

## This Is A Special Time!

Congratulations! You have made a significant decision in choosing to be baptized. St. John's United Church of Christ welcomes the opportunity to share this special time with you. This pamphlet will inform you about the meaning and effect of baptism, acquaint you with the ceremony in which you will be participating, and deepen your understanding of the promises you and the congregation will be making to God and to each other.

## This Is A Meaningful Time

The United Church of Christ celebrates baptism as a sacrament – a means whereby God gives his grace to us. Christian baptism is derived from Jesus' teaching. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all people, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:18-20) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mark 16:16) Jesus himself made a decision to be baptized (Mark 1:9-11) as an act identifying himself with humanity and confirming his relationship with God as his Father.



The Bible teaches us that in baptism:

- God works the power of forgiveness in us (Acts 2:38)
- God gives us his Holy Spirit to renew us (Acts 2:38)
- God identifies us with Christ in his death and resurrection, giving us new life (Romans 6:4)
- God unites us with all other Christian people, making us one Body, the Church (Galatians 3:26-28)

God is at work in our lives through baptism. Our participation in baptism says, "Yes, God, I accept what you are doing in my life."

In the early church, youth and adult converts to Christianity were baptized after they confessed their sinfulness and acknowledged their belief that through the death and resurrection of Jesus they had been forgiven and set free to live a new life of obedience and discipleship. Baptism was initially practiced as immersion in water. It is not clear when the practice of infant baptism, or the pouring or sprinkling of water began. These were early practices dating to at least the second century. The United Church of Christ practices both adult and infant baptism, and utilizes sprinkling, pouring and immersion as forms of baptism.

## This Is A Celebration Time

The United Church of Christ conducts baptism services within the context of regular Sunday morning services. That is the time the local church gathers to celebrate God's activity in our lives. Baptism bears witness to that activity. The congregation wants to celebrate with you! Private baptism are performed at St. John's United Church of Christ only on an emergency basis.

Specifically you will be asked the following questions at the time you are baptized:

- Do you desire to be baptized into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?
- Do you renounce the powers of evil and to receive the freedom of new life in Christ?
- Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?
- Do you promise that you will be Christ's disciple, to follow the way of the Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?
- Do you promise to grow in the Christian faith, to be a faithful member of Christ's church, celebrating Christ's presence, and

furthering Christ's mission in all the world.

- Will you accept the love, support and care of the members of St. John's United Church of Christ as you strive to faithfully fulfill the promises you are making here today?

You will want to give careful consideration to the promises you are making as you answer these questions. These questions and answers establish an agreement or covenant between you, the local church and God. After answering affirmatively to these questions you will be expected to model Christian discipleship by being an active part of the life and fellowship of St. John's United Church of Christ.

In addition to your commitment to God and the local church, the local congregation makes a commitment to you, and to God.

The members of St. John's United Church of Christ will promise their "love,



support and care" to you. This comes in many forms as needs arise. The members of St. John's United Church of Christ take this responsibility very seriously. We offer outstanding programs, worship opportunities, and fellowship events to help people grow in Christ.

## This Is A Beginning Time

As you become a part of the Church you will want to share your time, talents, and treasure for the growth of God's realm and this local congregation. St. John's United Church of Christ extends to you their invitation to become a member of the congregation at the same time you are being baptized. We look forward to our future together!

Our Pastor is looking forward to talking with you about your decision. The date for your baptism will be set when you meet with him. You may call 616-453-2497 or email [Pastor@StJohnsUCCgr.org](mailto:Pastor@StJohnsUCCgr.org) to schedule an appointment.



St. John's  
United Church of Christ

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# Baptism



for Youth  
& Adults

St. John's  
United Church of Christ

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