

Mount Baker Park Presbyterian Church
Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism for Infants and Young Children
(Revised by the MBPPC Session, June, 2009)

Introduction

One of the greatest joys in the Christian life is the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Baptism for infants and young children. This sacrament is “the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ” (*The Book of Order*, W-2.3001), meaning that it celebrates God’s loving promise to claim us as children through Jesus Christ, now and forever. Since “redemption from sin through the blood of Christ and the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit are promised to these children no less than their parents, infants are also by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, to be incorporated into the Christian Church” (*The Book of Confessions*, 4.074). In other words, when a child is baptized at MBPPC, he or she is not only claimed as a beloved child of God in Christ, but becomes a member of Christ’s universal Church.

Baptism initiates a child’s journey in the Christian life. Along with his or her parent or parents, the congregation vows “to support and encourage the child to be a faithful Christian” (*The Book of Common Worship*, p. 406). It is the responsibility of the parents, the congregation, and the pastor to provide the child support and instruction in the Christian faith so that he or she can eventually unite with a particular congregation as an active member by his or her own profession of faith.

When Baptisms Are Scheduled at MBPPC

“For reasons of order, Baptism shall be authorized by the session (church board), administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament, or a commissioned lay pastor when invited by the session and authorized by the presbytery, and accompanied by the reading and proclaiming of the Word” (BOE, W-2.3011, a.). Baptisms are authorized for the second Sundays of each month, except in the season of Lent. Exceptions shall be scheduled as approved by Session.

The Role of Parents and the Congregation

Since we believe that baptism is initiation into the Church, the Body of Christ, it is very important that the parent or parents have an active role in the life of a particular congregation. And it is equally important that members of the congregation undertake the responsibility of supporting the parent or parents in raising the child in the Christian faith. For this reason, “the parent(s) or one(s) rightly exercising parental responsibility shall be an active member of the congregation” (BOE, W-2.3014), and “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life” (BOE, W-2.3013). The Presbyterian Church (USA) does not assign the role of godparents, but may name sponsors from the congregation (BOE, W-2.3013).

How to Request the Sacrament of Holy Baptism

A parent or parents, or those rightly exercising parental responsibility, may request that the session authorize a baptism for their child by contacting the Clerk of Session either in writing or by email. Written requests may be mailed to the Clerk of Session, Mt. Baker Park Presbyterian Church, 3201 Hunter Blvd. S., Seattle, WA, 98144. Emails may be sent to mbppc@qwestoffice.net. A telephone number, mailing address, or email should be included in order for the Clerk to contact those making the request.

Once the request is received, the pastor will contact the parents, or those exercising parental responsibility, to provide instruction about the meaning of baptism, and their responsibility to participate as active members in the church.

At its monthly meeting (2nd Wednesday of each month, except August), the session will review and authorize baptism requests made by members of MBPPC, and schedule the

celebration of the sacrament on one of the designated Sundays as agreed to by the Clerk of Session and those making the request.

Instruction by the Pastor

When baptisms are scheduled, the pastor will contact those who have requested the baptism, to arrange for instruction in the meaning of baptism and the manner in which the sacrament is administered in a worship service.