

BAPTISM OF CHILDREN AT TRINITY



Marked as Christ's Own

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1615 6th Ave, Tacoma WA 98405

"Living the Gospel in the Heart of Tacoma"

"It was for you, little one,
that the Spirit of God moved over
the waters at creation,
and the Lord God made covenants
with his people.
It was for you
that the Word of God became flesh and
lived among us,
full of grace and truth.
For you, Jesus Christ suffered death
crying out at the end, "It is finished!"
For you Christ triumphed over death,
rose in newness of life,
and ascended to rule over all.
All of this was done for you, little one,
though you do not know any of this yet,
But we will continue to tell you
this good news until it becomes your own.
And so the promise of the gospel
is fulfilled:
"We love because God first loved us."
(Part of the Baptismal liturgy for infants)



Here's what to expect on the morning your child will be baptized...

- Opening Words on the meaning of baptism
- Presentation by a Trinity elder
- Profession of Faith/Questions of the Parents
- Questions for the congregation
- Scripture verse (selected by parents)
- Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Water
- Baptism
- Laying on of hands

If you are interested in having your child baptized, please contact the church office (253-272-8819) or Pastor Matt Robbins-Ghormley (matt@tpctacoma.org), and he will be in touch to schedule a time to meet with you.

Q&A - THEOLOGICAL & PRACTICAL

The question of baptism for infants brings up many questions. Here's a few questions and answers about the "why" and "how" of baptism.

Why Baptism of Infants?

Baptizing babies might be new to you - and might sound a little "Catholic" to some Protestants Christians - but most churches that come out of the Reformation do practice infant baptism.

Baptism of infants is based on the conviction that children of believing parents are included in God's covenant of grace. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the sign of God's covenant was circumcision. In the New Testament, baptism is the new sign of God's covenant with us (Col 2:11-15).

Obviously, infants cannot choose on their own to follow Christ - that will be for another time in their lives, when they can make a choice to profess their faith as a youth or adult. But the very fact that an infant *cannot* choose anything for themselves witnesses to the fact of God's grace choosing us before we are able to respond in faith.

What about "dedication?" I'd like my child to make their own decision about baptism someday.

Some Christian traditions only baptize youth or adult believers upon a profession of faith. "Dedication" comes from that adult baptism tradition, as a way to hear the promises of parents to raise their children in the church, and pray for God's blessing with the hope that one day they will choose to follow Christ and be baptized. Dedication & baptism are different, but similar enough in intent that we at Trinity honor the parents' choice to offer their child for *either* dedication or baptism.

When does a Baptism happen?

Baptism happens on a Sunday morning as part of our regular worship service. Baptisms are a public, sacramental act of the gathered community, not just a private family event.

What am I committing to when I bring my child to be baptized?

Those who bring their child to be baptized are both professing their own faith in Christ, and are also committing to raise their child in the community of faith.

How old should my child be to be baptized?

The answer we get from our Directory for Worship is: "without undue delay and without undue haste." About as clear as mud! But it does help give some direction - it's important enough to make it a priority and do it soon, but you don't have to rush. When is too old to do "infant baptism"? That is for the pastor and parents to decide together - case by case. There's not a hard and fast rule.

What about godparents?

Presbyterian practice has historically been not to have godparents. The congregation as a whole stands in as the godparents. But at Trinity, we really see the value of having someone in particular commissioned to stand alongside your child as they grow up - to remind them of their baptism, and to encourage them in their relationship with God. So - we're happy to have them included if that's what parents would like.