



COMMUNITY  
CONGREGATIONAL  
C H U R C H

# *Planning a Baptism*

Community Congregational Church, Short Hills

# Congratulations!

The choice to be baptized or to have your child baptized is a milestone moment in a person's faith journey - and we are excited to guide you through the process!

Baptism is one of two sacraments in our tradition, along with the sacrament of communion. At baptism, a person is welcomed into the universal church, the body of Christ, through the sacrament. The water, words, and actions of the sacrament are visible signs that convey an invisible grace. The invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the water and upon the candidates for baptism is an affirmation that it is God who takes the initiative in the sacrament. "Baptism is both God's gift and our human response to that gift." It is "a sign and seal of our common discipleship.

Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the church of every time and place." Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their new growth into full Christian faith and life.

## **When should I baptize my child?**

In our tradition, baptism is typically done as an infant. Some parents prefer to wait until their child is old enough to make his/her own decision whether or not to be baptized, as an older child or as an adult. If you decide to baptize your child as an infant, he/she will have the opportunity later in life to reaffirm this decision through the process of Confirmation, affirming the baptismal vows that you will make on his/her behalf.

## **Scheduling the Date**

The sacrament of baptism normally takes place during the regular Sunday worship service. The scheduling for this date should be made in consultation with our pastors, as well as with any family members who might be attending.

## **Parents**

When an infant or young child is baptized, one or both parents promise to assume certain responsibilities for the Christian nurture of the baptized child. At least one of the parents must be an active and involved member of Community Congregational Church.

## **Sponsors/Godparents**

Parents may choose sponsors or godparents for infants and young children who are to be baptized. At the time of the baptismal service, the sponsors/godparents, who accompany the newly baptized on their journey of faith, may join the parents and candidate to present them for baptism. They make promises similar to the promises of the parents concerning their role in the child's life.

## **Role of the Congregation**

Baptism is not only a personal celebration in the lives of the individual candidates and their families, but also a central celebration in the life of the local church, which embodies the universal church in a particular place. For this reason, baptism should take place in the presence of the community of faith gathered for public worship. The Congregation will also make promises to nurture and support the candidate in his/her faith.

## **Symbolism of the Water**

Water is an essential element of baptism. It represents the washing away of sins and a cleansing of the soul.

## **Certificate of Baptism**

Once your child has been baptized, you will be presented with a Certificate of Baptism stating the place, date, and pastor officiating. Your child's name will also be recorded in the church records.

## *Next Steps*

If you are interested in being baptized, or having your child baptized, at Community Congregational Church, please get in touch with one of our pastors. They will meet with you to discuss the significance of the sacrament, as well as schedule a date that is mutually agreeable.

The Rev. Dr. Johann Bosman: [Johann@CommunityChurch.org](mailto:Johann@CommunityChurch.org)

The Rev. Margie Price: [Margie@CommunityChurch.org](mailto:Margie@CommunityChurch.org)

*Go therefore*

and make disciples of all nations,

*baptizing them*

in the name of the Father and  
of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19



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200 Hartshorn Drive, Short Hills, NJ 07078

[www.CommunityChurch.org](http://www.CommunityChurch.org)

(973) 379-5600