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## What questions will I be asked and what promises will I be making?

In the service, parents will be making promises on behalf of their children. These promises are not to be taken lightly and are an important part of the service. We recognize that life presents many challenges as children are being raised, so we ask that you answer these questions as openly and honestly as you can, doing your best to uphold them in the coming years.

*...as you present your child for baptism, you are entrusted with gifts and responsibilities: to live with him/her among God's faithful people, sharing with him/her to the word of God and nurturing him/her in faith and prayer, so that s/he may learn to trust God, to proclaim Christ's love through word and deed, to care for others in this world, and to work for justice and peace for all people.*

*Do you promise to help your child grow in the Christian faith and life, in the instruction and understanding of the love and will of God as understood through Scriptures and the traditions of our faith?? (I do)*

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## Do I need Godparents?

Inviting family members or friends to be Godparents is a personal choice and not one that is mandated by the Protestant Church. If you do choose to ask one or more people, choose people who share your same faith values, so they can support you in raising your child in the Christian faith. Godparents are asked the following questions:

*...do you promise to nurture this child in love and to support his/her parents in the fulfillment of their promises, so that, with your support, s/he may be strengthened to live in a loving and caring manner all the days of his/her life?*

## Should I invite guests?

Baptism is a family bond - you and your child are not alone in this world, and Baptism celebrates that fact. Children need many adults in their lives to lean on through the years, so inviting all those who love you and your child, and who share a special place in your life, is appropriate. There is a part of the service that we recognize these people and celebrate their presence in your life.

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## The Sacrament of Baptism



## Southport Congregational Church

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*Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

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## What is Baptism?

The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward truth - that we are all created by God, receivers of God's grace, called to live faithful and loving lives and to celebrate our love for God through our faith. Recognizing that while we are created in God's image, we fall short of perfection, and through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and conquering of death and sin through the resurrection, we are loved and forgiven by God, we know that through Baptism, God works in us the power of forgiveness, the renewal of the spirit and the knowledge to be God's people, always. Baptism is an ancient sacrament of the Christian church, practiced by Christians in every land around the world. Throughout the pages of the New Testament, we encounter the sacrament of baptism over and over again.

- 1) John, Jesus' cousin who was the one born to prepare the way for Jesus, baptized many people in the river Jordan.
- 2) Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, was baptized by John in the river Jordan.
- 3) On the day of Pentecost, three thousand new believers confessed their faith and were baptized.
- 4) When people brought their children to Jesus, he received them joyfully, saying that anyone who wants to enter God's kingdom must enter as a child.

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## How does Baptism take place?

Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the sign and seal of our common discipleship. Since baptism is God's gift, the Holy Spirit is called upon to be with us at this service. The act of baptism also marks the beginning of new life of discipleship. Water is an essential element in baptism. We use water that has been collected from the River Jordan (where Christ was baptized), the Sea of Galilee (where Christ did most of his ministry) and Southport Harbor.

## What do I need to do to have my child or myself Baptized?

The first step is to call the church office and determine a date for the ceremony.

If you are a member of SCC already, you have two choices:

- 1) Have your baptism occur within a church worship service with your church family
- 2) Have a private baptism with invited guests

If you are not a church member, you are welcome to have your private baptism in either the Sanctuary after worship or in the Chapel.

After a date has been chosen, one of our ministers will contact you for a private meeting before the chosen date.

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## Who can be Baptized?

All infants, children, youth and adults are invited to be baptized, welcoming all ages into the fellowship of the church universal.

## I have a Catholic background, how does that affect Baptism?

The Protestant church as a whole has always recognized the baptisms by the Catholic Church, but the reverse has not always been true. Since the Second Vatican Council, a series of historic church meetings from 1962 to 1965, the Catholic Church began recognizing baptisms from major Protestant denominations. However, there has always been discussions and sticking points over some of the particulars.

However, a most historic move came in January of 2013, when an official document called "*The Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism*" became a formal agreement between the Catholic Church and the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church of USA, the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Reformed Church in America in which both the Catholic Church and these 4 denominations now fully recognize and celebrate each other's Sacraments of Baptism.