

Baptism at Oakmont Presbyterian Church

Baptism is an event of rich meaning and significance for individuals and for the Oakmont Presbyterian Church. Baptism is much more than “what is done” to babies, or to adults who want to join the church. God’s love for you is proclaimed and the congregation recommits its life to faith and fellowship.

In the Church’s memory water has symbolized passage to freedom, life-saving sustenance and rebirth of Christ. The Hebrew people escaped the oppression of the Egyptians by crossing the Red Sea through the path provided by God. While in the wilderness, they ate “manna” which was crystallized by the morning’s dew. As people discovered God’s love in Christ, they were baptized. Baptism reminds us that God’s will is for us to “have life and have it abundantly”.

Baptism also unites us with the fellowship of the church. Since we all stand in need of God’s loving mercy, we share in common a desire to see God clearly. Hence, Oakmont Presbyterian Church members are committed to support and nurture one another through the worship and program of the church and by becoming “friends in Christ.”

The following material is our affirmation of God’s love and the fellowship of the church revealed in the sacrament of Baptism.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is a commitment to the person and lifestyle of Jesus Christ. (The baptism of infants involves a pledge by parents to take spiritual responsibility for the child.)

Baptism and communion are the two sacraments in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Sacraments are tangible, dramatic symbols of the love and promise of God. They are the word of God made visible.

It is an “outward sign” and an “inward seal” of God’s grace. “Grace” is both God’s mercy toward us and His power in us. The “inward seal” is this, that all of God’s love is pledged to the child. The “outward sign” is the visible symbolism of the washing with water. The outward symbolism of washing reflects the power of Christ to cleans us from sin.

Baptism is both God’s act and the people’s response.

Baptism is not tied to the moment when it is administered. Baptism signifies the beginning of life in Christ, not its completion.

Who May Be Baptized

Oakmont Presbyterian Church follows the Presbyterian Book of Order which states, “The parents or those persons rightly exercising parental authority, if members of the congregation, may present infants for baptism”.

Baptism should be administered only to those who will be responsibly nurtured through participation in the worship and work of the church. to do less than this is to empty the sacrament of its meaning and to hide the graciousness of God from those who seek it.

Baptism of infants may be performed for those who are not members of Oakmont Presbyterian Church, but are members of another Christian congregation, who, for the sake of tradition, family history, or other good reason desire the baptism take place in our sanctuary. They are encouraged to participate in the mission and life of their own church. the vows taken by our congregation are to be taken for the member's own congregation. These vows will be communicated to the parent's home church.

If grandparents desire their grandchildren to be baptized by the church, it is important to inform them that based on the Presbyterian Book of Order, "Only children of parents who are members of a church will be accepted for baptism." This enables the child and the family to participate in the ongoing grace of God through the fellowship of a Christian church. Session stands ready to help parents become active members in the life and worship of a congregation.

BAPTISM COMMITMENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

God has given parents the responsibility for the protection and nurture of children in matters personal, social, and spiritual. In the baptism of infants, parents affirm their faith as well as their duty to bring up the child to love and serve the Lord.

1. Child's full name _____
Date of birth _____
Place of birth _____
Male _____ Female _____
2. Father's full name _____
Member of what church if not OPC _____
Address of church _____
3. Mother's full name _____
(Please include maiden name)
Member of what church if not OPC _____
Address of church _____
4. Desired date of baptism _____
5. Christian Sponsors ("Godparents") requested for the Child
Name _____
Address & Phone # _____
Name _____
Address & Phone # _____

We desire our child to be baptized into the church. As Christian parents, we recognize our responsibility to Christ for this child. In humility we are prepared to answer the commitment questions asked of me:

1. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

Parent/Parents: I do.

2. Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

Parent/Parents: I do.

3. Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

Parent/Parents: I will, with God's help.

Father's signature _____

Mother's signature _____

Date _____

The church, as an instrument of God, will support the family in helping the child to grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

As a safeguard during the coronavirus pandemic, parents and pastor will wear masks.

***Return the completed form to Oakmont Presbyterian Church
415 Pennsylvania Avenue, Oakmont, PA 15139***

BAPTISM COMMITMENT FORM FOR ADULTS

Adult believers affirm their faith in Christ and commit themselves to love and serve the Lord. The following questions will be asked in worship. They will serve you as a reminder of your commitment and as a challenge to you throughout your life. Your signature means that you intend to be guided by your commitment and be faithful to Christ.

1. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

2. Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

I do.

3. Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

Signed _____

Dated _____

COMMITMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

The congregation affirms its commitment on behalf of the universal church to "surround the child [or adult] with love and concern in Christ as Savior and live in God's eternal kingdom.

This congregation takes seriously its responsibility to help provide the spiritual nurture of all baptized persons.

If baptism is to communicate the powerful meanings which it has embodied for Christians throughout our history, baptism must be experienced as an event of great importance. It must, in fact, be the beginning of a process for which the whole congregation takes responsibility.

It is the church, as an instrument of God, that joins the family in helping the child/adult to mature in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Times When Baptism May Be Administered

Baptism will be scheduled at the most opportune time for the family and pastor of the church, whenever possible. Session must approve the baptism. Session meets the second Tuesday of each month. Therefore, request to the pastor for baptism should be made by the 25th of each month.

Where Baptism is Administered

Baptism is an act of the whole church and a sign of entrance into the Church. Therefore, it regularly should be administered in the presence of the worshipping congregation. Since the Sacrament cannot be separated from the Word, it ordinarily is administered at a worship service at which the written Word has been expounded, setting forth the promises and benefits the Sacrament proclaims.

If, in the judgment of the minister, with Session approval, justify the administration of the Sacrament apart from public worship, the congregation should be represented by at least one member of the Session in addition to the minister, thereby manifesting the communal nature of baptism.

Although the entire congregation serves as sponsor, family sponsors are welcome. If desired, in consultation with the parents, members of the Session may be appointed additional sponsors.