

Montauk Community Church Baptism Policy

The Role of Parents and the Congregation

We believe as Presbyterians that baptism is an initiation into Christian life, the Church, and the Body of Christ. When a child is baptized he or she is not only claimed as a beloved child of God in Christ, but becomes a member of Christ's universal Church and a member of the covenant community (the community of believers and their children). After baptism it is the responsibility of the parents, the congregation, and the pastor to provide the child support and instruction in the Christian faith.

It is very important that the parent(s) assume an active role in the life of our congregation. And it is equally important that members of the congregation undertake the responsibility of supporting the parent(s) in raising the child in the Christian faith. Along with the child's parent(s), the congregation vows "to support and encourage the child to be a faithful Christian" For this reason, "the parent(s) or one(s) with parental responsibility shall be an active member of the congregation" and "The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the child.

As a community of faith at MCC we welcome and encourage continuing parental/child presence in worship and in various other events of the church, in order to facilitate better congregational partnership towards the nurture, growth, and understanding of God's design in one's life faith journey.

Frequently Asked Questions

I am an adult and not baptized. What must I do to be baptized?

Contact the pastor of the church who will arrange for your baptism.

Is it possible to be baptized but not join the church?

No. As baptism is union with Christ, so it is union with Christ's body, the church. Baptism is Christ's gift to those who would be joined to him and promise to follow him as a member of his body, the church.

Are private baptisms permitted?

No. Baptism is an initiation into the covenant community, and members of that community must participate in the service. In addition to the vows the parent(s) take, the congregation vows to support the parents and the child, (if this is an infant baptism) as they grow in faith. Therefore, except in extraordinary circumstances, baptisms take place as part of the regular Sunday morning worship services.

I would like to join the Montauk Community Church, but I was baptized as a Catholic (or Methodist, Eastern Orthodox, etc.). Do I need to be baptized again?

No. The Presbyterian Church has always placed great emphasis on the unity of the Christian church (*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all,*

who is over all and through all and in all- Ephesians 4:4). We count anyone who has been baptized with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit a baptized Christian, regardless of the tradition within the Christian church that administered the baptism. You may join the church through profession of faith.

Do I have to be baptized to take Communion?

Baptism is the act of initiation into the Christian community and should take place before you receive Communion.

How do I arrange for a baptism?

If you are already a member of the church and are baptizing a child, contact the pastor who will schedule a baptism conference with you. At that time, the pastor will discuss the meaning of infant baptism with you to ensure that you understand the intention of the vows you will take. If you are not a member, the first step to having your child baptized is for you to join the church. At least one parent must be a baptized Christian and a member of the Montauk Community Church. In infant baptism, the parent(s) take the vows on behalf of the child and promise to raise her or him in the Christian faith. Similarly, the congregation vows to support the child's growth in faith.

Can we have godparents?

The role of godparents is to take special responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the child. "Godparents" are not a specific part of Presbyterian tradition because the entire community is charged with this role. However, if you wish to include "sponsors" who are close to your family and will be taking particular care to fulfill this spiritual responsibility to your child, they are welcome to stand with you at the font and take the baptismal vows for the child with you.

After my child is baptized, what happens?

After your child is baptized he or she is placed on the Cradle Roll and will receive birthday cards each birthday, with the reminder that when they reach their third birthday they are welcomed into the younger Sunday School Class. As parents your participation in the life of the church and attendance at Sunday worship is encouraged. Child-care during Sunday worship is usually provided.

Approved by Session 3/17/08