

BAPTISM

Of infants and children



Westminster
Presbyterian
CHURCH
— worship well —

2012

Dear Parent,

We are delighted that you have a child whom you are considering having baptized into this church family. A baptism is such a special time in a family's faith journey; and we are so glad to be a part of it. Westminster's staff wants to do everything possible to ensure that your child's baptism is a memorable occasion that will be the beginning of a lifelong relationship with God and the church.

While baptism is a joyous and even festive occasion, we want you to know that we take baptism very seriously. As you may know, the purpose of baptism in the Presbyterian Church (USA) is twofold. First, it is the child's publicly being received into the family of God and claimed as a child of God. Secondly, it is the parents' and the congregations' opportunity to make vows promising to nurture the child in the Christian faith and see that he or she has the chance to come to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ. For an older child who has requested baptism, there is the added significance of the baptism being her/his first time to make a public profession of faith.

As you consider having your child baptized at Westminster Presbyterian Church, know that we will do our utmost to fulfill the promises that we make to you and to your child. Feel free to speak with one of the pastors if you have any questions. When you decide that you are ready to have your child baptized, please email Program Assistant Jessica Thurnes (Jthurnes@wpc-alex.org) or call 703-549-4766 to make arrangements. We want to share in your joy at this time and will work with you to ensure that your child's baptism is a special experience for you, your child, and your family.

In Christ,

Rev. Casey FitzGerald, Associate Pastor

Dr. Larry Hayward, Pastor

Rev. Patrick Hunnicutt, Associate Pastor

BAPTISM is

one of the two sacraments in the Presbyterian church. It is an outward sign of an inward reality.

God has already chosen your child and is already at work in your child's life.

Through the act of baptizing your child you are confirming your faith. At the age of confirmation, having been cultivated in the faith, the child will publicly make a profession of faith.

Ordinarily, we require at least one parent to be an active member in good standing at Westminster Presbyterian Church. While there are some exceptions, we strongly urge a family to unite with a congregation where they live as part of their faith commitment to the sacrament of baptism for their child.

Baptism is an ordination done by water alone and in the presence of a worshiping congregation. As such it is a public act of worship where people publicly acknowledge their faith in Jesus Christ.

We ask that parents have a pre-baptismal conference with one of the clergy.

Since baptism is a part of sacred worship, no photographs or videos should be taken during the service. Posed pictures with the minister and family by the baptismal font can be arranged at the conclusion of the service.

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PREPARING FOR BAPTISM

Westminster wants to make your child's baptism as meaningful as possible. When you are ready to schedule a baptism, email Jessica Thurnes at Jthurnes@wpc-alex.org or call 703-549-4766. Once you have a date, please fill out the attached form and return it to the church office. A form must be completed for each baptismal candidate.

PROCEDURES for baptism

1. Call or email Jessica Thurnes to arrange a date.
2. Complete and send the application to the church office.
3. A baptismal conference will be arranged approximately two weeks before the selected date.

