**First Congregational United Church of Christ**

# Application for the Baptism of Children

*Please return this form at least one month before the baptism date.*

Child's Full Name (First, Middle, Last): _____ Gender: M / F

Date of birth: _____ Birthplace (City, State): _____

Date of baptism: _____ Service: 9:30 AM

Pastor: _____

| | Parent 1 | Parent 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Parent's Name (First MI Last) | Maiden Name: | Maiden Name: |
| Parent's Address | | |
| Parent's Church Relationship | | |
| Parent's Phone Number | | |
| Parent's Email | | |

Is this your family's first baptism at First Congregational? (circle one) ..... Yes / No

Will your child have sponsors or godparents? (circle one) ..... Yes / No

If so, would you prefer they be called? (circle one) ..... Sponsor / Godparent

| | Sponsor / Godparent 1 | Sponsor / Godparent 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Sponsor/Godparent's Name (First and Last) | | |
| Sponsor/Godparent's Address | | |

**Please list any additional sponsors/godparents in the space below or on the back side of this paper.**

First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
724 E. South River Street, Appleton, WI 54915

Office Use Only:
Church Record ___ Red Book ___
Yellow Card to Log Book ___
Application to File Cabinet ___
R07/2025

First Congregational United Church of Christ

# The Sacrament of Baptism at First Congregational

**What Is Baptism?**
There are two sacraments in the Protestant church: Communion, or the Lord's Supper, and baptism, which means "to dunk."

The baptism of infants, children and adults is a profoundly significant event, both for the person being baptized as well as the whole church. Ideally, baptism is celebrated in the context of a worship service. As a communal celebration, baptism reminds all believing Christians of their own baptismal vows and their identity as the called people of God. The gathered community of faith makes vows promising their love, support and care to the one who is being baptized.

Like the Lord's Supper, baptism is "an outward and visible sign of an inner, spiritual reality." Members of Protestant churches will vary in their precise theological understanding of baptism, but we can certainly affirm that it is an occasion when God is present through the work of the Holy Spirit in bestowing Christian identity and bringing the baptized person into the community of Christ's people, both in its broadest sense and in terms of participation in a specific, local congregation.

**Baptism and the New Testament Church**
Biblically, a variety of rich images inform our understanding of baptism. Closely linked with repentance and with the reception of the Holy Spirit, the rite of baptism with water as a symbol of entry into the Christian community was practiced from the day of Pentecost onward. Baptism also appears to represent the believer's response to and acceptance of the gospel message, but the Apostle Paul in his writings also makes linkages between baptism and grace. In addition, Paul sees baptism as the means of incorporation into the Christian community, which is the body of Christ. He also describes baptism as "putting on" Christ and sees it as a symbolic representation of dying, being buried and rising again with Christ, understood as dying to sin and rising again to a new moral life.

Baptism of adults and baptism by immersion were normative for the New Testament church. Over time, the rite of baptism changed somewhat. Particularly in northern countries, baptism by sprinkling also became standard practice.

Originally, all persons were baptized as adults, since the earliest Christians were all converts. As these converts married and had children, concerns arose over incorporating children into the faith, which eventually resulted in the practice of infant baptism.

One important component that has always been considered extremely important in the Christian church was missing in infant baptism, the personal profession of faith.

(Over)

**724 E South River Street, Appleton, WI 54915**
**(920) 733-7393 www.uccappleton.org**
07/2025 Revised

First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
— *The Church of the Open Door* —

Confirmation ("to make firm") for young people became the way for those who were baptized as infants to make a public confession of their faith. Confirmation also serves as the catechetical (teaching) component of a Christian upbringing. The earliest Christians typically underwent an intensive three-year period of study prior to being confirmed/baptized, which was originally a single rite.

**Infant and Believer's Baptism**
In the United Church of Christ, we baptize persons of all ages. Some traditions, such as the Baptists, only practice Believer's Baptism, emphasizing the individual's profession of faith. When baptizing infants, the emphasis is primarily on God's grace.

Both God's grace and a personal faith commitment are important components of Christian baptism. In infant baptism, parents and godparents make those vows on behalf of the child, who will then hopefully claim those promises for her/himself at the time of Confirmation.

**Theology of Baptism**
In the United Church of Christ, the emphasis in baptism is on *identity*, *grace* and *incorporation* into the community of faith, although in some other traditions baptism is considered essential for salvation or as a means of washing away sins. Some traditions also practice repeat baptism. The UCC recognizes the validity of any Christian baptism and believes that baptism is "once and for all," even as Christ's sacrifice was "once and for all."

**Baptism at First Congregational UCC**
Several different liturgical forms of the sacrament of baptism are performed by the pastors at First Congregational UCC. When an infant is being baptized, vows in some form will be made by the parents and godparents/sponsors (if any). In most instances, this will include promises to raise the child in the Christian church, to encourage his/her growth in the Christian faith, and to model a Christian lifestyle in one's own life. These vows are extremely important and are intended to be taken with great seriousness. When a teen or adult is baptized, that person makes vows on his or her own behalf.

Due to the large number of children being baptized at First Congregational, we have limited baptisms to one Sunday each month. Please call the office to inquire about our baptism schedule. The pastor baptizing your infant will contact you at some point during the week prior to the baptism to answer questions and to arrange to meet on Sunday morning prior to the baptism.

It is entirely up to you if you wish to select a person or persons to serve as godparents or sponsors for your child. If you do ask someone to take this very special role, they are invited to join you in worship when your child is baptized.

We look forward to sharing in this sacrament with you and your family. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact one of the ministers or the church office at (920) 733-7393.

**First Congregational United Church Of Christ**

# Photography Policy

The First Congregational United Church of Christ discourages photography during worship since it may disrupt the worship experience for those in attendance.

Anyone who feels obliged to take photographs during a worship service is asked to do so discreetly, demonstrating respect for other worshipers by observing the following guidelines:

1. No flash photography or special lighting is permitted.
2. All pictures and videos must be taken within the pews (use of the aisles is not permitted).

Church staff will be available for pictures following the service. For special church events, a video camera is often set up to record the event. Please consult with the staff to see if this is planned, as those videotapes can be made available.

For wedding bulletins, we ask that the following announcement be included:

*The Bride and Groom request that no flash photography be taken during the ceremony.*

Worship and Music Ministry Team, 09/1996

First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
724 E. South River Street, Appleton, WI 54915

Please initial each line to indicate acceptance:

_____ I acknowledge that I have read the Photography Policy and will adhere to it.

**By signing below, you acknowledge receipt of the policies listed above. You further acknowledge that you have read, understand, and accept each policy in its entirety, and have indicated so by initialing above.**

Signature of Applicant _____Date _____

First Congregational
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
724 E. South River Street, Appleton, WI 54915

Office Use Only:
Church Record ___Red Book ___
Yellow Card to Log Book ___
Application to File Cabinet ___
R07/2025