

The Sacrament of Baptism for Children and Youth

Baptism is the celebration of God's saving grace. In baptism Mount Sinai Congregational Church acknowledges and celebrates its faith that God offers forgiveness and grace to people, and this opens new possibilities for living in the new age of God's reign. It also acknowledges and celebrates the faith that God calls us into the community of Church and into its life and ministry.

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Baptism is one of two Sacraments (the other being Holy Communion) celebrated in Mount Sinai Congregational Church and in Protestant Churches in general. Jesus began his ministry by being baptized by his cousin, John, in the Jordan River. At that time, Mark tells us "the Spirit descended like a dove and a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."" (Mark 1:9-11)

Since the baptism of Jesus, the Church has used a variety of forms of baptism: immersion (total dipping of the believer in the water), affusion (pouring water over the believer's head), and sprinkling (placing a few drops of water on the believer's head). Most of the baptisms at Mount Sinai Congregational Church use sprinkling. In our Congregational tradition, baptism is a communal act. As one is receiving the Sacrament, worshippers are invited to remember and reaffirm their own baptisms. Therefore, baptisms are conducted in the midst of the church community of faith during Sunday morning worship.

One can be baptized at any age, however, infant baptism is most common in Mount Sinai Congregational Church. Infant baptism stresses God's grace and invites the family of the child and the church congregation to pledge to support the parents as they raise their child in the Christian faith. Many families choose to have Godparents. If this is the case, the Godparents are also asked to support the parents as they raise their child. Infants who are baptized are given the privilege of making a personal affirmation of their faith by attending Confirmation classes during their 8th grade school year and receive the rite of Confirmation following Confirmation classes.

Baptism gives a sense of identity as it affirms that we are baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." By remembering our baptism, we know who we are and who we are called to be. Christians live by faith and a trust in God, who makes life fresh and new. Martin Luther, in his moments of greatest doubt and despair, consoled himself by saying over and over again, "I have been baptized!" When we claim our baptized identity as Christian, we are given the gift of being able to remember just how pleased God is with us and how present God is to us.

Following the Sacrament of Baptism, it is the practice of Mount Sinai Congregational Church to bestow the gifts of a Certificate of Baptism and a Children's Bible.

This church is happy to have this opportunity to minister to your family through the sacrament of Baptism. We stand ready to continue ministry to your family in every way. If you are new to Mount Sinai Congregational Church, we invite you to consider this church for your place of worship, your family's church home.

Please use the attached form to request baptism for your infant or child, or for yourself. If you desire adult baptism or have any questions, please call the church office at 631.473.1582.

Steps Towards Your Child's Baptism

- Church membership is not required for baptism, but at least one parent must be baptized.
- Call the church office or complete the Baptismal Request Form and return it to the office to request a date for the baptism. Baptisms are not scheduled on the first Sunday of the month.
- Choose your child's Godparents. Godparents are not required, but if you are having Godparents, they must be baptized. Godparents are requested to attend the Orientation Class with you.
- Baptism Preparation Class
Baptism is a sacred act. It is also a communal act. Prior to your child's baptism you are required to attend a class in which the meaning of baptism is explored in a group setting. The class is held on the first Saturday of each month. Led by our Senior Pastor and deacons, the Baptism Preparation Class is also an opportunity to get to know other members of the church. Between the time that you schedule your child's baptism and the Baptism Preparation Class, you will be assigned a mentor. You may request a member of Mount Sinai Congregational Church to be your mentor or one will be assigned to you. The role of the mentor is to help you and your family connect to the Mount Sinai Church family.

On the Day of the Baptism

- Please arrive fifteen minutes early and identify yourself to the greeters as the Baptism Family. They will direct you to where you and your family will be sitting.
- The front center section of the sanctuary will be reserved for you and your family and friends.
- Please communicate to your family and friends that photography is allowed, but those taking photographs are to remain seated.
- There are no costs, fees, or honoraria for a baptism. Should you wish to contribute to the church in honor of your child's baptism, we suggest making a donation to our Cradle Roll Fund.

After the Baptism

- Your child will be placed on our Cradle Roll. You will receive a monthly newsletter called *Splash* as well as an annual CD of age appropriate music.
- Your mentor will continue to be in contact, as appropriate, with you and your family.

Baptismal Request Form for Infants and Children

Name of child to be baptized _____
First Middle Last

This child is (circle one): Male Female Preferred date for the baptism _____

Child's Date of Birth _____ City and State of birth _____

Father's full name _____
First Middle Last

Are you a member of this church? _____

If no, how did you discover this church? _____

Have you been baptized? _____ If so, where? _____

Cell phone _____ Email _____

Mother's full name _____
First Middle Last

Are you a member of this church? _____

If no, how did you discover this church? _____

Have you been baptized? _____ If so, where? _____

Cell phone _____ Email _____

Home Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Name of Godfather _____
First Middle Last

Place of baptism and approximate date _____

Name of Godmother _____
First Middle Last

Place of baptism and approximate date _____

Name of Mentor _____

Please return this form to: **Mount Sinai Congregational Church (UCC)**
233 North Country Road
Mount Sinai, NY 11766

Date of Baptism _____
Pastor Officiating _____

In the Baptism Preparation Class we will . . .



baptism.

Talk about the meaning of



parents as faith educators.

Talk about the role of



the church that nurture children and families.

Hear about the programs at



Share our faith stories.



Ceremony.

Review the Baptism

Classes are held from 10:00 am to noon

on the first Saturday of each month.