

Baptisms at La Plata United Methodist Church

The Baptismal Covenant is God's word to us, proclaiming our adoption by grace, and our word to God promising our response of faith and love. Those within the covenant constitute the community we call the church; therefore, the services of the Baptismal Covenant are conducted during the public worship of the congregation where the person's membership is to be held, except in very unusual circumstances. These services are best placed in the order of worship as a response following the reading of Scripture and its exposition in the sermon.

Persons of any age are suitable candidates. Infants and others unable to take the vows for themselves are presented by parents and/or sponsors. There may also be sponsors when candidates can speak for themselves. Parents or sponsors should be members of Christ's holy church. Those baptized before they are old enough to take the vows for themselves make their personal profession of faith in the service called confirmation. Those who are able to take the vows for themselves at their baptism are not confirmed, for they have made their public profession of faith at the font. After confirmation, or after baptism when candidates take the vows for themselves, Christians are encouraged to reaffirm the Baptismal Covenant from time to time. Such reaffirmation is not, however, to be understood as the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is not administered to any person more than once, for while our baptismal vows are less than reliable, God's promise to us in the sacrament is steadfast.

Infant Baptisms



Services of infant Baptism are almost always done in the context of regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship and are scheduled in consultation with the pastor. Because Baptism claims and enacts a covenant between parent/guardian and congregation, at least one guardian/parent must be a member of the congregation. Infant baptisms are celebrated for children two years old or younger.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to have infants baptized early in the first six months of life. Children older than two years, normally would wait for the age of Confirmation (approximately 13 years old) or adulthood for baptism. "Sponsors" or "Godparents" are optional for infant baptism. When guardians/parents decide to invite someone to claim that responsibility they must ascertain the willingness of that person or persons to act on behalf of Christ's church in offering support and accountability to the parents in matters of the Christian faith and life.

Adult Baptisms

Persons who have been baptized at some time in their life in any Christian context are not to be re-baptized. Because baptism affirms, among other realities, entrance into the Community of Faith, the sacrament is celebrated for adults only when church membership is also being claimed. Because membership in the church is predicated on claiming the Christian faith, persons who wish to join the church must be baptized before taking the vows of membership.