

Notes

1. As a parent or godparent you should ask yourself:
 - Are you prepared to the best of your ability to give the child a Christian upbringing within the family of Christ's church?
 - Will you help the child by being regular in public worship and private prayer, not only by your teaching but also by your example and your prayers?
 - Will you encourage the child as it grows to come to Confirmation and Communion?
2. The church law requires grand parents or godparents. Parents may be godparents to their own children. Church law requires that godparents should be baptized at a minimum, and confirmed.
3. Church law requires that a child should be baptized at her/his own church or the church her/his parents normally attend. This requirement may be satisfied at the discretion of the pastor.
4. The usual time for baptism is 10 a.m. on Sunday morning at the Imani Community Church worship service.
 - Please note that it may not be possible to accommodate your preferred date, and as much notice as possible is requested.
5. Please return this form as soon as possible to Sis. Glenda Young or Sis. Mildred Washington You may e-mail an electronic version of this form to info@imanichurch.com or mail to 11800 Mustang Chase, Austin, TX 78727.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

or Baptized Parent of Child to be Baptized _____ Date _____

BAPTISM

Christian baptism is rooted in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, in his death and in his resurrection. It is incorporation in to Christ, who is the crucified and risen Lord; it is entry into the New Covenant between God and God's people. Baptism is a gift of God, and is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. St Matthew records that the risen Lord, when sending his disciples into the world, commanded them to baptize (Matt. 28:18-20). The universal practice of baptism is attested in the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, and today continue in practice as a commitment to the Lord who bestows grace upon his people. Baptism requires the renunciation of evil, an affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ and application of water.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Baptism is the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the one baptized with Christ and with his people. The New Testament and the liturgy of the Church unfold the meaning of baptism in various images which express the riches of Christ and the gifts of his salvation. These images are linked with the symbolic uses of water in the Old Testament. Baptism is participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12); a washing away of sin (1 Cor. 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Eph. 5:14); a reclothing in Christ (Gal. 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (1 Peter 3:20-21); an exodus from bondage (1 Cor. 10:1-2) and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of sex or race or social status are transcended (Gal. 3:27-28; 1 Cor. 12:13). Avoid confusing the many images but the reality is one.

Participation in Christ's Death and Resurrection

Baptism means participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus went down into the river Jordan and was baptized in solidarity with sinners fulfil all righteousness (Matt. 3:15). This baptism led Jesus along the way of the Suffering Servant, made manifest in his sufferings, death and resurrection (Mark 10:38-40, 45). By baptism, Christians are immersed in the liberating death of Christ where their sins are buried, where the "old Adam" is crucified with Christ, and where the power of sin is broken. Thus those baptized are no longer slaves to sin, but free. Fully identified with the death of Christ, they are buried with him and are raised here and now to a new life in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, confident that they will also ultimately be one with him in a resurrection like his (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:13, 3:1; Eph. 2:5-6).

The baptism which makes Christians partakers of the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection implies confession of sin and conversion of heart. The baptism administered by John was itself a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4). The New Testament underlines the ethical implications of baptism by representing it as an ablution which washes the body with pure water, a cleansing of the heart of all sin, and an act of justification (Heb 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11). Thus the baptized are pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ, and their baptismal experience allows a new ethical orientation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

When the expressions "infant baptism" and "believers' baptism" are used, it is necessary to keep in mind that the real distinction is between those who baptize people at any age and those who baptize only those able to make a confession of faith for themselves. The differences between infant and believers' baptism become less sharp when it is recognized that both forms of baptism embody God's own initiative in Christ and express a response of faith made within the believing community.

The practice of infant baptism emphasizes the corporate faith and the faith which the child shares with its parents. Parents must be believers in Jesus Christ and must have already been baptized and taken their own personal vow renouncing sin, and affirming their personal belief in Jesus Christ as savior. The infant is born into a broken world and shares in its brokenness. Through baptism, the promise and claim of the Gospel are laid upon the child. The personal faith of the recipient of baptism and faithful participation in the life of the Church are essential for the full fruit of baptism. The practice of believers' baptism emphasizes the explicit confession of the person who responds to the grace of God in and through the community of faith and who seeks baptism. Both infant and believers baptism require a similar and responsible attitude towards Christian nurture. Infant Baptism is followed by later profession of faith.

Towards Mutual Recognition of Baptism

Churches are increasingly recognizing one another church's baptism as the one baptism into Christ when Jesus Christ has been confessed as Lord by the candidate or, in the case of infant baptism, when confession has been made by the church (parents, guardians, godparents and congregation) and affirmed later by personal faith and commitment. Mutual recognition of baptism is acknowledged as an important sign and means of expressing the baptismal unity given in Christ. It is a fact that children are placed under the protection of God's grace, and therefore we guard against the practice of apparently indiscriminate baptism and take more seriously our responsibility for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ.

Baptism is administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Baptism** is normally administered by an ordained minister, because the ordained minister is the only ones authorized to baptize. Since baptism is intimately connected with the corporate life and worship of the Church, it should normally be administered during public worship, so that the members of the congregation may be reminded of their own baptism, may commit to teach and share a role in the nurture of the Baptized person to grow in Christian faith in Jesus, and welcome them into the faith fellowship.