

THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

Exerpts taken from the United Church of Canada Book of Services: Celebrate God's Presence.

Baptismal Hymns in Voices United 441-455

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Statement of Purpose

- Sisters and Brothers, let us celebrate God's gift of grace given to us in the sacrament of baptism.

There is one body and one Spirit; we have one hope in Christ.

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, Creator of us all.

**Out of the water of baptism we rise with new life,
forgiven, renewed, and one with Christ, members of Christ's body.**

Ephesians 4:4-6

- As we come to this font of living water, let us recall the meaning of baptism.

For just as the body is one and has many members,

and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—
and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it. 1Corinthians 12:12-13,27

- Hear this record of Jesus' radical concern for welcoming children:

People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might bless them;

and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it."

And Jesus took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16

- One of the following passages may be read:

Genesis 1:1-10	The waters of creation
Genesis 9:8-17	The rainbow covenant
Exodus 14:21-31	The waters of deliverance
Psalms 46	Water as both life-threatening and life-giving
Ezekiel 47:1-14	Water from God to renew the land
Isaiah 49:15-16	I will never forget you, my people
Matthew 28:18-20	The risen Christ sends disciples to baptize
John 3:5	New birth by water and the Spirit
John 4:7-15	The living water
Romans 6:3-4	Baptism into Christ's death and resurrection
I Corinthians 10:1-4	Waters of deliverance and sustenance
I Corinthians 12:4-13	The unity of the body in baptism
Titus 3:4-5	Renewal in the Spirit
I Peter 3:18-21	Salvation through the waters of baptism

Presentation of Candidates

On behalf of the congregation of *N. United Church*, I present *N.*, [and *N.*], Son/daughter of *N.* for initiation into the body of Christ through baptism.

Profession of Faith and Promises

A. Profession of faith in the Triune God

- Do you believe in one God: Creator, Christ and Spirit? **I do.**
- Do you believe in God, who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, and who works in us and others by the Spirit? **I do.**

B. Commitment to Seek Justice and Resist Evil

- Desiring the freedom of new life in Christ, do you seek to resist evil, and to live in love and justice? **I will.**
- Will you follow in the way of Jesus Christ, resisting oppression and evil, seeking justice, and witnessing to God's love for all creation? **I will.**

C. Commitment to Follow the Way of Jesus-Christ

- Will you proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, in your words and actions? **I will.**
- Will you follow the way of Jesus Christ? **I will.**

D. Commitment to the Mission and Ministry of the Church

- Will you support the life and work of Christ's Church? **I will.**
- Will you join with your brothers and sisters in this community of faith to celebrate God's presence, live with respect in creation, and love and serve others? **I will.**

E. Commitment of Parent(s) or Sponsor(s)

In baptism, N. (and N.) mark(s) an important step in his/her/their journey of faith.

- Will you care for *him/her/them*, and help *him/her/them* to take *his/her/their* place within the mission and witness of Christ's Church? **I will.**
- Will you share your faith with *N. (and N.)*, growing with *him/her/them* in faith, hope, and love? **I will.**

F. Commitment of Godparents

- Will you grow in faith with this child, trusting that, "you are not alone, you live in God's world"? **I will.**
- Recognizing that many persons nurture and influence the life of a child, will you support *N./ these children and his/their parent(s)* as they grow in faith? **I will.**

Congregational Commitment

- Let us pledge to these persons our support and care.

As a baptized and baptizing people, we commit ourselves to support and uphold you within the community of faith.

May God grant us all the grace to live out our baptism.

Amen.

- As *N. United Church*, do you commit yourselves to support and nurture these persons within a community which worships God, loves and serves others, seeks justice, and resists evil? **We do.**

Affirmation of Faith

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Pouring of Water

• Gracious and Holy God, we bless you for the gift of life, and, within it, the gift of water. Over its unshaped promise your Spirit hovered at creation. By water, comes the growth of the earth. Through water, you led the children of Israel to freedom. In the waters of the Jordan your Child Jesus was baptized. Now may your Spirit be upon us and what we do, that this water may be a sign for all of new life in Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

• As the water is poured, we recall Isaiah's promise: "waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert"; Ezekiel's declaration: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean"; the Psalmist's testimony: "Beside the still waters, God leads me"; and Jesus' words: "whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." May God's Spirit be upon us and these waters of daily use, which we now use to baptize and to welcome. Isaiah 35:6, Ezekiel 36:25, Psalm 23:2, Matt. 10:42

The Act of Baptism:

Baptism in the Name of the Triune God

N.,

I baptize you, *or* in the name of the Father,
we baptize you, *or* and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
You are baptized,

Blessing

- May the blessing of the one God, Mother and Father of us all, be with you today and always. **Amen.**
- May the blessing of God, Source of Love, Jesus Christ, Love incarnate, and the Holy Spirit, Love's power, be with you today and always. **Amen.**
- May the blessing of the God of Sarah and Hagar, as of Abraham, the blessing of the Son, born of the woman Mary, and the blessing of the Spirit, who broods over us as a mother her children, be with you today and always. **Amen.**

Marking with the Sign of the Cross

N., child of God, from this day forward,
you bear the sign of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Laying On of Hands

- *N.*, may the Holy Spirit, Love's power, guide you, inspire you, and work within you, all the days of your life. **Amen.**
- The Holy Spirit be upon you and within you, *N.*, child of God, disciple of Christ, member of the Church. **Amen.**

Other Symbolic Actions:

Lighting of a Candle

Presentation of a Bible

Clothing in a New Garment or Baptismal Stole

Declaration and Congregational Welcome and Blessing

- Into the household of faith, we welcome you with joy and thanksgiving.

We are members of the Body of Christ.

We are inheritors of God's promise.

In the name of Christ, we welcome you.

- There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism:

By one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body.

We are children of the one God,

Mother and Father of us all.

We welcome you into the community of faith.

- VU 965 The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. **Amen**
- VU 454 May God who creates you give you light; may God who sustains you make you wise; may God who protects you give you joy, may God who surrounds you give you peace.