



GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)
1624 E. Euclid Ave. | Mount Prospect, IL 60058
847-824-7408 | www.grace-mtprospect.org

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF *Baptism*

Baptism is one of two sacraments used by the Lutheran church as a means to communicate God's grace. Baptism assures and communion nurtures God's promise of love. We believe that the rite of baptism was commanded by our Lord and is a gift to all believers.

Our understanding of baptism is guided by biblical Scripture, writings of the Lutheran Confessions, and the shared practices of the universal Christian church.

By baptism God adopts us as God's children. We baptize both infants and adults as a sign that it is God who acts in the sacrament. However, children need to come to an understanding and acceptance of this gift through the teaching and modeling of parents and other believers.

We receive the promise of God's love through water and the word of Scripture. Water washes us clean from our human sinfulness, and the Bible assures us that we are saved by Jesus' death and resurrection alone. We are asked to simply accept that gift of grace in faith.

Baptism is not a life insurance. In that case we would simply go through a ritual and never have to worry about anything. And yet, human life is filled with failures and challenges. God will be with us but in order to experience God's help we need to be in relationship with God.

By baptism we become part of the community of the church. Therefore, baptisms usually take place within the main worship service of the congregation. We celebrate the visible sign of God's goodness together and take on responsibility for loving and supporting one another.

The sacrament gives us the guarantee of God's forgiveness and eternal life with God. The rite is used only once in a person's life. The hope of trust in God's promises needs to be reaffirmed continually through worship, study, fellowship, service and outreach to others.

Baptism is therefore not a one-time event for a name-giving Christening. To baptize means to be immersed in water, and to die in order to rise to a new life. The sacrament is the beginning of a life-long relationship with God which calls us to follow the teaching and life of Jesus.

The Spirit of God given at baptism calls us, gathers us and makes us holy. As baptized followers of Jesus we discover our purpose on earth, experience meaning in life now, and trust in the hope for eternity. Our response to this gracious gift is to faithfully love God and our neighbor.

Share the gift of life with God with a child, and explore new life as a follower of Jesus for yourself, or invite someone to discover being part of a community of faith.

To Tell the Good News of Jesus and Touch People with his Love.