



Congratulations!

We rejoice with you at the birth of this child. What a gift from God! Speaking a gift...baptism is the greatest gift. Christian baptism is clearly commanded by Jesus Christ for all of God's people from infants to the aged. (Mt. 28:19, Acts 2:38, Jn. 3:5-6, Acts 2:38-39, Mk. 16:13-15) In and through baptism God grants forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16), provides spiritual regeneration (Titus 3:4-5) and gives eternal salvation (Mk 16:16, 1 Pt. 3:21). Because it is commanded by Christ, and through it God does these marvelous things, Christian parents want to bring their children to the Lord through Baptism as soon as possible.

When Christian parents bring their child to be baptized, they are saying that they acknowledge that their child - like themselves - is born in sin and therefore deserves the love and forgiveness that God offers to all mankind (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:3), of the command of Jesus to baptize "all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20), and of the promise that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Therefore, they bring their child to be baptized so that in can receive the needed salvation that God offers through this means of grace (1 Peter 3:21).



What about Sponsors?

The idea of sponsors arose when Christians were being persecuted for their faith. Christian parents knew that they might not live long enough to see their children raised, and therefore they sought out concerned and confessing Christians to stand by, “just in case.” They wanted their child to be brought up as a Christian and not to revert to paganism. Therefore they looked, as parents should today, for:

1. Concerned people - people who cared about children and their continuing spiritual growth.
2. Confessing people - people who “stood up for their faith” and were not just members in name only.
3. Faithful people - people who believed in the Sacrament of Baptism and placed the relationship of faith in Christ Jesus above all other values providing the child with the example of a life of faithfulness in Christ and His Church.
4. Mature people - physically and spiritually mature people who could “parent” a child through the early stages of life.
5. Able people - people who could reasonably be expected to be alive during the child's adolescent years and be physically capable of carrying out the duties of a sponsor.

As you choose the sponsors for your child, remember too that you are asking someone -

1. To be a witness (a) to the fact of your child's Baptism (b) to state publicly that by Baptism your child obtains and possesses the saving faith in the one true God and renounces the devil.
2. To pray for your child;
3. To remind your child periodically of his baptism; and

4. To say “yes” to the following question asked by the Pastor during the service:

P: From ancient times the Church has observed the custom of appointing sponsors for baptismal candidates and catechumens. [In the Evangelical Lutheran Church sponsors are to confess the faith expressed in the Apostles' Creed and taught in the Small Catechism.] They are, whenever possible, to witness the Baptism of those they sponsor. They are to pray for them, support them in their ongoing instruction and nurture in the Christian faith,

and encourage them toward the faithful reception of the Lord's Supper. They are at all times to be examples to them of the holy life of faith in Christ and love for the neighbor.

The pastor addresses the sponsors.

P Is it your intention to serve [name(s) of candidate(s)] as sponsors in the Christian faith?

R Yes, with the help of God.

P God enable you [both] to will and to do this faithful and loving work and with His grace fulfill what we are unable to do. C Amen.

What is the difference between a “sponsor” and a “witness?”

Sponsors (sometimes referred to as “Godparents”) are a person or persons selected by the parents to testify to the child or others that the child has received a proper baptism; to assist in the spiritual education of the child (particularly if the child should lose his or her parents); and to pray for the child. It is an honor and a privilege to be chosen as a sponsor and a great responsibility. In order to carry out the responsibility with a clear conscience, the sponsor should be of the same religious convictions as the parents. For this reason we ask that you limit your choice of sponsors to Lutheran Christians with whom we are in church fellowship -and of course who are active and regular in their church membership.

We would differentiate between sponsors and witnesses by saying a witness’ basic responsibility is to testify to the fact that the child received a proper baptism. Therefore, we do not ask the witness to “bring the child up in the true knowledge and worship of God” since there may be disagreement on just what that is, nor do we ask the witness to instruct “the child to come to the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood” since some Christians do not believe that Christ is really present in the Lord’s Supper. Therefore, there is no conscience conflict for the sincere Christian of another denomination. We ask, however, that you limit your choice of witnesses to sincere practicing Christians who do not have scruples against infant and child baptism. Those who are delinquents, non-Christians, etc., are not suitable witnesses for the baptism of your child.

Are sponsors or witnesses absolutely necessary?

No! Sponsors and witnesses are a custom of the church, not a requirement of God. The congregation, and particularly the Elders of the congregation, stand ready to testify and to assist the parents as required.

Must a person be present to be a sponsor?

It is preferable, but not absolutely necessary. If a person meets the requirements, understands the responsibility, and states their willingness, they can be recorded as a sponsor even if time and distance prevent their presence.

INFORMATION FOR BAPTISM

First _____

Middle _____

Last _____

Born Where: _____

Birth Date: _____

Current Address: _____

Phone Number: Home Cell Work _____

PARENTS INFORMATION:

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Mother's Maiden Name: _____

SPONSORS

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

WITNESSES

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

Name _____

Church Affiliation _____

DATE & TIME OF BAPTISM: _____