

Baptism Policy

As Immanuel Lutheran Church of Swea City, Iowa, we affirm that baptism is something we are commanded to do by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20).

In keeping with the Lutheran understanding of Scripture passages such as Acts 16:15, Luke 19:9, Matthew 19:29 and others which refer to entire households and families being saved and baptized, we affirm and celebrate baptism at any age, from infants to adults. From this understanding and practice, we recognize Baptism as a Sacrament of the church and strive to make the primary focus the celebration the gift of faith being given to the one being baptized.

In the water of baptism, water that is set in God's command and joined to his Word, we believe there is forgiveness of sin and we are raised to a new life in Christ with our old self passing away (Romans 6:4, Titus 3:5-8).

In light of this foundation, we affirm the following policies concerning those who wish for their children or themselves to be baptized.

1. We desire that, whenever possibly, the sacrament be celebrated in the context of the larger faith community during a regular Sunday service. If this is not possible or is a barrier to any person receiving baptism, arrangements for a smaller, private Baptism can be made.
2. In recognition of the role of Pastor to publically proclaim the Word of God to the gathered congregation, a recognized pastor of the congregation shall perform any Baptisms held at Immanuel Lutheran Church. If the congregation is without a designated pastor at the time of the Baptism, the church council may arrange for another pastor who affirms the theology of Baptism as taught in Luther's Small Catechism, the President of the council, or the Vice President of the council shall perform the Baptism.
3. So that all involved in the Baptism understand what they are asking of the Church and the promises they are making to the Lord, at least one meeting with Pastor (or other performing the baptism as noted above) shall be conducted prior to the date of the Baptism being finalized. Those involved with this meeting should include:
 - a. The one being baptized if they are old enough to ask questions and have some understanding of what is happening.
 - b. The parents or legal guardians of the one being baptized, especially in the case of minor children.
 - c. The Baptismal sponsors if possible. If not possible due to distance or scheduling conflicts, the pastor should connect with them prior to the Baptism at a separate time.
4. During the pre-Baptism meeting, the pastor will go over the following key points with those gathered:
 - a. The basic theology and teaching of Baptism in the Lutheran church.
 - b. The language of the Baptismal liturgy to be used.
 - c. The roles of the parents/legal guardians and sponsors during the Baptism.
 - d. The commitments made to God by the parents/legal guardians (if a minor child) the one being baptized (if an adult) and the sponsors.
 - e. The commitment of the congregation gathered to support the newly baptized.
5. In honor of the unique role that parents play in the faith formation of their children, no infants or young children shall be baptized at Immanuel Lutheran Church without their parent/legal

guardian's knowledge and consent. If a parent wishes for their child to be baptized but does not wish to participate in the Baptism, the pastor will work with the family so that the child shall not be deprived of the chance to experience God's Grace through Baptism. Teenagers seeking baptism will be strongly encouraged to have their parent's permission, support, and involvement but, having reached a maturity level which enables them to make such decisions for themselves, it shall not be required.

6. In recognition that all who are baptized are members of the royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) and therefore ministers called to do the work of Christ (1 Corinthians 4:1), we do recognize as legitimate any Christian baptism performed by a lay person in times of emergency as well as any Christian baptism performed within another Christian tradition.
7. Finally, desiring that all should be part of the family of God and experience God's great grace, mercy, and forgiveness, no person seeking the sacrament of Baptism for themselves or their child shall be turned away regardless of their membership or prior participation in the faith community of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Swea City.