

		Shiloh UCC	Issued: 9/2011 Revised: 7/2012
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SHILOH BAPTISM POLICY

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I. UCC Baptism as a Sacrament

In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, the United Church of Christ recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. (From the Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ)

(Jesus said) All authority in heaven and on earth as been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28: 18-20)

In the United Church of Christ, we understand that the sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God. The physical act of being baptized is symbolic of the spiritual act of God that has already taken place. Baptism marks the beginning of a new life of discipleship in response to this gift of God's grace.

Through baptism a person is acknowledged and welcomed into the universal church, the body of Christ, where God is able to bring forth in us the power of forgiveness, the renewal of the spirit, and the knowledge of the call to be God's people always.

The promises that are made in the sacrament of baptism form a three-way covenant...between the one being baptized, God, and the faith community. As such, baptism is then a community celebration in which we recognize not only the commitment of the one being baptized, but also the commitment of the faith community as a whole.

II. Consideration of Baptism at Shiloh UCC

1. The sacrament of baptism is, by action and definition, an incorporation of the one being baptized into the body of Christ through a particular faith community. Therefore, those who wish to be baptized (or their children) will already be active in Shiloh United Church of Christ, regularly attending worship and other activities and offering financial and physical support for the work of the church.

2. Those wishing to be baptized (or parents of children to be baptized) should schedule a time to meet with the senior pastor. The purpose of this meeting will be to have a conversation about what baptism is and what it means to have a personal life of faith. At this time, the pastor will review with the candidate (or parents) the promises that will be made.
3. The United Church of Christ recognizes infant baptism, as well as the baptism of children and adults. The designation of godparents (for children) or sponsors (for older children and adults) is encouraged but not required. The purpose of godparents and sponsors is to be a resource for the person being baptized as they continue to grow in faith.
4. The United Church of Christ recognizes baptism as a once and for all time act, and accepts as valid baptisms done by other Christian denominations. Therefore, if someone has been baptized, there is no need to be baptized again. Opportunities to reaffirm the baptismal promises can be arranged if so desired. A candidate who is not sure if they have been baptized or not can be baptized by adding the words “if they have not already been baptized” into the service.

III. Scheduling and Special Requests

1. In recognition that baptism is a covenant with a celebration of the faith community, every effort will be made to celebrate the baptism during a regular service of worship. There may be times when this is not possible (for example: In a medical emergency, or if some relatives who desire to be present are homebound). In those situations, church members representing the congregation may be asked to participate. Please speak with the pastor about making special arrangements.
2. There may be times when a member of another congregation would request being baptized in our church (for example: grandchildren visiting from out of town, or when several generations of family members have been baptized here). In that situation the pastor will determine that the one being baptized is currently active in a faith community in their hometown. The congregation of Shiloh would then stand in proxy for the other congregation, making promises on their behalf.