

## **POLICY ON BAPTISM**

(Approved April 2007 amended 2025)

Parents desiring baptism for their children or adults desiring baptism for themselves should contact the minister at the earliest opportunity. This will allow for decisions to be made by the Council/Session of St. Paul's or Wallace.

Baptism will normally occur at a service of public worship in the St. Paul's or Wallace congregation. If there are circumstances, such as illness, which make regular worship time inadvisable, members of the congregation will accompany the minister to the home, hospital or other location for the Service of Baptism.

Ideally, the Council/Session of St. Paul's or Wallace will have agreed to the baptism before it takes place. In the case of the baptism of a person in danger of death, the minister will respond and the Council/Session will be notified at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the Manual. We baptize persons whose life is in danger, not because we believe that persons are loved any less by God if they are not baptized, but in order to provide loving pastoral care to the person and family.

When a request for baptism comes from a family not connected with the United Church of Canada or any other church, every effort will be made to connect that family to the St. Paul's or Wallace congregation.

Adult candidates and parents who have requested baptism for their children will be instructed by the minister, or any others that the Council/Session may determine, about the nature of baptism and the expectations that accompany the Sacrament. This could take the form of a group orientation session or individual instruction. Members of the congregation will be involved in the preparation.

Members of the congregation will also be involved in the subsequent Service of Baptism. Dates for a Service of Baptism are to be chosen in consultation with the family, the Council/Session and the minister.

Persons baptized in the St. Paul's or Wallace congregation, whether adults or children, will receive pastoral care as well as encouragement to remain connected to the congregation. The congregation will support the parents of baptized children, including those baptized elsewhere, through Christian Education programs, including Sunday School and regular worship, and through prayer, both public and private.

At an appropriate age, young people will be encouraged to consider the claim of the Christian church on their lives, to the end that they might seek baptism for themselves, or the Renewal of Baptismal Faith (Confirmation).

This policy will be reviewed by the Council.