# Old First Presbyterian Church Baptism Policy

The Sacrament of Baptism is God’s act of binding the promises of faith upon those seeking to live the Christian life and those seeking to nurture a child in the Christian life. The Sacrament of Baptism is the sign and seal of God’s grace and our response to that grace. It is the foundational recognition of Christian commitment and is an important signpost along a lifelong journey of faith.

Baptism is a Holy Sacrament and serious commitment involving public vows before God and the Christian family of faith. Some of these vows indicate the desire of families to raise one another in the way of Christian faith and others indicate the commitment of the congregation to be part of your faith journey. As a result, the Session strongly believes that the Sacrament of Baptism is not to be undertaken casually and therefore, necessitates a thorough understanding of the meaning and responsibilities involved in baptism.

To rightly administer this Sacrament is to enter into a learning process with the individual seeking baptism, or the parents of the child to be baptized, along with the congregation sharing in this momentous occasion. Those seeking baptism for themselves or their children must demonstrate an intention to participate regularly and responsibly in the life of the Church and to provide for the Christian nurture of children in the case of infant or child baptism.

Those being baptized, or at least one of the parents of an infant or child being baptized at Old First will ordinarily be active members or regular participants of this or another Christian congregation, except at the discretion of the Session and the Pastor. In keeping with the importance of baptism in the faith of all believers, and in accordance with the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order, the Session of Old First Church, Huntington, approves this policy on Baptism

# Steps Towards Baptism

Church Membership is not required for baptism, but at least one parent must be baptized. All baptisms must be approved by the Session.

Call the church office or complete the Baptism Request Form and return it to the office to begin the process. In order to allow for adequate time for the preparation class discussed below and for the Session to review the baptism request at its monthly meeting, the form must be received ***at least ten weeks before the earliest desired baptism date.*** Baptisms are typically not scheduled on the first Sunday of the month.

Attend the Baptism Preparation Class

* The Pastor and Session MUST ensure those being baptized or those exercising parental responsibility for those being baptized are acquainted with the significance of baptism. The Pastor and Session will also ensure that the congregation understands its responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in Christian life.
* Prior to your child’s baptism, you are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Class in which the meaning of baptism is explored. Participation in this class cannot be waived. The Pastor will determine how many sessions will be needed, and only after completion will the Pastor make a recommendation to Session.
* The Baptism Preparation Class is held upon request. Led by our Pastor and including participation from Elders and Deacons, the Baptism Preparation Class is also an opportunity to get to know other members of the church.

# On the Day of the Baptism

Please arrive thirty (30) minutes before worship to meet with the Pastor. Appropriate seating will be reserved for you and your family and friends.

Please communicate to any guests that photography is allowed, but those taking photographs are to remain seated and refrain from using flash photography.

There are no costs, fees, or honoraria for a baptism. However, financial gifts to Old First are appropriate as part of your ongoing financial support of the church.

# After the Baptism

Be sure to attend the coffee hour directly after the service so that the congregation can welcome the newly baptized into the family of the church.

# Photography and Videotaping

As baptism is a sacrament of the church and conducted during a service of worship, no flash photography shall be allowed.

Those seeking to unobtrusively record the event on film may do so; however, the church may also provide a video of the baptism upon request

# Requests from Extended Family

Baptism requests from extended family of the congregation are welcome and shall be subject to the same policy and procedures as outlined above.

# Summary of Baptism Guidelines

In seeking to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism at the Old First Presbyterian Church, Huntington, individuals will …

1. Demonstrate a serious commitment for themselves, or for their children, to practice their faith through active engagement with a Christian community.
2. Complete the Baptism Preparation Class either in person or via a face-to-face electronic meeting. This is a requirement of the Session that cannot be waived.
3. No date for baptism shall be set until the Baptism Preparation Class has been completed and a recommendation by the Pastor has been approved by the Session. (*Please note that the Session meets only once each month and completion of the Baptism Preparation Class should correspond with appropriate time for your baptism request to be reviewed and approved.)*
4. Demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of the vows and commitments made in baptism.
5. Commit to responding to the vows made in baptism with regular and responsible participation in the life of the church.
6. Attend the regular service of worship during which the baptism is to be held. *(Remember that all baptisms are conducted during a regular service of worship, unless otherwise approved by the Pastor and the Session under extenuating circumstances.)*

*Baptism Request Form*

*We are delighted you have chosen to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism and share the journey of faith with your church family at Old First.*

*Old First Presbyterian Church*

125 Main St. Huntington NY 11743

Phone#: 631-427-2101

Email: oldfirstoffice@gmail.com

 Website: oldfirstchurchhuntington.org

Baptism Recipients’ Full Name:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Gender: \_

Address:

Phone#: Email Contact:

Please select up to three preferred dates for Baptism (available ***Sundays only*** during worship):

\*Please return completed applications in print or via email to the church office.

\*Completed application is **required** to obtain Session approval for all baptisms.

Parent or Guardian Information (for Infant or Child Baptisms)

Father’s Full Name: Baptized? Y/N Address: Phone #: Email: Mother’s Full Name: Baptized? Y/N Address (if different): Phone #: Email:

Names of Godparents (if any): Please indicate whether or not Godparents will be present for baptism

Please take time to consider your answers to the following questions:

Why do you want your child to be baptized?

What commitments are you making in choosing baptism?

What commitments do you expect from Old First?

How do you plan to carry out these commitments: