

THE COVENANT OF BAPTISM
KNOX UNITED CHURCH
May 2014

“Baptism celebrates God’s initiative and our response. It is God’s “Yes” to us, and our “Yes” to God. It is a sign of the Divine-Human covenant. Baptism flows from God’s unmerited grace and pours out in lives of gratitude and commitment. An initiation into the Church, the Body of Christ, it is an act of welcoming, blessing, and belonging.

The covenant of Baptism celebrates the fullness of God’s grace throughout the story of salvation: in creation and in exodus, in wilderness and in exile, in birth and in death. In his baptism, Jesus received the Holy Spirit and was declared God’s beloved, he opened himself to repentance and forgiveness, and marked a new beginning in his ministry. In our baptism, we are similarly claimed, called, and commissioned.”

Celebrate God’s Presence, pg. 321

“As a faith community we are committed to sharing God’s love and grace and to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship, study, work, action and fellowship.

As the people of Knox United Church we aim to provide a safe, nurturing environment where we accept and welcome all into the life and ministry of the Knox family: persons of any age, colour, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, marital status, social or economic circumstance.

We are dedicated to being good stewards of God’s world, working and living towards justice and freedom for all of God’s people.”

Knox Mission Statement

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- a. Baptism is a rite of initiation for infants, children and adults of any age, into the community of the Christian church.
- b. Baptism normally takes place in the candidate’s home congregation during a regular worship service, as the congregation also play a role in the promises made.
- c. Faith, not only an individual experience, is shared and affirmed in a community of believers.
- d. Parents of children who are too young to make and keep promises on their own will need to make promises on their child’s behalf. Later in life, they may express their own faith in Jesus Christ through the process of Confirmation.
- e. Water is the symbol of cleansing and of new life.
- f. Baptism is a celebratory action, portraying the unconditional love of God for these baptized persons.

WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT:

- a. Baptism should be regarded merely as a social event.
- b. Baptism is an essential condition for salvation.
- c. Baptism is to satisfy the wishes of others (i.e. grandparents) rather than the parents or guardians of the individual.
- d. Those who are not baptized are in disfavor with God in any way.

WE DO:

- a. **Baptize children** after one or both parents have met with the Minister and have participated in conversation concerning:
 - i. The meaning and process of Baptism as outlined in the Knox Baptismal Brochure.
 - ii. Their reasons for baptism.
 - iii. Their expectations and their responsibilities.
 - iv. Their commitment to the baptismal candidate: to lead by example, to pray, and to expose the child to Christian teachings.
 - v. Their commitment to the church; to follow through the promises made, to be an ongoing part of the Christian Development Programs within a church, and to share, as they are able, their time, talents and treasures.
- b. **Baptize adults**, at their request, after having met with the Minister and having participated in conversation concerning:
 - i. The meaning and process of Baptism, the Christian faith and the Church.
 - ii. Their reasons for baptism.
 - iii. Their expectations and responsibilities.
 - iv. Their commitment to the church; to be part of the life and work of a congregation, and to follow through on the promises that he/she will make.
- c. As a church, offer to **support** the individual through prayer, example, constant love, Christian teaching and fellowship.
- d. Consider each **request** for baptism individually.
- e. Request **approval** of candidates through the Worship Committee to the Council of Knox United Church.
- f. Ask that on the day of baptism, the **certificate** on behalf of the congregation be given by a member of the Worship Committee and/or a member of Knox Council.
- g. Ask that in the event of the baptism of a child whose parent(s) are not present members of Knox United Church, **a notice be provided to the home church** of the parent(s) regarding the baptism. If the parent(s) are not currently active in a worshipping community, we encourage and support them in **finding an accessible faith community**.