

### ***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM***

In the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Baptism is an act of the whole church celebrated during a regular Sunday worship service. Baptism proclaims God's grace and love for us. In Baptism, God claims us and marks us as God's own. Baptism signifies our new identity as members of the Body of Christ, the church. Through the waters of baptism, we participate in Christ's death and resurrection by which we are freed from all that separates us from God and we are raised to new life.

No matter the age at which you are baptized, baptism celebrates the start of a new life in Christ. Parents bring their child for baptism on the basis of their own faith, with the hope that the child will grow in faith and love and serve God.

When we present babies for baptism, we do so because we believe they already belong to Jesus, and therefore should be baptized as a symbol of their membership in the family of God. The parents promise to be a faithful member of the congregation, sharing in its worship and ministry through their prayers and gifts, their study and service, so as to fulfill their calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The congregation joins the parent(s) in their vows to raise the child in the church and promises to guide and nurture by word the child by word and deed with love and prayer encouraging the child to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of the church.

All active members of the congregation may present their child for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

### ***A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND WELCOME***

Some families are not yet ready to commit to raising the child in their own faith but would like to offer thanksgiving to God for the gift of their child and celebrate their welcome addition to the family. A service of thanksgiving and welcome can be conducted in the church or in another setting.

The parent(s) need not be a member of the congregation making regular contributions to the life and ministry of the church. In such instances, a suggested donation in the child's honor of \$300 is expected.

### ***NURTURING THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH***

All children and youth, baptized or not, are invited to attend church. We welcome them with open hearts and open arms. We have a fully staffed nursery for the littlest ones. We know children love to wiggle and squirm and so we anticipate they will do so in God's house. May we suggest that you sit near the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on. Quietly, explain to them the parts of the service. Sing the songs, pray and voice the responses. Children learn best by mimicking the adults around them. If you feel you need to leave the service with your child, feel free to do so.

All children, baptized or not, are encouraged to grow in their faith through their attendance in Sunday School. From September to June, Sunday School is held Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. for children ages 3-through 12th grade. Many parents choose to attend Adult Education during that same hour.

All children, baptized or not, are invited to attend one of our age-appropriate Youth Group for fun and Christian fellowship. Kids Club for children K-4th grade and B.I.G (Believers in God) for 5th-7th graders meet monthly. CHAOS, our high school youth group meets every other Sunday night.



*The Sacrament of Holy Baptism  
and other  
Services of Welcoming a Child  
at  
First Presbyterian Church of Freehold*

118 West Main Street  
Freehold, New Jersey 07728

