

Baptisms at SPUMC

Congratulations! We are *thrilled* that your child will be baptized into the family of God. In these extraordinary times, we are taking several precautions to ensure that your family is safe during this special celebration. This document outlines health and safety measures, as well as several options for scheduling baptisms. If you have any questions, contact Beth Frank at bfrank@severnaparkumc.org.

For ALL Baptisms:

- **We require all people to follow basic health & safety protocols.** As soon as you leave your vehicle, please ensure that all persons over the age of 2 have a fabric face mask covering their mouth and nose. All people must remain masked and distanced (6+ feet) from people who are not from their household. For babies being baptized, a parent will hold the child for the duration of the baptism. The pastor will remain masked (using a lapel microphone to be heard), and will administer water using a shell, at arms-length distance, to minimize contact with the child.
- **Protocols around health & safety continue to change** as we seek to follow the guidance of local governments and our bishop. Thank you for your understanding, if we need to alter the limitations on how many people are able to attend your child's baptism!
- **Scheduling will be based upon availability** of the people needed to conduct your child's baptism. The church will arrange for the following clergy (1-2 people) and a tech team (up to 2-3 people) to be present, and we ask for your patience as we seek to schedule baptisms at a time when all are available:
- **Baptism is a part of the life of our congregation**, and so all baptisms will take place within a service of worship.
- **The number of loved ones who may attend any particular service is limited**, and so we encourage you to keep this in mind as you choose when and where to hold your child's baptism.
- **If you have not done so already, we ask that you attend a baptism class or meet with a pastor prior to scheduling your child's baptism.** This provides you an opportunity to learn about our church's beliefs regarding baptism, and give you the chance to ask any questions you may have. This will be held via Zoom, and material will be provided for you to read in advance.
- **Participate in worship for at least 4 weeks leading up to your child's baptism.** This ensures that you are familiar with our community, and confident that we are the right congregation to partner with you in helping your child to claim their faith. This may be via Facebook Live or at an in person service.

There are 2 options for scheduling a baptism:

Outdoors, LIVE during Sunday morning worship

- **Scheduling:** Our in-person worship services are held outdoors on the church parking lot from 9–10am every Sunday morning. Baptisms being conducted during the service will take place in the first half of that hour. In the event of rain, outdoor services are moved indoors to the Fellowship Hall. If you are not comfortable holding your child's baptism indoors, we would be happy to arrange a rain date. You can read more about these services at <https://severnaparkumc.org/outdoor>
- **Who Can Come:** In addition to the person being baptized, up to 25 loved ones may be present. Anyone attending the baptism must register to attend the worship service. Worship service attendance is currently limited to a total of 100 worshippers, so register early!

In the Sanctuary, LIVE during Sunday morning worship

- **Scheduling:** Beginning April 11, our weekly online worship service is live streamed from the Sanctuary from 10:30–11:30am every Sunday. Baptisms being conducted during the service will take place in the first half of that hour. Your family will wait in the lobby outside the sanctuary until just before the baptism, and then you will exit the sanctuary after the baptism is complete. This will limit your exposure to the team of people producing the online worship service.
- **Who Can Come:** In addition to the person being baptized, their parents, siblings, grandparents, and up to 2 godparents/sponsors may be present.

**If COVID numbers increase,
and in-person Sunday worship is cancelled,
then a third option will be available:**

Outdoors, RECORDED and played during online Sunday worship

- **Scheduling:** Should families wish to have their child baptized outside, these services will be scheduled based on the availability of clergy and other personnel. Outdoor baptisms may take place in the Chapel in the Woods (outside the SPUMC building), where there are a number of wooden benches for the congregation to gather.
- **Who Can Come:** In addition to the person being baptized, up to 25 loved ones may be present. Please provide a list of attendees to the presiding pastor, so the church has this information for contact tracing purposes.