

Infant Baptism and Dedication



The Evangelical Covenant Church practices both infant baptism and infant dedication. In bringing your child to the community of faith to be either baptized or dedicated, you are acknowledging your desire and the child's need for the gathered church to help children come to faith and to grow in faith throughout their lives. Baptism and dedication, however, are not the same. Baptism is a sacrament, an action ordained and commanded by God. Dedication is a practice of the church developed in relation to believer baptism.

Infant Baptism

The Evangelical Covenant Church celebrates the sacrament of baptism as commanded by Christ in Matthew 28:19:20. This sacrament is a visible sign of God's invisible grace. It signifies that it is through God's love and grace and by God's initiative alone that God:

- Created us
- Redeemed us through the death and resurrection of God's Son
- Promised us the forgiveness of sin and eternal life through Jesus
- Placed us in the community of believers, that we might be nurtured and encouraged in faith
- Is present as the Holy Spirit to transform and guide us into an ever-deepening faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life.

When parents bring their child for baptism, they acknowledge in the sacrament God's promise and the unmerited gift of God's redeeming grace. Its emphasis is not on our response, but on what God has already graciously done for us through Jesus Christ.

Infant Dedication

The Evangelical Covenant Church recognizes and values children who have not been baptized as infants to be full participants in the community of faith. The rite of blessing a child, also commonly referred to as the dedication of a child, is a service for parents who want the blessing of God on their child but believe that baptism is to be reserved for those who make a conscious choice in confession of faith. Grateful for the gift of a child, the parents are accepting their responsibility of nurturing the child in the love and grace of God. The emphasis in infant dedication is on the personal pledge of parents to raise and nurture their child in a loving Christian home. Parents who dedicate their child look forward to the day when the child hears the word, repents, believes, and is baptized through immersion or sprinkling. The focus here is more on the believer's conscious reception of God's grace.