



# A **GUIDE**

## for the *Baptism of Christians*

An Informational Booklet

To Assist Your Family Through Baptismal Planning

***St. John's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church - Vilmar***



NORTH AMERICAN  
LUTHERAN  
CHURCH



**Phone:**

(319) 267-2080

**Address:**

16073 Keystone Ave.  
Greene, IA 50636

 /StJohnsVilmar

**Email:** [vilmarchurch@gmail.com](mailto:vilmarchurch@gmail.com) • **Website:** [www.vilmarchurch.org](http://www.vilmarchurch.org)

# A GUIDE FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHRISTIANS

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## INTRODUCTION

*At St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church – Vilmar, we baptize because Christ commanded it. We celebrate baptisms for God's children of all ages. Many of our baptisms happen with infants, but we believe that anyone can and should be brought to Christ through the waters of baptism as it is a place where we encounter God. This encounter makes us aware of specific promises, specifically that God offers forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.*

*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." –Matthew 19:14*

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

The following questions and answers have been taken from Martin Luther's small catechism, and explain the significance and importance of baptism for all Christians at St. John's – Vilmar:

### What is Baptism?

Baptism is not water only, but it is water used together with God's Word and by His command.

### What is God's Word?

In Matthew 28:19 our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

### What benefits does God give in Baptism?

In baptism God forgives sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what he has promised.

### What is God's promise?

In Mark 16 our Lord Jesus Christ says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

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## How can water do such great things?

It is not water that does these things, but God's Word with the water and our trust in this Word. Water by itself is only water, but with the Word of God it is life-giving water, which by grace gives the new birth through the Holy Spirit. St. Paul writes in Titus, "He saved us ... in virtue of his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he pours out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. The saying is sure."

## What does baptism mean for daily living?

It means that our sinful self, with all its evil deeds and desires, should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever. St. Paul writes in Romans 6, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

## BAPTISMAL BELIEF

### What do I need to believe to be baptized or to be a baptismal sponsor?

For those who are old enough to answer for themselves, a number of questions are asked about how they intend to follow Jesus. For infants and younger children, sponsors are asked to profess their faith and devotion to share that faith with the child by the following:

- To live among God's faithful people
- To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper
- To proclaim the good news of Christ through word and deed
- To serve all people, following the example of Jesus
- To strive for justice and peace in all the earth

We know that we cannot do this, but we commit to do this with God's help.

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## PLANNING FOR BAPTISM

- If you're interested in being baptized or having your child baptized, we would love to invite you to contact us to set up a date.
- Baptisms are celebrated during the regular Sunday worship service. The order for the baptismal rite will follow the "Holy Baptism" service in the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW, green hymnal).
- Traditionally, the parents of the child (or adult preparing for baptism) and the baptismal sponsor(s) will meet briefly with the pastor before the service to go over the significance of baptism: what it is; what it does; and the promises that are made by people and by God at baptism. You will also discuss the order of service.

## CONTACTS

<b>Pastor:</b> Tamara J. K. Keen .....	316-655-3306
<b>Director of Communications:</b> Monica Edeker .....	319-939-7348
<b>Council Chairman:</b> Kurt Roose .....	641-425-3418
<b>Worship Committee Leader:</b> Diane Hummel .....	319-429-4611