

# What To Do/What To Expect

## Prior to the Service:

1. Pray. Thank God for His goodness and for the gift of life He has entrusted to you and for wisdom in raising your child and for your child's physical and spiritual protection.
2. You will also have an opportunity to share the scripture verse that you have chosen as your child's or family's life verse. You may want to be prepared in advance to recite or read it.
3. Choose someone in advance you would have pray for your child.
4. Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the service.
5. The first row on each side will be reserved for the Parents and their children and the one whom you have designated to pray for your child. The second row will be reserved for your family and friends.

## Order of Service:

1. You will receive the instruction to come forward while we sing at the start of the service.
2. Parents, child, grandparents, siblings and the one who will pray for your child will stand up front at the first step, facing the platform.
3. The purpose of Child Dedication will be given and the parents and those standing with you will be asked to vow their support in helping you raise your child under godly principles.
4. The parents will be asked to step up on the platform with their child and the one who will be praying. You will turn and face the congregation.
5. Individually, each set of parents will be asked to make a vow toward their commitment to raise their child in the truth of the Lord's instruction and discipline and in partnership with the church. You may share a verse from scripture and then we will pray.
6. The congregation will respond with a vow to support you in your parental role in disposing your child to respond to the fullness of Christ.
7. You will then all be dismissed together.

## Final Instructions

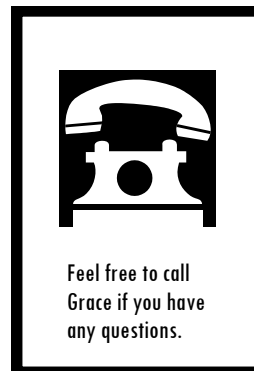
**First Service begins at**

**8:30 a.m.**

**Second Service**

**begins at**

**11:00 a.m.**



Friends and family are invited to stop by the Welcome Center in the Fellowship Hall for coffee and donuts while they wait for the Worship Teams to finish practicing.



I N F O R M A T I O N

Grace Burkholder, Director of Children & Family Ministries  
St. John Mennonite Church  
15988 Rd. 4  
Pandora, OH 45877  
Phone: 419-384-3680  
Fax: 419-384-3640  
Email: [gburkholder@stjohnmennonite.org](mailto:gburkholder@stjohnmennonite.org)

## CHILD DEDICATION



I N F O R M A T I O N

**Mother's Day &  
Second Sunday in  
November**

# What We Believe

Parent/Child Dedication is a time of public and personal commitment where parents promise to raise their children with godly principles, so that one day when they are ready and understand, they will choose to accept Christ. Through this ceremony, you show God, your friends, and your family that you are willing to take on the solemn responsibility of guiding your child into a relationship with God.

By participating in Parent/Child Dedication, you thankfully receive your child as gift from God and promise to:



**1. Be committed to your spouse.** When you grow together as husband and wife, you provide a loving, stable and secure environment, which is needed for your child to mature.

**2. Be committed to your own faith.** Your children are more likely to accept Christ as Lord if you do, more likely to respect people if you do, more likely to pray, read scriptures or attend church by the model they first observe in you.

**3. Be parents of patience.** Your desire to shape this gift from God, with his or her inherent strengths and weaknesses, into the man or woman they are

meant to be is a task that requires time and prayer.

**4. Be parents of praise.** It's easy to find faults in children, especially when they are growing into their own unique personality. Look for ways to affirm their positive qualities, while building the confidence they need to deal with their shortcomings.

**5. Be parents of play.** Tomorrow will arrive sooner than you know. Your child's automatic desire to play will be replaced with a tendency to work and worry. Promise to love, laugh, and play today and not wait for tomorrow.

## Questions About Parent/Child Dedication

**How is dedication different from baptism?**

Child Dedication is not a sacrament, nor is it a declaration of a child's faith. Rather, it is a commitment that parents are making. Some churches offer baptism for infants. At St. John, we don't baptize infants because every baptism recorded in the Bible occurred when someone was old enough to make a faith decision.

**Does dedicating my child mean he or she will be "saved"?**

Similar to the belief here at St. John about baptism, dedication is simply a public declaration of an internal decision – in this case, the decision is to raise a child in a way that will guide him or her into a relationship with God. Dedication does not impart grace or salvation. The Bible is clear that we are

saved by God's grace, not by dedication, baptism, or our own works. Dedication and baptism are not salvation; Christ's blood on the cross is really what washes away sins and pays our debt.

**If it doesn't lead to salvation, why is infant baptism so widely practiced?**

Infant baptism became popular about 400 years after the birth of the Christian church, when Augustine developed the theology of "original sin." In a nutshell, this idea means that when children are born, they are not only sinners, but God holds them accountable for their sins. So if an infant died, Augustine believed that God would hold that child separate from the Lord for all of eternity unless the child was saved (through the sacrament of Holy Baptism). Given that the infant mortality rate was high in those days, the practice of infant baptism caught on fast. St. John holds to implied Bible teaching that there's an age of understanding when people are mature enough to grasp a faith decision for themselves. Only God truly knows that age and it may differ for each child. If kids happen to pass before that time, we believe they're going to heaven.

We believe that children belong first and foremost to God. We not only have an awesome responsibility to care for this gift, but also to enjoy this gift. As it says in Psalm 127:3, *Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.* This gift is given by to parents by grace, so it is only proper that they be dedicated back to him.