

## **Ministerial Services**

For formal, active members of First Unitarian Church, Rev. Pamela Wat conducts Child Dedication ceremonies during the Sunday services at no charge. Rev. Pam will discuss with the parent(s)/guardian(s) how to plan and which Sunday to hold the ceremony.

For non-members, a nearby Unitarian Universalist minister (who may or may not be Rev. Pam depending on availability) is usually available to officiate for private services. A fee of \$350 for a minister's participation in a non-member's private Child Dedication service is recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association.

**To inquire or make plans for a Child Dedication service, please contact the minister:**

Rev. Pamela Wat

302-478-2384 or

[pam@firstuuwilm.org](mailto:pam@firstuuwilm.org)



First Unitarian Church

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# **Child Dedications**

**at First Unitarian Church  
of Wilmington**



# Child Dedications

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In our Unitarian Universalist tradition, a child dedication ceremony is a rite of passage in which the family and community acknowledge their commitment to support the spiritual life and development of the child.

The theological purpose of the Child Dedication service is threefold:

First, we welcome, honor, and celebrate the miracle of life.

Second, we honor the love and nurturing embrace of those who care for the child (immediate and extended family, godparents, and friends).

Finally, we recognize the responsibility of the community to support the child's growth and faith development.

Unitarian Universalists affirm the worth of every life, and recognize no need to erase original sin from a child. Our tradition perceives the development of faith to be a series of individual choices within the context of a community's shared values and commitments.

Because the community's commitment is called for, Child Dedication ceremonies are most meaningful in the context of active church membership and during a Sunday morning worship service.

## Elements of a Child Dedication Ceremony:

1. **Naming** (a parent or guardian shares the full name of the child);
2. **Covenanting** with parent(s)/guardian(s) and congregation (also may or may not include: Godparents, Grandparents, Aunts/Uncles, siblings, or other people in the child's life);
3. **Blessing** with water (the water is drawn from the congregation's holy water and a small amount is placed onto the child's head by the minister while the minister offers an affirmation/blessing);
4. **Blessing** with a rose bud with no thorns (the minister uses a rose bud symbolizing newness and potential to share intentions for the child to grow into our Unitarian Universalist values of appreciation, compassion, and justice); and
5. **Presenting** of the child (the minister presents to the child to the congregation).

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are presented with a Certificate of Dedication.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**How old should my child be for the ceremony?** Parents often bring an infant to these services, but may wish to include older children who have not yet been dedicated. To schedule a service, speak with the minister.

**My extended family is not Unitarian Universalist. Would they be welcome to participate in the ceremony?** Yes! The language and ritual included in the ceremony include widely-accepted beliefs about humanity, but if needed, we can tailor the ceremony to help make it more universal/inclusive of the family's traditions or background.

**What do I need to do to prepare for the ceremony?** First be sure to contact Rev. Pam to schedule a time to meet. She will go over the ceremony with you, help you identify family/friends you may want to involve if applicable, help you schedule a Sunday service in which to have the ceremony, and answer any questions you may have.