

how to get involved

If you are interested in becoming a witness or wish to invite a team to your church, please call our Witness Coordinator , Christine J. Baxter at (518) 337-8424 or by email at christinejbaxter@gmail.com . For more information about the program, call the Capital Area Council of Churches office at

(518) 462-5450

This wonderful program is visible testimony and witness that Baptism is the one sacrament we all share in common with other Christians, and reminds us that there is more that unites us than divides us — namely, our Baptism in Christ, as we become members of the Body of Christ in Baptism. The Reverend. Fr, James Kane, Ecumenical Officer, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

It was very special having the Ecumenical Witnesses celebrate baptisms with us because their presence serves as a wonderful reminder that baptism welcomes our children not just into our church, but into our collective faith and God's family. We feel honored they were able to share in our celebration. Keri R.

Ecumenical Witness of Baptism Team

Christine J. Baxter—Christ United Methodist Church in Troy, Witness Coordinator

Peggy McQuade - St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church in Voorheesville, sends out cards and crosses

Pastor Denise Gisott (retired) - First United Methodist Church of Delmar, responsible for the EWB renewal service which occurs on the second Sunday of January

The Rev. William Hinrichs - St. John's Episcopal Church in Cohoes, publicity

Capital Area Council of Churches Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism



Capital Area Council of Churches

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Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism coordinated by the Capital Area Council of Churches

how it began

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:5-6

Our program, Ecumenical Witnesses of Baptism, is one attempt to practice Christian unity.

An article by Conrad Riser in *The Christian Century* inspired an idea that local churches should witness each other's baptisms. We adopted a model developed by Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church and Union Presbyterian Church in Schenectady and designed a program to embrace the council's 90 member congregations, representing 16 denominations. The first baptism witnessed under the Council's program was in 1995 at Trinity United Methodist Church in Albany.

how it works

The pastor, Deacon, or designated volunteer from a local congregation, calls our witness coordinator three to four weeks in advance of the scheduled baptism. The coordinator then contacts witnesses and assembles a small but diverse group representing other denominations. One of the witnesses will bring a card to be signed by all the witnesses and then presented to the one being baptized or their representative.

role of the congregation

Each congregation determines the appropriate level of participation of the witnesses within its own baptismal liturgy. This may range from simply recognizing the group's presence to inviting the group to stand with the family at the baptismal font and incorporating a response for them to read during the liturgy of Baptism.

The host church assigns someone to greet the witnesses, show them where to sit, and explain how they are to participate, as well as anything else they should know about the service that day.

role of the witnesses

Witnesses make an annual commitment to attend a minimum of two baptisms a year. Once an invitation is received the witnesses are contacted as a group. They are all notified in a group email, and we encourage everyone to reply All so that we can see that there is a broader denominational representation.

There is a yearly witness renewal service, on the second Sunday in January, of new and continuing witnesses, pastors and deacons to share significant experiences and suggestions.

