

Baptism at All Saints

People often have questions about how a person becomes a member of the church and, more basically, how one becomes a Christian. The simple answer to that question is by baptism. Even long time members of the church are sometimes confused about the meaning of baptism. Therefore the following will seek to clarify that and to also define how baptisms are done at All Saints Episcopal Church.

Holy Baptism is a sacrament, that is it is an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace. Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church. It is how one becomes a Christian. The bond which God establishes in baptism is indissoluble.

Holy Baptism is appropriately administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast. The bishop, when present, is the celebrant; and is expected to preach the Word and preside at baptism and the Eucharist. In the absence of a bishop, a priest is the celebrant and presides at the service. If a priest uses oil of chrism in signing the newly baptized, it must have been previously consecrated by the bishop.

Each candidate for Holy Baptism is to be sponsored by one or more baptized persons. Sponsors of adults and older children present their candidates and thereby signify their endorsement of the candidates and their intention to support them by prayer and example in their Christian life. Sponsors of infants, commonly called godparents, present their candidates, make promises in their own names, and also take vows on behalf of their candidates.

It is fitting that parents be included among the godparents of their own children. Parents and godparents are to be instructed in the meaning of baptism, in their duties to help the new Christians grow in the knowledge and love of God, and in their responsibilities as members of his Church. A time for instruction is to be scheduled with the Priest in Charge or other designated person prior to the date of the baptism.

Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after the Epiphany).

It is recommended that, as far as possible, baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present.

Baptism is membership in the Body of Christ, the Church. In the Episcopal Church all persons baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, regardless of denomination, are invited to receive communion and participate fully in the life of the Church. Confirmation (another sacrament of the church) is not required prior to receiving communion. Parents are responsible for deciding when their children are ready to receive communion.

At All Saints Episcopal Church, all baptisms are public services of worship. There are no private baptisms celebrated, unless it is an emergency situation or there are special pastoral concerns.

Baptisms are not automatically “done” for newborns or other young children. A family needs to be regular in attendance and worship in order to model the faith for their children. Time is needed for being a part of the congregation and baptismal preparation, and also to live a sense of commitment to the congregation and the Church.

Baptized persons can become members of All Saints Episcopal Church by having the date and place of their baptism recorded in the Church Register. Baptisms done with water in the Name of the Trinity in any Christian denomination are not repeated in the Episcopal Church. If there is a question about whether or not one has been baptized, then there can be a conditional baptism.

Please contact the Priest in Charge as far in advance as possible of a baptismal date if you wish to be baptized, or if you have a child to be baptized.