



A Customary for Holy Baptism

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

“Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body, the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble.” (Book of Common Prayer, P. 298). Baptism, however, is not simply an individual experience of salvation, nor is it a tradition by which one joins a social club. Through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, God adopts us as God’s children. This divine action makes us members of Christ’s body, the Church and inheritors of the Kingdom of God. The celebration of Holy Baptism, then, is a celebration of, by, and for the Christian community.

Baptism is also the sign that we have been buried in Christ’s death and resurrected into his life. As such, baptism also signifies our commitment to living as a follower of Jesus and helping to ensure the coming of God’s kingdom. Baptism is not “fire insurance” against death. It is entrance and commitment to the Christian faith.

WHO CAN BE BAPTIZED?

We believe that God’s grace is not preconditioned on one’s merit or understanding. It is a gift of God, and as such we baptize infants, children, and adults. We baptize infants so that they can share in the citizenship of God’s family through Jesus Christ with the explicit understanding that baptism is not a rite of passage or mere tradition. As such, parents and godparents are expected to be active in their Christian walk and committed to raising the baptized in the Christian faith. That said, baptisms are not automatically “done” on newborns or other young 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. **As such, in the case of an infant or child’s baptism, at least one parent must have regularly attended St. Paul’s for at least 3 months at the time of application.**

WHEN DO BAPTISMS TAKE PLACE?

Holy Baptism is administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast. *The Book of Common Prayer* (page 298) recognizes that Baptism is an action of the entire Christian community as it is the incorporation of new members. In the baptismal liturgy, the community promises to support the candidates in their new life in Christ, so it is most fitting to celebrate Baptism at the time and place when the greatest cross-section of the community gathers: the Sunday or feast-day Eucharist. As such, we do not perform private baptisms. Emergency baptisms, however, are available at any time

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM AT ST. PAUL’S

- Candidates for baptism—or their parents and godparents if the candidate is an infant—enter into a time of holy preparation before the baptism. In the case of older children, teens, and adults, the Rector will initially meet with the interested parties to discuss their desire to be baptized at St. Paul’s and how they intend to nurture their faith in community. This is not a test! It is an opportunity to explore one’s faith journey in a safe setting and address any initial concerns and questions.

- Preparation can involve more extensive formation, depending on the candidate's age, background, and desire. We also encourage you to come to church regularly well in advance of a baptism. During this time, candidates reflect prayerfully on the five promises of the Baptismal Covenant (*Book of Common Prayer*, pp.304-305). These serve as a foundation for a commitment to the Christian faith and life. The Christian journey is a lifelong process, and baptism marks the beginning of a commitment to grow in faith.
- The Saturday before the service, the Rector will gather the parents, godparents, candidates, and other family in advance of the service. Attendance is mandatory.

WHO CAN BE GODPARENTS?

Every candidate for baptism is accompanied in their faith journey by at least one sponsor (for adults) or godparent (for minor children). The commitment of the sponsor is to support the candidate in the Christian faith and life. One sponsor must be a Christian, preferably an Episcopalian. Anyone else can serve in this role, including persons from other faith traditions or no faith tradition—as long as the individual is sincere in promising to support the candidate's spiritual growth as a Christian. Any number of sponsors is considered appropriate.

BAPTISM INFORMATION & REGISTRATION FORM

Please type or print as this information goes into the Church's historical records. Mail or email application to office@stpaulswaldorf.org.

Date of Application: _____ Requested Date of Baptism: _____

Baptismal Candidate

Full Name _____

Gender _____ Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth (Hospital, city & state) _____

Parents or Guardians (Complete only if candidate is under the age of 18)

Full Name of Parent/Guardian

Address (street, city, state, zip)

Telephone _____ Email _____

Baptized: Yes No Date _____

Church _____

Full Name of Parent/Guardian

Address (street, city, state, zip)

Telephone _____ Email _____

Baptized: Yes No Date _____

Church _____

Godparents/Sponsors

Godparent/Sponsor 1

Full Name: _____

Church: _____

Godparent/Sponsor 2

Full Name: _____

Church: _____