



# 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. 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. It's not membership into a social club or "fire insurance" against death.

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 beloved community of interdependence, service, belonging, joy, and unconditional, sacrificial love.

## WHO CAN BE BAPTIZED?

Anyone. 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. This doesn't mean that they're perfect or don't have questions or doubts. Rather, we hope and expect that parents and godparents are committed to walking this journey of faith with all of its highs and lows.

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 way of Christ. As such, in the case of an infant or child's baptism, at least one parent must regularly participate in the life of community at St. Paul's. In instances when the parents/guardians are not active members or worshippers at St. Paul's or members but would like to have the baptism at St. Paul's because of immediate familial connections, parents/guardians are expected to be actively engaged in another Episcopal worshipping community.

## **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. 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 (or another mutually agreed upon date), 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. Sponsors must be 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](mailto:office@stpaulswaldorf.org).

Requested Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Date (if preferred date is not available): \_\_\_\_\_

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

Current Church (if not St. Paul's) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (street, city, state, zip)

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Baptized: Yes No Date \_\_\_\_\_

Current Church (if not St. Paul's) \_\_\_\_\_

## Godparents/Sponsors

### Godparent/Sponsor 1

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

### Godparent/Sponsor 2

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*You may add additional names as needed.*

In the case of infants and small children, please briefly explain why it is important for you to have your child baptized and how you intend to nurture their Christian faith? This is not a test. Rather, it will help the priest provide appropriate resources and support.

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