



# The Episcopal Church of St. Paul

## Baptism Guidelines

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### INTRODUCTION

Baptism is one of the two most important sacraments of the Church, the other is the Holy Eucharist. It is administered to individuals of any age who have not been previously baptized in any other Christian denomination. If someone is joining the Episcopal church from another denomination, their baptism in that denomination is recognized and acknowledged.

We believe Baptism to be a service of Christian initiation by which the individual baptized becomes a member of the body of Christ and the Church. Speaking for themselves or through the promises made by sponsors, called God Parents, the individuals vow to follow the Christian teachings and way of life. These vows include participation in corporate worship as well as individual observance of prayer and study as a life-long practice.

Since baptism is the rite of Christian initiation, it is a celebration of the church in which the newly baptized is warmly welcomed into the Christian Community. All baptisms take place in the presence of the congregation during corporate worship unless performed in situations of emergency. Those interested in the sacrament of Holy Baptism may call the parish office, or contact the Rector directly.

### OCCASIONS FOR BAPTISM

Baptisms are celebrated on those occasions designated by the Book of Common Prayer:

- The Easter Vigil,
- Easter Day
- The Day of Pentecost,
- All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day
- The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord
- On occasions when a bishop is present.

### OTHER OCCASIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- The Feast of St. Paul
- St. Mary the God Bearer

### 2014 DATES FOR BAPTISM:

- January 5 -The Baptism of our Lord
- January 26 -The Feast of St. Paul
- February 2 -The Feast of the Presentation
- April 19 -Easter Vigil
- April 20 - Easter Day
- June 8 -The Day of Pentecost
- August 17 -St. Mary the God Bearer
- November 2 -All Saints Day

## EXPECTATIONS

Holy Baptism is appropriate for those persons who desire to be active participants in this community of faith. In most cases that will mean that adult candidates, and the parents of young children desiring baptism, will have been attending worship regularly for a period of some months, and will have contributed to the parish in a traceable fashion.

The Baptism of children whose parents live outside of this parish may only be scheduled at St. Paul's with the assurance that the promises and vows of Baptism will be fulfilled through active membership in another parish or community of faith. The Rector is happy to assist families who have some historic ties to St. Paul's and who now live in other communities to locate and to join their local Episcopal church.

Parents and Godparents of children to be baptized at St. Paul's are expected to complete a four session Pre-Baptism class with the Rector at least four weeks prior to the scheduled date of Baptism. No Baptism will take place at St. Paul's without the completion of pre-Baptismal instruction.

It is recommended that a financial donation be made to St. Paul's as an act of thanksgiving in the name of the Baptized. \$150.00 minimum is recommended, part of which will go towards outreach for the needy in our community.

## SPONSORS

According to the Book of Common Prayer:

*"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, sometimes 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."*

The number of God Parents for infants and small children can vary. God Parents should be aware that they take on the responsibility of seeing that the child they sponsor takes seriously their Christian life and formation. It is therefore wise for parents to choose God Parents whose own Christian life reflects this commitment.

## THE SERVICE

Baptismal Candidates, their sponsors and families may sit anywhere in the nave, and will be invited to come forward for the Presentation and Examination of the Candidates. Since you may have family members or guests who are not Episcopalians, we encourage you to advise them in advance that all baptized Christians are welcome to receive communion, and to explain how that is done if they have any questions.

## BAPTISMAL RECORDS

Certificates for Candidates and Sponsors will be prepared. Be sure to get these from the Rector before leaving the church.