



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE
EPIPHANY

Baptism Policy

At Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, we delight in welcoming the newly baptized as partners with us in Christ's life and ministry, and we thank you for considering having your baptism here! We promise to do all in our power not only to make your baptism a joyous event, but also to support you in your life in Christ.

Baptism is one of the two most important sacraments of the Episcopal Church, the other being the Holy Eucharist, a remembrance of the Last Supper. Baptism is administered to individuals of any age who have not been previously baptized in any other Christian denomination.

What is the purpose of baptism?

In the Anglican Communion, we tend to emphasize the incorporation into the body of the faithful at baptism. We also focus on the covenant we make and renew with God. That is why we emphasize church membership and participation so heavily; it would be odd to baptize someone into a community in which they are not actively engaged.

Some also see baptism as washing away the stain of ancestral sin; while this may be a theologically valid and sometimes helpful construct, that we have not performed this ritual does not negate God's love, nor does it prevent God from

welcoming those who are not baptized into paradise. Baptism provides a sacramental ritual that proclaims the essential truth that all people are marked as God's beloved for ever.

I was baptized elsewhere; do I need to be baptized again?

No. Baptism is baptism. You could have been baptized in the Roman Catholic church, a Baptist temple, or down by the riverside by a Congregationalist minister — whatever, so long as it involved water and an invocation of the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). These are all recognized by the Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion.

When we baptize infants, it is the parents and sponsors (godparents) who make promises on behalf of the child. When we baptize adults, the adult renounces evil, affirms faith in Jesus Christ, and joins us in promised to uphold the faith of the Church.

Since baptism is the rite of Christian initiation, it is a celebration of the church in which the newly baptized is warmly welcomed! In baptism, holy water is poured on the person's head as the presence of the Holy Spirit is invoked and claimed for the new Christian. Finally, a candle is given to the newly baptized, symbolizing that this person now shares in carrying the Light of Christ out into the world.

Can anyone be baptized?

Anyone who seeks God and is drawn to Jesus Christ is welcome to receive the sacrament of Holy Baptism! God's invitation extends to people of all ages and from every kind of background.

How about baptizing little children?

Yes, of course! The celebration of an infant's baptism is a joyous occasion for that child and for the family, as well as for the family-in-Christ, the church. Baptism celebrates God's love for us, and that God calls each of us to a special and personal relationship.

Do we have to be active members, or give regularly?

No. We welcome everyone. Period. Since part of what baptism conveys is membership in the Body of Christ, the church, we welcome you to participate in our worship and community life - both before, during, and after the baptism!

What happens if we decide to postpone baptism of our child?

Nothing. If you wish to let your children make an informed choice at a later age, that is just fine with us.

What do I do if I don't know if I was ever baptized?

No problem; we've got that covered. Although we consider baptism an unrepeatable event, we also have the ability to perform what is called a "conditional baptism" in circumstances like these.

The Service

Baptismal Candidates, their godparents, sponsors and families may sit anywhere in the nave, and will be invited to come to the font for the Presentation and Examination of the Candidates. Since there may be family members or guests who are not

Episcopalians, please don't worry about their being made welcome! The community of Epiphany is a welcoming and affirming community, and we love to share our style of worship with guests and visitors!

Baptismal Records

Certificates for candidates and sponsors will be prepared by the clergy. Please make sure to get these from the Clergy before leaving the church on the day of baptism.

Occasions for Baptism

We encourage baptisms on certain joyous occasions. If circumstances necessitate a different date, we will try to accommodate your need. Baptisms are not held in the season of Lent (forty days leading up to Easter) and are not encouraged during Advent (the four weeks preceding Christmas.)

The principal service involves several groups of people who plan worship, select music, and so on. Therefore, we request a minimum of two months' notice for baptism at our 10:30 Sunday service. The 5:30 Saturday evening, and 8:00 Sunday

morning services are simpler, so for this reason, they may be more flexible.

Because baptism in the Episcopal tradition is an initiation into the Christian community and is a public occasion, we do not offer ‘private baptisms’ that do not include the presence of gathered Christians beyond the immediate family.

2019 DATES FOR BAPTISM:

- January 6 - Epiphany
- January 13 - The Baptism of our Lord
- February 3 - The Feast of the Presentation • April 20 - Easter Vigil
- April 21 - Easter Day
- June 9 - The Day of Pentecost
- August 17 - St. Mary the God Bearer
- November 2, 3 - All Saints Day Weekend

What about godparents or sponsors?

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. Historically, a boy would've had two godfathers and one godmother, whereas a girl had two godmothers and one godfather. Today, however, any number of sponsors is considered appropriate.

How do I prepare for baptism?

Candidates for baptism—or their parents and godparents if the candidate is an infant—enter into a time of holy preparation before the baptism. The clergy will gather the parents, godparents, candidates, and other family in advance of the service. 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.

What are the expectations of the church after baptism?

Because baptism is a rite of initiation and welcome, the church yearns for the newly baptized to have an authentic relationship with God and the Christian assembly. A mark of

this relationship will be regular participation in the life of this parish. We invite candidates for baptism to take seriously this aspect of the Christian life, expressing a sincere commitment to “continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers.”

How much does baptism cost?

There is no charge for this or any other sacramental rite. As a sign of God’s love freely bestowed upon all people, baptism come without a price tag. Cost must never be a barrier to providing a joyful baptism.

Many people, however, feel called to make a monetary donation in thanksgiving for a baptism. A donation to the discretionary fund of the Rector is both welcome and appreciated—and fully tax-deductible. Make checks payable to “Epiphany Episcopal Church,” enter “Discretionary Fund” in the memorandum line, and give your donation directly to the priest. We remind you that the biblical standard for giving to the church is a tithe—ten per cent of all you have. If you are not currently giving at this level, we encourage you to consider prayerfully your giving.

If you are not currently a member of the parish, making regular financial support as you are able, we may also ask you to make a contribution to help defray costs.

What about pictures?

Since flash photography and spotlighted video are distracting to the congregation and the altar party, we strongly

encourage you to make any recordings without flash. Anyone with photographic ability will be able to remain discreet and yet take photographs that will be suitable for any family album. Any and all professional photographers or videographers must consult with the priest well before the baptism, to ensure compliance with this policy.

How do I schedule a baptism?

When you are ready to commit to a specific date, the process is quite simple! Please contact our Office Manager to begin your inquiry--or, better yet, just come to church, worship with us, and become a part of our community!