

At the same time, personal commitment is necessary for responsible membership in the body of Christ. Baptism is related not only to momentary experience, but to life-long growth in Christ.

CANDIDATES FOR HOLY BAPTISM

The integrity and vitality of the Church's mission requires that, as a normative principle, all candidates for Holy Baptism (or in the case of infants and small children, their parents and sponsors) confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and evidence their commitment to Christ in daily living and participation in the ecclesial fellowship of this Parish.

In the Baptism of infants and small children, the church also requires assurance that the child will continue to be raised in the Christian faith and life.

At St. Paul's, baptisms are normally scheduled during the principle service on a Sunday morning. If this time is not possible, contact the Pastor to request a different time.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING

No pictures requiring artificial light (flash or movie flood lights) may be taken during the baptismal service by either professional photographers or guests. This policy will be strictly observed.

Pictures may be taken following the service. Video recording will be permitted if arrangements are made with the officiating priest before the service. Video recording equipment should not be used in a way that

is ostentatious or distracting from the service. The videographer is required to set up the placement of equipment prior to the beginning of the service and in consultation with the priest.

FACILITIES

The Parish Hall (Getman Hall) is available for receptions. Wine or champagne may be served if non-alcoholic beverages are also provided. Compliance with state and county laws will be upheld when alcoholic beverages are served.

Each party is responsible for securing its own caterer, as well as decorations at the reception. The Parish Hall must be cleaned immediately after the reception. Any damage is the financial responsibility of the parties using the facilities. The deposit will be forfeited and the cleaning will be billed to the parties.

BAPTISMAL SERVICE FEES

	Contributing Members	Non- Members
Church Bldg. & Admin.	No charge	Donation
Parish Hall	Varies	Varies
Sexton (if using the Hall)	\$200	\$200

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A CUSTOMARY FOR THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM



This is a guide for individuals wishing to be baptized or for parents wishing to have their child baptized at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Exton. It explains some of the requirements of the Episcopal Church and of this Parish regarding the baptismal service.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
 The Rev. Maxine M. Dornemann
 Exton, Pennsylvania



CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Christian Baptism is rooted in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, in his death and in his resurrection. It is the sacrament by which God adopts us as God's children and incorporates us into Christ's Body and the Church; it is entry into the New Covenant between God and God's people. Baptism is a gift of God, and is administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

St. Matthew records that the risen Lord, when sending his Disciples into the world, commanded them to baptize (Matthew 28:18-20). The universal practice of Baptism by the apostolic church from its earliest days is attested in letters of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, and the writings of the Fathers.

Baptism is essential for the life of the Church. It is not absolutely essential to salvation. Baptism incorporates us into the body of Christ and allows us to commit ourselves to Christ. But the grace of God covers all contingencies and must surely cover those persons who wished to, but failed to, be baptized.

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church (BCP, p. 298). It is the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. We are baptized into the holy catholic Church and not into a

denomination of that Church. This bond which God established in Baptism is indissoluble and we are baptized only one time. It is an unrepeatable act.

A. Participation in Christ's Death and Resurrection

By Baptism, Christians are immersed in the liberating death of Christ, where their sins are buried, where the "old Adam" is crucified with Christ, and where the power of sin is broken. Thus, those baptized are no longer slaves to sin, but free. Fully identified with the death of Christ, they are buried with him and are raised here and now to a new life in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

B. Conversion, Pardoning, and Cleansing

The New Testament underlines the ethical implications of Baptism by representing it as an absolution which washes the body with pure water, a cleansing of the heart of all sin, and an act of justification (Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; 11 Corinthians 6:11). Thus those baptized are pardoned, cleansed and sanctified by Christ, and are given as part of their baptismal experience a new ethical orientation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

C. The Gift of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of people before, in and after their Baptism. It is the same Spirit who revealed Jesus as the Son and who empowered and united the disciples at Pentecost. God bestows

upon all baptized persons the anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit, marks them with a seal and imparts in their hearts the first installment of their inheritance as sons and daughters of God.

D. Incorporation into the Body of Christ

Through Baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common Baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world. When Baptismal unity is realized in one holy, catholic, apostolic Church, a genuine Christian witness can be made to the healing and reconciling love of God.

E. The Sign of the Kingdom

Baptism initiates the reality of the new life given in the midst of the present world. It gives participation in the community of the Holy Spirit. It is a sign of the Kingdom of God and of the life of the world to come.

BAPTISM AND FAITH

Baptism is both God's gift and our human response to that gift. Although the outward and visible sign in baptism is administered by human hands, the inward and spiritual grace is given by God alone. This is a free gift of God, and care must be taken not to diminish this fact by making the grace contingent upon some work of our own, including a work of faith.