



Holy Baptism

The word “baptism” is derived from a Greek word meaning “immersion” and follows a Jewish ritual of cleansing and repentance.

History, Tradition

Baptism has its scriptural origins in the great commission of Christ to his disciples at the end of Matthew's gospel: **"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."** (Mt 28:19) There is an inseparable connection between faith and the acceptance of baptism. Jesus tells Nicodemus: **"no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."** (John 3:5) Baptism is the gateway to the Spirit and our initiation into the Christian life and community.

We are baptized, not into a particular denomination, but baptized as Christians for all time. Whenever possible, baptisms occur in the midst of the community's regular worship service, as a sign of the community's participation in the Life of Christ. The Easter Vigil is the traditional time for catechumens (learners) to be baptized, as it recounts God's saving actions in the world as well as the symbolism of our new life in Christ. Other appropriate times are the Baptism of Our Lord in early January; Pentecost – 50 days after Easter; and All Saints' Sunday – on or following November 1; as well as the feast of patron saint; in our Nativity of St. John Baptisms may also days, and done privately.



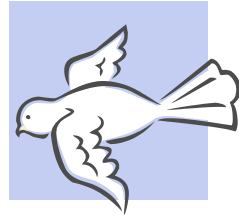
The Gospels tell us that Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist before beginning his public ministry. We, like Jesus, become more open to the working of the Holy Spirit when we allow ourselves to follow that Spirit, and we are given grace to become children of God. Through grace we are given spiritual gifts to enable us to grow in our faith and use our gifts to further the mission of God.

Symbolism

Water is the most evident symbol of baptism; Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River and was himself described as “Living Water.”

Water is always used in baptism; whether sprinkled, poured, or immersed we are cleansed by virtue of the Spirit’s presence as we baptize in the Name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our sins are washed away and we are symbolically buried with Christ to rise again in the Spirit.

The person to be baptized, whether child or adult, is often clothed in white to symbolize the new creation that is in Christ.



Following baptism we are anointed – “sealed with the Holy Spirit” and “marked as Christ’s own forever.” – (BCP, p.308.) No matter what we do we belong to Christ, and his arms will always be open for each of us in times of celebration and times of trouble. For ***“neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** (Romans 8:38-39)

The baptized may receive a candle, symbolic of the Light of Christ shining in our lives, and the Light of the World around us. It is helpful in future years, especially on the anniversary of a child’s baptism, to remind the child and ourselves of baptism by lighting the baptismal candle and talking about the importance of our baptismal covenant.

Baptism is a one-time sacrament which marks the beginning of our life in Christ. It gives us a place to belong – the community of Christians – and requires us to continue to look for God’s guidance in our lives through worship, Christian formation, fellowship, and our ministry with others. By surrounding ourselves with other believers, we are supported in our Christian life and continually reminded that God’s people are promised eternal life.

On the Day of Baptism

Please make sure you have registered in advance for a baptism date and worship time.

On a regular Sunday, please arrive one-half hour before worship (along with sponsors) and speak to the clergy or vergier. (For baptism at the Easter Vigil, please arrive 45 minutes prior to the service.) You will be given directions as to where to sit, when to move to the baptismal font, etc. Please feel free to ask questions of the vergier or clergy.



All Are Welcome!

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St. John in the Wilderness**

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