

We were buried with Him (Jesus Christ) through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too live a new life. (Romans 6:4)

BAPTISM BELIEFS

Baptism is an outward sign of belief in Jesus. It represents our union with Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection. Baptism signifies birth into God's family, forgiveness of sins and a new life in the Holy Spirit. Logically, baptism follows belief, which is the case with adult Baptism. But emerging from the Jewish tradition of circumcision, Christian parents include their children in the external expressions of faith.

The Scripture promises that if we "train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) Since many baptisms in the Episcopal Church are of children, we need to give it special consideration. There is only one reason for baptizing a child in the name of Jesus Christ – the parents have made Jesus Christ the head of their household. Such families have a special relationship (called the New Covenant) with God in which they want their children to share. God has given Baptism as the outward sign of this relationship.

GODPARENTS

When a child is presented for baptism, Godparents (or "sponsors") stand with the parents, and join them in promising to do all in their power to insure the child's Christian nurture. In the event of a tragedy so that the parents could not fulfill their promise the responsibility falls to the Godparents. Godparents may be of any denomination, but must be believing, practicing and baptized members of some part of the larger body of Christ. They also must be willing to carry out the promises made in the service.

WHAT WE EXPECT

In light of the tradition in the Episcopal Church of baptizing infants, it is not reasonable to assume that a child can initially accept the responsibilities or understanding the blessings inherent in baptism. It is therefore the responsibility of the child's parents and sponsors (godparents) to commit themselves to helping the child grow in faith and understanding of what it means to be a Christian. We expect therefore that parents and godparents, in good conscience, be able to commit to the promises that they make in the baptismal liturgy. Furthermore, we expect that they be actively involved in the ministry of this or another parish before we will perform the baptism of their child.

The liturgy of Holy Baptism in *The Book of Common Prayer* emphasizes the role of the congregation in the life of the one baptized. Just as the parents and sponsors accept certain responsibilities at baptism, the Church community witnessing the baptismal vows accepts the responsibility of supporting the newly baptized in their life in Christ through a life-long ministry of Christian formation. We at Christ Church believe that the presence of the congregation at baptism is paramount for the newly baptized and their family. Unless pastoral circumstances merit, it is our policy not to perform private baptisms.

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM

In the Episcopal Church we will baptize an individual at any age. Baptismal instruction is a prerequisite for parents of infants who are to be baptized. At Christ Church there are three required meetings with a member of the clergy. The first will occur shortly after parents inquire about baptism. The second will be an instructional session the shortly before the baptism. We ask that you read the reading material that is sent to you before this session as it will form the basis of the discussion. The third session will be a baptismal rehearsal (with godparents) in the Church sanctuary at 10 a.m. on Saturday, the day before the baptism. We ask that godparents not be chosen until you have consulted with a member of the clergy. We prefer that at least one of the godparents be an Episcopalian and that all of them be active practicing Christians associated with a faith community. For obvious reasons, persons belonging to religious traditions that do not believe in infant baptism are not encouraged to be sponsors.

DATES

There are six dates in the Church year on which baptisms have traditionally been performed, and we ask that you keep in mind these dates as you make these plans:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
The Baptism of our Lord	Jan. 7	Jan. 6
Easter Eve at the Vigil (adults)	April 7	March 22
Sunday after Easter (children)	April 15	March 30
Feast of Pentecost	May 27	May 11
Third Sunday in July	July 15	July 20
All Saint's Sunday	Nov. 4	Nov. 2

Baptism Information

A Guide for Planning Baptisms
at Christ Episcopal Church
Charlottesville, Virginia

Baptism Prayer

Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin: Grant that we, being reborn to new life in him, may live in righteousness and holiness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

(The Book of Common Prayer, page 254)

*... baptizing
them*

*in the name of
the Father
and of
the Son
and of
the
Holy Spirit*

Matthew 28:19

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