

# Baptism at St. Matthew's

“**Holy Baptism** is the sacrament by which God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ’s Body, the church, and inheritors of the kingdom of God” (BCP, p. 858). It is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into the Church and is indissoluble. Holy Baptism is accomplished through the making of solemn vows, followed by the immersion or pouring of water in the Name of the father, Son, the Holy Spirit. (See BCP, p. 298)

**In the Episcopal Church**, Holy Baptism is appropriately administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast. However, in an emergency (see BCP, p. 313) or under special circumstances, at the discretion of the rector, baptism may be done at other times. Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, at the celebration of All Saints' Day, on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the first Sunday after the Epiphany), or when a Bishop is present.

## Making Arrangements

Any person prepared to take the vows of baptism may be baptized as may any young child or infant with parents and sponsors prepared to make vows of faith and commitment to Christian nurture on behalf of the child.

To make arrangements for baptism, parents of infants and young children should contact the rector. Teenagers and adults should contact the rector directly. The rector will meet with the parents or the candidates to discuss the meaning and the procedures of the service, and to set the date for the service. St. Matthew's expects that all candidates shall be in regular attendance and active in parish life.

## Sponsors and Godparents

“Sponsors of adults and older children present their candidates and thereby signify their endorsement of the candidates and their intentions to support them by prayer and example in their Christian life. Sponsors of infants, commonly called godparents, make promises in their own names and vows on behalf of their candidates” (BCP, p. 298).

Godparents, along with parents, present a child during the service of baptism. They also answer questions at the examination of baptismal candidates on behalf of this child. At the heart of these questions is a renunciation of evil and a promise to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

In considering godparents for your children, you might ask yourself who you know that would take seriously these commitments. Because of the nature of the vows they take on behalf of your children, godparents need to be Christian. It would be hard to make such vows if they were not. You might also ask who would be willing and able to love and support and encourage your children in their life in Christ.

Godparents might be close friends or relatives. They might be someone in the parish who you believe would take a special interest in your child. They do not have to live here or attend St. Matthew's, although living nearby and being part of the same church community is nice for developing a close relationship with your child.

It is ideal if godparents are present at the baptism but not required. And if you cannot think of anyone to ask as godparents for your child, we can help identify and contact someone who could be your child's godparent. Most people would consider it an honor and a privilege.

Choosing godparents presents a wonderful opportunity for you to strengthen the Christian community of people who surround and support your children as they grow in the knowledge and love of God.

### **Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child**

There are times when a family chooses to celebrate the birth or adoption of a child. There is a suitable place in the liturgy for this celebration. Details can be found in the Prayer Book (see BCP, p. 439) and can be further discussed with the rector.

**At Baptism**, we of the St. Matthew's parish family pledge to do all in our power to support the newly baptized person in his or her life in Christ (BCP p. 303).

**During the service**, flash photography is not permitted and video taping is permitted from the balcony only. Any person taking pictures should strive to be as unobtrusive as possible.

**Altar Flowers** may be donated by the family or sponsors of the newly baptized for the Sunday of the Baptism. The flower notebook to sign up for this opportunity is located in the foyer of the Ruffin House. Any question about flower donations may be directed to the parish administrator or the flower guild chairperson.

*We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the Baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.*

*We thank you Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

*- The Book Of Common Prayer, page 306*

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