

BAPTISM AT ST. GREGORY'S



According to the Book of Common Prayer, “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, 858). As such, Baptism is a serious matter and is not to be entered into lightly. Following are some considerations as related to Baptism at St. Gregory’s.

One of the concerns we hear expressed, particularly when it comes to Baptism of a child, is that many people feel there is a need to hurry up and get their child baptized. The first thing to know is that there is no “deadline” for having a child baptized. Baptism can occur at any age, not just for infants. There is concern among some people that children need to be baptized as soon as possible in case something happens to them. We do not believe that is necessary. Children are innocent and should something (God forbid) happen, we are assured that our God is all-loving and all-merciful and that children are safe and protected, baptized or not.

Before even considering Baptism at St. Gregory’s, we suggest a period of regular attendance as a way of discerning if St. Gregory’s is a place you want to make your church home. This is because we take Baptism very seriously. It is not just the rite of incorporation into the Body of Christ. Baptism is a communal event whereby the person being baptized is made a part of and welcomed into the parish family. As such, it is important that the person being baptized (or their family, in the case of baptizing children) feels comfortable here and intends to be a part of the community. Baptism is not just a “one and done” event, where we baptize someone and never see them again (which sadly, does happen). Baptism is the beginning of a relationship and a faith journey. The parish is a party to that relationship and, as such, is an integral part in that journey. In fact, in the Baptismal rite, the congregation vows to be a part of that faith journey, supporting the person being baptized in their life in Christ. That means accepting some level of responsibility for the education of the person being baptized and helping that person grow in their Christian faith.

Getting to know the parish and some of its members is also important because we require that at least one of the Baptismal sponsors (who were traditionally referred to as “godparents”) be a member of St. Gregory’s (there can be other sponsors who are not members, as well). Ideally, this would be someone whom you have developed a connection with, as the sponsors also vow to take responsibility for the care and support of the person being baptized. Once I get to know you a little better, I can make some recommendations for who might be a good fit as sponsor(s).

If, after getting to know us and our parish a little better, you feel that this is the place your family would like to call home, we can arrange a time for the actual Baptism. Because Baptism is considered a communal event, we do not do private Baptisms. All Baptisms are done as part of a regular Sunday service or other feast. Normally, we do Baptisms on one of four Baptismal days: The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord (early January), Easter Vigil, Pentecost, and All Saints

Sunday (first Sunday in November). Because it is a long season between Pentecost and All Saints, there would be the possibility of doing a Baptism sometime in the summer or fall.

Once we decide on a date for Baptism, there is the matter of Baptismal preparation. While Baptismal preparation in the ancient church took three years, we do it a little quicker. We only require a brief Baptismal preparation session, usually about two hours in length. This is normally held on the Saturday before the Baptism.

We hope this helps in your discernment regarding Baptism at St. Gregory's. Please let the Rector know if you have any questions.