

Holy Baptism at St. David's

Holy Baptism takes place within the context of the Christian Community and therefore we offer Baptisms as part of the scheduled Sunday morning liturgy, the exception being at the Great Vigil of Easter which occurs the evening before Easter Day.

The Book of Common Prayer suggests four dates that are particularly appropriate for Holy Baptism based on the theme of the day. Those dates, and in parenthesis the date it falls in the coming year, are as follows: All Saints' Sunday (November 3, 2019); the First Sunday after the Epiphany (January 12, 2020); the Great Vigil of Easter (Saturday, April 12, 2020, 7:30 pm); and the Day of Pentecost (May 31, 2020).

Although these are the normative dates, we also work with families to find a date that will accommodate the needs of Godparents, extended family members, and friends so that everyone can be in attendance. Please be aware that in some years there are quite a few individuals to be baptized and so it is not uncommon that Baptism dates are shared among two or more families. The inclusion of multiple baptisms in a single service tends to heighten the joy and excitement of the event of welcoming new members into God's family.

Parents of infants and children who wish to present their child(ren) for Holy Baptism are not required to be members of St. David's. However, we do ask that you begin attending as a family on a "regular" basis prior to the scheduled baptismal date and seriously consider becoming regular, participating members of the congregation either before or thereafter. In The Episcopal Church Holy Baptism is considered the beginning of full membership in the church and as such there is a natural expectation of participation in the community and regular attendance.

Because The Episcopal Church views Holy Baptism as the sacrament making one a full member of the church, the newly baptized will receive their First Communion at the service in which they are baptized. This is discussed in detail at the pre-baptismal meeting (see below).

It is customary for each person being baptized to have one or more Godparents (for infants and young children) or Sponsors (for older children and adults). By virtue of the vows they are taking on behalf of the child they are presenting – "I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior" – Godparents must be baptized Christians. This does not preclude having individuals of other faith traditions as identified caregiver/role models for your children, however the role of Godparent is specific to those who actively practice the Christian faith.

Once a date for the baptism has been set, parents will be asked to fill out a Baptismal Information Form and return it to the office. Additionally, the clergy person who will be officiating the baptism – at St. David's currently that is typically the rector – will set-up a time to meet with parents and Godparents. This 90-minute meeting is usually held on the day before the baptism and includes 1) a brief overview of the history of Christian baptism; 2) discussion of the roles and responsibilities of those presenting someone for Holy Baptism; and 3) a walk-through of the logistics of the service within the context of the liturgy of the day.

Please contact the rector, Father Scott Bellows (sbellows@stdavidsrolandpark.com) for more information and/or to schedule the sacrament of Holy Baptism.