

## The Sacrament of Holy Baptism in The Episcopal Church

Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church. God establishes an indissoluble bond with each person in baptism. God adopts us, making us members of the Church and inheritors of the Kingdom of God (*Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 298, 858). In baptism we are made sharers in the new life of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the foundation for all future church participation and ministry. Each candidate for baptism in the Episcopal Church is to be sponsored by one or more baptized persons.

Sponsors (godparents) speak on behalf of candidates for baptism who are infants or younger children that cannot speak for themselves at the Presentation and Examination of the Candidates. During the baptismal rite the members of the congregation promise to do all they can to support the candidates for baptism in their life in Christ. They join with the candidates by renewing the baptismal covenant. The water of baptism may be administered by immersion or pouring (BCP, p. 307). Candidates are baptized "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and then marked on the forehead with the sign of the cross. Chrism oil may be used for this marking. The newly baptized is "sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever." When all baptisms have been completed, the Celebrant and congregation welcome the newly administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or another feast day.

The Catechism notes that "Infants are baptized so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God." The baptismal promises are made for infants by their parents or sponsors, "who guarantee that the infants will be brought up within the Church, to know Christ and be able to follow him" (BCP, pp. 858-859).

Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, the Day of Pentecost, All Saint's Day or the Sunday following, and the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after the Epiphany).

**Please speak with the Rector about being baptized**, or call 717-442-4302 or email [stjohnscompass@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnscompass@gmail.com)

