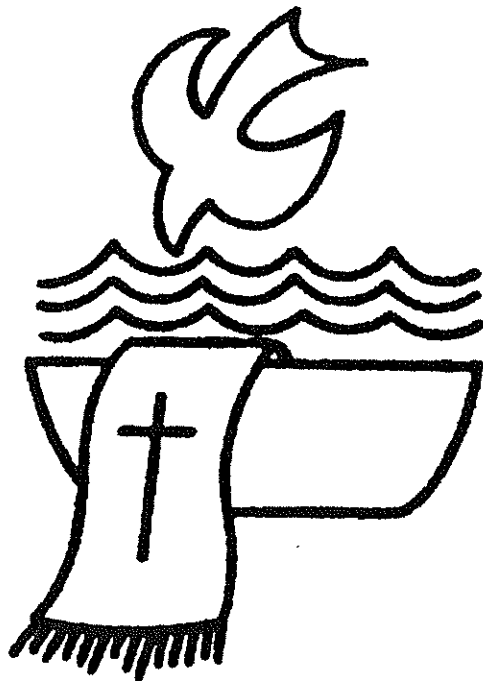


ST. EDMUND'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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BAPTISM INFORMATION AND APPLICATION

HOLY BAPTISM

Holy Baptism is one of the most important Sacraments of the Church, since it is the means whereby a person or child begins a new life, through the gift of God's grace. The Book of Common Prayer states that "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). Baptism has been the form of Christian initiation ever since the first Apostles began baptizing converts to the Faith "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The privilege of continuing this Apostolic practice is a source of great joy for us. It is also something we take very seriously.

OLDER CANDIDATES

Those who have reached an age of discretion – that is, adults and older children – and are able to speak for themselves are asked to repent of their sins, and to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Candidates for Holy Baptism are to be sponsored by one or more persons who are themselves already baptized, active Christians. These sponsors present their candidates and thereby signify their endorsement of those persons and their intentions to support them by prayer and example in their Christian life. It is desirable that Sponsors be Episcopalians, though faithful members of other Christian bodies may also be considered.

YOUNGER CHILDREN AND INFANTS

Since Baptism is such an important step in a person's life, it is essential that the parents understand clearly what they are committing themselves to in the Sacrament of Baptism, and why they want their child to be baptized. Their first responsibility is to talk together at length about this action on behalf of their son or daughter, and to be sure that this is something that has grown out of their faith, rather than a formality that family and friends expect.

Second, Baptism means more than bringing a child to Church for a special Rite. After infants have been brought into the family of God through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, they must be nurtured within that family. The responsibility lies with the parent to exemplify the Christian life by their attendance at worship, by praying with their children, and by giving and working for the Kingdom of God.

CHOOSING GODPARENTS

Sponsors of infants, commonly called "godparents" present their candidates, and make promises in their own names, and also make vows on behalf of their infant godchildren. In the Episcopal Church, it is often the custom for a boy to have two godfathers and one

godmother, and for a girl to have two godmothers and one godfather. This traditional selection of godparents according to gender is optional. The choice of godparents is a crucial one, for together with the parents they will speak for the infant and promise that he or she will be brought up in the Christian faith and life. For this reason, people who have little religious commitment are not suitable, even though they may be family members or close friends. The best godparents are people who are confirmed members of the Episcopal Church, and are active in church life. It is particularly appropriate to choose someone who is a member of our congregation here at St. Edmund's. However, any baptized person who knows and loves the child and who is prepared to make this important spiritual commitment is acceptable.

THE BAPTISM SERVICE

At St. Edmund's, as at all Episcopal churches, we follow the rule that "Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saint's Day or the Sunday after All Saint's Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after the Epiphany). It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptism be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present" (BCP 312). Because additional dates are sometimes needed, we occasionally schedule Baptism at those times of the year when families are likely to gather: the weekends closer to Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving.

"Holy Baptism is appropriately administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast" (BCP page 298). At St. Edmund's, Baptism take place during the 8:00 or 10:00 a.m. services on Sunday, so that the parish family can be part of receiving a new member into Christ's Church and to join with the candidate's parents and sponsors in "renewing their own Baptismal Covenant" (BCP page 304).

BAPTISM INSTRUCTION

The Baptism application form on the following page should be completed and returned to the Church office as soon as possible.

Q. What is Holy Baptism?

A. 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.

Q. What is the outward and visible sign in Baptism?

A. The outward and visible sign in Baptism is water, in which the person is baptized in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace in Baptism?

A. The inward and spiritual grace in Baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family and the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit.

Q. What is required of us at Baptism?

A. It is required that we renounce Satan, repent of our sins, and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Q. Why then are infants baptized?

A. Infants are baptized so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God.

Q. How are the promises for infants made and carried out?

A. Promises are made for them by their parents and sponsors, who guarantee that the infants will be brought up within the Church, to know Christ and be able to follow him.

We hope this information will give you a better understanding of our approach to Baptism at St. Edmund's Church, and will help you with your application. Please complete the following application and return it to the Church office.

The Reverend George F. Woodward III
Rector of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church.

INFANT/CHILD BAPTISM APPLICATION

Date of Application: _____

Proposed Date of Baptism: _____ Proposed Time: _____

Chapel: _____ Church: _____

Full Name: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Father's Address: _____

Father's Church Affiliation: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Mother's Address: _____

Mother's Church Affiliation: _____

Father's/Mother's Telephone – Home _____ Cell _____

E-mail: _____

Church parent (s) now attend? _____

How long have you attended? _____

Why do you wish to be Baptized at St. Edmund's? _____

Have you had other children Baptized at St. Edmund's? _____ if YES, please give names and dates _____

Other Relevant Family Information _____

Please list your children's proposed Godparents:

Name & Church Affiliation:
