

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AT SAINT JAMES **A SHARED PATHWAY TOWARD COMMITMENT AND DECISION**

Thank you for your request for information about Baptism. It is always one of the most joyful events of worship here at Saint James.

Holy Baptism is a big decision. It is our desire to prayerfully join you in this decision. These following guidelines may help you to be informed, to explore, and to decide with integrity. Our Lord, Jesus founded Baptism in the Church's life and practice. Therefore, it is marked by great joy and delight, great dignity and gravity. Baptism is a vow made in faith to Jesus Christ.

SET A DATE FOR BAPTISM

The service of Baptism is found in the Book of Common Prayer beginning on page 298. We recommend that you read it through carefully and attentively. Prayer Books may be borrowed from the church. Baptism is administered as part of the principal Sunday service. There are seven occasions during the year when Baptism may be administered. **Except for emergencies and extreme pastoral reasons, there are no private baptisms or baptisms on other Sundays.**

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| 1. Epiphany Sunday | January 6, 2019 |
| 2. The First Sunday after Easter | April 28, 2019 |
| 3. Trinity Sunday – Father's Day | June 16, 2019 |
| 4. The Second Sunday after Labor Day | September 15, 2019 |
| 5. The Sunday following All Saints Day | November 10, 2019 |

Exact dates can be obtained from the Parish Administrator at the office.

The clergy of Saint James are always available for consultation and advice about Baptism.

WELCOME!

The first step is worship and integration into the Faith Community. Become a regular worshipping member of Saint James. Join the worship. Join the Community. Our goal is to live out the Gospel together. Baptism is appropriate only within the life of the worshipping community. The goal is to give you an opportunity to understand the promises you will make on behalf of your child and to give us an opportunity to love and support you in those promises.

Jesus said to the disciples, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."
- The Gospel according to Matthew

"Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble."

"Sponsors of infants, commonly called godparents, ... make promises in their own names, and also take vows on behalf of their god children." *The Book of Common Prayer*

"Baptism is a sign of salvation and not the means of salvation...." *AMJ*

CHILDREN AND INFANTS If you are requesting baptism for your child, you need to know that your responsibility as a parent is very great. The fruits of this sacrament will depend in large part on how wisely
Saint James: It's Simple: Love God, Love People, Build Community

and visibly you help your child learn what it means to be a Christian. We will help you all we can through our church school, adult courses, preaching and worship all that is the life of the believers, but when all is said and done, only you can present Jesus Christ to your child in ways that become part of the fabric of his or her life.

ADULTS

If you are an adult seeking baptism, please know this will be a wonderful example to all God's people. Not only will your baptism be a Sacrament for you, but God will use you as a sacrament for the whole congregation. When an adult chooses the Christian faith as a way of life, people take notice and it strengthens them in their own faith.

BAPTISMAL INSTRUCTION

The next step is to receive some specific instruction about Christian baptism and allow for some time that you might ask any questions you may have. The purpose of this instruction is three-fold. (1) To learn about the meaning of Baptism. (2) To explore and probe personally one's own experience, faith and relationship with Jesus Christ. Many find this to be a rich and exciting time of discovery and personal spiritual insight. (3) To decide: For many, the decision by the family and the church is to proceed with Baptism. Others may decide that Baptism is not their choice. Some may decide to delay a decision. "I want more time to reflect and probe and stretch." There is no "right" choice. Any of these may be the good decision for you and your family at this time. Baptism is a big commitment.

Instruction is held for all parents, sponsors and adult candidates for baptism. First you will meet with a member of the Clergy. Another meeting will be scheduled for the Saturday before the Baptism, for both the parents and godparents of the child. Please do not bring babies and small children who are being baptized. Attendance at instruction is required; special arrangements should be made with the clergy if you are unable to be at the instruction time.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

It is a requirement for Baptism that the parents of the child read and study Mark Holmen's books, Faith Begins @ Home: Dad, Mom. You are encouraged to also read and study the book: Family Driven Faith, by the Rev'd Dr. Voddie Baucham, Jr. and Dr. Rob Rienow's book, God's Grand Vision for the Home. We ask you to read this in order that we may discuss with you the privilege and responsibility entrusted with you by our Lord for your children. Please take it seriously. At the time of Baptism you, the parents will be asked to participate in several specific ways. Fathers will be asked to "name their child" at the moment of Baptism and following that, to pray a blessing over them. We will help you with this.

SPONSORS AND GODPARENTS

All children being baptized need to have at least one sponsor. The only requirement is that the sponsor must be a baptized Christian. They do not need to be Episcopalian. There is no requirement as to the gender and number of godparents a child may have. There are some common sense limits. The sponsors of infants are often called godparents, but they have no legal rights or responsibilities.

OTHER INFORMATION

No fee is charged for Baptism.

NO PHOTOS – Baptism is part of Christian Worship and we do not want to interrupt the sacred reverence of this time.

Please be as accurate as possible in filling out the Baptismal information blank. It is entered into the parish register and can be used as legal evidence in case of a lost birth certificate, for example.

In an emergency, any Christian may perform a Baptism. (See page 313 in the Book of Common Prayer)