

Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church

Baptism Guidelines

**INTRODUCTION:** Along with Holy Eucharist, Baptism is one of the two most important sacraments of the Church. Baptism is administered to individuals of any age who have not been previously baptized with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. If someone joins the Episcopal Church from another denomination, his or her Baptism in that denomination is recognized as valid.

Baptism is the sacrament of Christian initiation by which a person becomes a member of the Body of Christ. Whether old enough to speak for themselves, or infants for whom godparents speak, persons who receive Baptism vow to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. These vows include regular participation in corporate worship, as well as a commitment to prayer and study as life-long practices.

Since Baptism is the rite of Christian initiation, it is a public celebration of the Church. All baptisms take place in the presence of the congregation gathered for Sunday worship. Anyone interested in receiving baptism for themselves or for someone else may call the church office at (225) 926-5343.

**EXPECTATIONS:** Holy Baptism is appropriate for persons who desire to be active participants in the community of faith. In most cases, this means that adult candidates for Baptism, and the parents of young children, will attend worship regularly for a period of some months prior to Baptism

The Baptism of children whose parents live outside of this parish may only be scheduled at St. Luke’s with the assurance that the promises and vows of Baptism will be fulfilled through active membership and participation in another parish. The clergy will be happy to assist families who have a historic connection to St. Luke’s and who now live in other communities to locate and join a local Episcopal church.

Parents and Godparents of children to be baptized at St. Luke’s are expected to attend a pre-baptism instruction and rehearsal with a member of the clergy prior to the scheduled date of Baptism. *No Baptism will take place at St. Luke’s without the completion of pre-baptismal instruction*.

**GODPARENTS or SPONSORS:** According to *The Book of Common Prayer*:

“Each candidate for Holy Baptism is to be sponsored by one or more baptized persons. Sponsors of adults and older children present their candidate and thereby signify their endorsement of the candidates and their intention to support them by prayer and example in their Christian life. Sponsors of infants, commonly called godparents, present their candidates, make promises in their own names, and also take vows on behalf of their candidates. It is fitting that parents be included among the godparents of their own children. Parents and godparents are to be instructed in the meaning of Baptism, in their duties to help the new Christians grow in the knowledge and love of God, and in their responsibilities as members of his Church.”

The number of godparents for infants and small children can vary. Godparents should be aware that they take on the responsibility of seeing that the child they sponsor takes seriously his/her Christian life and formation. It is therefore wise for parents to choose godparents whose own Christian life reflects this commitment.

**THE SERVICE:** Seating will be reserved for baptismal candidates, their sponsors, and families. Baptismal candidates, parents, and sponsors will be invited to come forward after the sermon for the Presentation and Examination of the Candidates. If you have family members or guests who are not Episcopalians, we encourage you to advise them in advance that all baptized Christians are welcome to receive communion.

**BAPTISMAL RECORDS:** Certificates for candidates and sponsors will be prepared. Be sure to get these from the clergy before leaving the church.

**OCCASIONS FOR BAPTISM:** According to *The Book of Common Prayer*:

“Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saints’ Day or the Sunday after All Saints’ 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, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present.”

**For more information, please call the church office at (225) 926-5343, or contact Fr. Chris Golding at** **frchris@stlukesbr.org****.**