

Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

This applies to those who have lapsed from the faith for a period of time or who have been separated from the Church. It is also appropriate for members of the Church who wish to renew their commitment to the service of Christ in the world, either in general terms or upon undertaking special responsibilities. Just as with confirmation and reception, the bishop officiates at reaffirmation.

Membership at All Saints

All are welcome to participate in the life and worship at All Saints. When we join a local congregation of the greater Church, we are identifying ourselves with Jesus Christ. We invite you to become part of Christ's family at this parish. You can indicate your desire to unite with us by completing the Census and Membership Form (available from the office).

If you have not been baptized, confirmed, or received, we hope you will consider taking these steps. They provide an opportunity to become more intentional about living out the commitment and responsibilities found in our Baptismal Covenant. Confirmation and reception only occur during the visit of the bishop (approximately every 18 months). Classes will be offered ahead of time.

If you are already a confirmed Episcopalian, you can simply transfer your membership from your previous parish. If you are a "cradle Episcopalian" and never officially joined a parish when you became an adult, you are probably "on the books" of the parish where you attended as a child. If you cannot remember the name of the parish but remember the town, we can find that information for you.

Once we have the name of your childhood parish, it is just a matter of requesting that your records be transferred to All Saints. We will be happy to make that request for you.

We recognize that active membership in a church and its responsibilities might be unfamiliar to some. As members of the body of Christ we are called to be faithful in corporate worship and in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. Attending a Newcomer Social is a good way to receive an overview of parish ministries and educational offerings. Committee, guild, and Vestry meetings are open to all, and by visiting them you can learn more about their activities. On the Every Member Canvass form (available in the entryway) you can also indicate what parish ministries about which you would like to learn more. We hope that each parishioner will become involved in ways that are suited to his or her gifts, interests, and schedule.

If you would like more information about what has been described herein, you are welcome to contact Father Stephen or examine the appropriate pamphlets that are on the racks in the narthex.

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BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, RECEPTION & MEMBERSHIP AT ALL SAINTS



The purpose of All Saints' Church is to celebrate God's love, to seek and to serve Christ in all persons, and to go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

From the service of Holy Baptism (Book of Common Prayer, p.308): *We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.*

Journey in Faith

This brochure briefly describes steps of faith in Christ that we invite all persons to consider as they mature spiritually. By responding to God's call and through His grace we are able to pursue our parish's mission statement printed on the front of this brochure.

As a community of faith we look forward to celebrating with the candidates the services of baptism, confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation of baptismal vows. Since the commitments made at these services should not be made lightly, prior instruction is required. Father Stephen Whitney-Wise, with the assistance of parishioners, oversees the preparation of all candidates.

Holy Baptism

"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. The outward and visible sign in Baptism is water, in which the person is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The inward and spiritual grace in Baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit." (BCP, p. 858)

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism is a joyous experience for the entire Christian Community. It is as one of the baptized that we may partake of the sacrament of Holy Communion, and it is the foundation for formal membership in the Episcopal Church.

Normally, we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism at the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost (Whitsunday), Christmas, and other feasts or Sundays, but always after proper instruction and preparation.

In the case of the baptism of an infant or young child, the preparation of parents is especially important. Their participation in the practice of their faith, regular worship of God through community celebration of Holy Eucharist, and instruction in the Catechism or Outline of the Faith is essential for the faith and development of their child. To that end the rector meets with the parents and, when possible, the godparents three or four times prior to the Baptism, to discuss the commitments they are making on behalf of their child. It should be noted that the rector cannot baptize a minor against the wishes or without the expressed permission and participation of the parent(s).

It has been the custom that in an emergency any baptized Christian can baptize another person while pouring water on the person's head saying, "I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." If this is done, the parish office is to be notified immediately so that pastoral care can be given and the baptism may be recorded.

Confirmation

"In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.

"Those baptized as adults, unless baptized with laying on of hands by a bishop, are also expected to make a public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism in the presence of a bishop and to receive the laying on of hands." (BCP, p. 412)

Confirmation is intended for baptized Christians who desire to continue to grow to the full stature of Christ. They receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop, who represents a spiritual link to the Apostles and to the whole Church.

We too seldom speak of the responsibilities of being a Christian (see the Examination of the Candidates and Baptismal Covenant, BCP, pp. 415-417). As adults we confirm our faith, "put aside childish ways" (1 Cor. 13:11), and accept the responsibilities that come from our Christian commitment. Confirmed adult members have the ability to serve in all the lay ministries of the Episcopal Church.

Reception

If someone has been duly baptized and confirmed in another Christian denomination, he or she is not "reconfirmed" in the Episcopal Church. Instead, when the person desires to become a formal member, he or she is received by the bishop into the Episcopal Church. This joining together with the Episcopal Church allows the received to participate as fully as other confirmed members.