

one's Baptism is simply a public statement that one is recommitting to resist what is wrong, to believe what is true, and to do what is right before God – henceforth, living out one's baptismal promises.

Please speak to a member of the clergy for additional information.

Marriage or Blessing of a Relationship

“Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between two individuals in the presence of God” (Book of Common Prayer, P. 422). Any covenantal union or relationship that is recognized by others – the State or the Church – is never to be entered into “unadvisedly or lightly;” it is to be “entered into reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God” (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 423).

In the Episcopal Church, we believe that any marriage or committed relationship is a holy union between two individuals who have chosen to come together in a mutual agreement of love – love of body, mind, heart and soul. Furthermore, we believe that this kind of covenant was intended by God not only for shared love, but for the “help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity, and when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and the nurture of children in

the knowledge and love of God” (Book of Common Prayer, pg. 423).

While Marriage or Holy Union is not found in Sacred Scripture to be instituted by Christ, as was Baptism and Holy Eucharist, our theology defines Marriage as a sacrament simply because it, like all Sacraments, teaches us about a God who we cannot touch or see, in a way that we can touch and see through tangible and visible things.

Simply stated, the purpose of marriage is to give life and love to the world. Two individuals who enter into a mutual covenant, will fulfill their marriage vows in the way that they will love, honor and nurture each other. But in Christian marriage, the relationship is also meant to be for others - an example (or an icon) of what it means to be loving and faithful to another human being.

The Celebration and Blessing of Marriage and Blessings of Commitments require consultation with clergy. It is important that no date or time is set for a ceremony until after you consult with a member of the clergy. As in all sacraments, we urge couples to consider how they can first become active members of the congregation before seeking marriage at Trinity Parish.

Sacraments

Baptism
Confirmation
Marriage
(and related topics)



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The Sacrament of Baptism

The sacrament of Baptism is an important first step in becoming a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. Besides Holy Eucharist, Baptism is one of the two “Sacraments of the Gospel” Christ is believed to have instituted; its Biblical authority being found in the Gospel of St. Matthew 28:19: *“Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”* According to the “Outline of the Faith” that is found in the Book of Common Prayer, “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.” (*Book of Common Prayer, pg. 858*) As in any sacraments, there are signs – outward and inward – that are present. In the case of Baptism, water is the outward and visible sign used on those being baptized. The inward sign of Baptism is a rebirth into the family of God and union with Jesus Christ through His death and resurrection. Overall the Church celebrates the fact that all baptized members of the Body of Christ celebrate new life in the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. What then is required of someone desiring baptism?

Someone receiving the Sacrament should be in a state of grace – namely, a state of being **receptive** to God’s love and God’s gifts. Having received God’s gifts freely, we are then called to stand against sin and evil. The person being baptized is asked to resist what is wrong, to believe what is true, and to do what is right before God. This is otherwise

known as the *Baptismal Covenant*; a covenant that celebrates what we believe and how we will live out this belief.

Because Baptism is such an important first step in becoming a member of the Body of Christ, it is offered to all people, adults and infants as well. Baptism presumes that the individual to be baptized is choosing to become a member of the family of God, the congregation to which he/she is about to be welcomed into. In the case of infants, parents and sponsors generally make the commitment for the child who has not yet reached the age of reason or who cannot yet speak for him/herself to turn away from evil and sin and join the family of God, the Church. Apart from the parents and sponsors, the entire community is asked to help teach the child what it means to live a Godly life.

According to the Book of Common Prayer, the celebration of Baptism in any congregation should be appropriately celebrated at the Easter Vigil, the Day of Pentecost, All Saint’s Day (Or the Sunday after All Saint’s), and on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. In the Episcopal Church, baptisms are never celebrated apart from the chief service on a Sunday or alone. Since it is all about belonging to the Body of Christ, the living Church, the celebration of Baptism is always communal as opposed to private.

For additional information on preparation classes, contact one of the clergy at Trinity Parish

The Sacrament of Confirmation and Reception into the Episcopal Church

Confirmation is the sacrament in which spiritual gifts are imparted to an individual to live more fully a Christian life. Theologically, it celebrates the reality of our baptism and our anointing as God’s children. In the latter history of the Church, it

marked the moment in one’s life when one ceased to be a child spiritually and become a spiritual adult. It has been the common practice to confirm young adults around the ages of 14-16; however, anyone who has not been confirmed and wishes to receive this sacrament should speak to a member of the clergy of the congregation.

Reception Into The Episcopal Church

Reception is when an individual who was baptized in another religious tradition within the historic churches (e.g. Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.) wishes to join the Episcopal Church by requesting full reception into the Church by the Bishop of the Diocese. If the individual is already confirmed, there is no need for re-confirmation. Instead, the individual is *formally received* as a member into the Episcopal Church. The words found in the Book of Common Prayer speak to this moment: (The Bishop speaks to the one being received) *“We recognize you as a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, and we receive you into the fellowship of this Communion. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you”* (*Book of Common Prayer, pg. 418*).

Individuals wishing to celebrate a Reaffirmation of their Baptism vows may also do this when the Bishop of the Diocese is present for Confirmation and/or Reception. A “Reaffirmation” of