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BAPTISMS AT STAH

When a person is baptized, the whole congregation participates in the ceremony. This is (in part) because being a Christian is about relationships: with God and with each other. That's why it is of utmost importance that a candidate be baptized in his or her spiritual community (when possible). Baptism is a commitment a person makes for him- or herself (or on behalf of a child), and the community is making that commitment with the candidate.

If you would like to be baptized at STAH or have your child baptized here, please know that you will be asked to attend services and participate in the community of STAH for at least six months before the baptism will be scheduled. We want you to be sure that STAH is the right place for you and your family before making that commitment.

All Sacraments are performed at the discretion of the Rector, and different arrangements may be made at the discretion of the Rector.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is the full initiation by water and the Holy Ghost into Christ's Body, the church. God establishes an indissoluble bond with each person in Baptism, adopting us and making us members of the church and inheritors of the Kingdom of God. In Baptism we share a new life of the Holy Ghost and of forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the foundation for all future church ministry and participation (including the partaking of Holy Communion).

CAN INFANTS BE BAPTIZED AT STAH?

Yes. The Catechism notes that "Infants are Baptized so that they can share citizenship in the Covenant, membership in Christ, and redemption by God." The Baptismal promises are made for infants by their parents or godparents "who

guarantee that the infant will be brought up within the Church, to know Christ and be able to follow him.”

WHEN ARE BAPTISMS OFFERED?

A Baptism may be scheduled year-round, with the exception of Lent (the period beginning Ash Wednesday and concluding at Easter). Baptisms are not encouraged to be scheduled during Advent (the four Sundays preceding Christmas Day).

Baptisms are especially appropriate at the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord (the Sunday after 6 January), the Great Easter Vigil (the night before Easter Day), the Day of Pentecost (the Sunday seven weeks after Easter Day), and All Saints’ Festival Sunday (the Sunday within the week of 30 October to 5 November).

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR BAPTISM?

Adult and youth candidates are encouraged (but not required) to join the Catechesis, a weekly class that begins in the fall and culminates with the Baptismal Rite at the Great Vigil of Easter.

Parents and godparents of infants (and other candidates not opting for Catechesis) should reflect prayerfully on the five promises of the Baptismal Covenant (*Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 304-305). These serve as a foundation for a commitment to the Christian faith and life.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE BAPTISMAL RITE?

Each candidate for Baptism in the Episcopal Church is to be sponsored by one or more Baptized persons, who will present the candidate for Baptism. The candidate is then examined by the Officiant, who asks the candidate a series of questions. For infants or younger children who cannot speak for themselves, godparents (sponsors for young minors) speak on behalf of the candidates during the Examination.

Following the Presentation and Examination, the members of the congregation promise to do all they can to support the candidate for Baptism in his or her life in Christ. They join with the candidate by renewing their own Baptismal Covenant and praying for the candidate. After which, the candidate is anointed with the Oil of Catechumens on the crown of his or her head.

The water of Baptism is administered at STAHL by pouring it over the candidate’s head. A candidate is Baptized “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” and then the Celebrant, using Holy Chrism, marks the sign of the

cross on the forehead of the newly Baptized, who is then “sealed by the Holy Ghost in Baptism and marked as Christ’s own for ever.”

A Baptismal Candle is then lit using the flame of the Paschal candle and presented to the newly Baptized (or godparents) as a symbol of moving from death to life in Christ.

HOW MUCH DOES A BAPTISM COST?

There is no fee for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP?

Once you are ready to proceed with the process of Baptism, the first step is contacting the Parish Office for a questionnaire and to schedule an appointment with the Rector.