

## The Background of Holy Baptism

In the sacrament of baptism, we recall the early rituals of the Jewish faith. Baptism has its origins in the purity rituals of our Jewish forbearers. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The three Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism by John are integral to our understanding of baptism (See Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). All of these scripture passages include both the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus and the voice of God saying, "You are my son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Baptism, then, marks the beginning of a new and more abundant life begun as we turn from that which keeps us separated from God and accept our true identity as beloved children of God. In continuity with the purity rituals and early baptisms, water serves as a symbol of cleansing and new birth. Baptism means all this and more because of the coming of Jesus, the Christ. John the Baptist said to his followers, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the gift of the Holy Spirit." This gift of the Holy Spirit means that all that we vow to do in baptism is done with God's help. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live this new life promised in Baptism.

### A Relationship

Baptism is the outward and visible action that connects a person to God in a covenant relationship. In addition, the congregation not only witnesses the vows of the baptized, the parents, and the godparents, but also reaffirms their own baptismal vows and pledges to uphold the newly baptized in their Christian life and faith. Baptism is a powerful, transformational moment for the entire faith community as we welcome our newest members, vow to support them, and reaffirm our own baptismal vows.

## Arranging for a Baptism at St. Thomas' Church

### Determine the Best Date and Contact Us

At St. Thomas' Church, baptism is a process involving speaking with the clergy and a baptismal preparation class. Please check the dates listed in this brochure (**the deadline is typically at least one month prior to the baptism date**) then call the Rector's Assistant at Parish Office at 215-233-3970 ext. 121 to reserve the date and for any additional information.

### How much does it cost?

There is no charge for the sacrament of baptism but we hope that you will consider giving generously to the work of the church during our stewardship season.

### Worship Regularly

Because baptism is a transformational moment for the entire faith community in which we welcome our newest members and vow to support them, relationships are pivotal. The day of one's baptism is just the beginning of the new life that Christ has promised us. It is only through the gift of community that we can truly receive all the gifts promised to us at baptism. The baptismal candidate is baptized into Christ's body, the Church. But for the church to fulfill its vow to the baptized, the baptized needs to be present! During baptismal preparation, every attempt should be made to attend worship services regularly.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Whom should I choose for a sponsor or godparent?

The role of godparent is a special one in which one person, in the case of infants and younger children, makes a vow on behalf of another to support them in their Christian faith and life. Godparents should ideally be persons with whom you share your faith and whose life is one which you would hope your child to emulate. Parents are appropriate godparents for their children.

### How many godparents should I choose?

*The Book of Common Prayer* requires that there be at least one or more baptized persons. If you would like guidance in choosing a godparent, one of our clergy will be glad to assist you.

### What if the godparents cannot be present?

It is ideal for godparents to be present to make their vows on behalf of the candidate. If they cannot be present, you might choose another baptismal date when they can be present. If this is not possible, someone else should stand in for that person and the godparent should make an appointment to talk with the clergy to discuss their role as a godparent.

### Do I have to participate in a baptismal preparation class?

All parents are required to attend a baptismal preparation class, not only to learn more about baptism, but also to reflect on your own faith journey and your hopes for your child's life of faith. The class also provides an opportunity to build community with other parents in the church. Adult baptismal candidates are required to prepare for baptism too. Contact the Rev. Whitney Altopp for more information.

Place Stamp  
Here

St. Thomas Church Whitmarsh  
P.O. Box 247  
Fort Washington, PA 19034

To register for baptism at St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh please fill out and return this card.

\*Please ensure that you are scheduling your baptism at least one month in advance otherwise we may not be able to honor your request.

You will be contacted by

The Rev. Whitney Altopp, Vicar

## PREPARING FOR Holy Baptism



*St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh*  
*Our mission is to know Jesus and to*  
*make Him known to others.*

### Baptism Class Schedule 2009-2010

Parents who desire to have their children baptized at St. Thomas' Church, are required to attend a baptismal prep class led by the clergy to learn about the Sacrament, to reflect upon your faith journey and for your hopes for your child's life of faith. Adults wishing to be baptized go through a similar program.

#### Dates of Baptism and Preparation Classes

All baptisms are held during  
Worship Services

#### Baptism Dates 2009

All Saints Sunday, November 1 @ 9:30 a.m.

Prep Class October 31 @ 9:30 a. m.

#### Baptism Dates for 2010

Epiphany, January 10 @ 9:30 a.m.

Easter Vigil, April 3 @ 7:00 p.m.

Pentecost, May 23 @ 9:30 a.m.

June 20, July 18, August 15 @ 10:00 a.m.

All Saints Sunday, November 7, @ 9:30 a.m.



---

St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh  
P. O Box 247  
Fort Washington, PA 19034

---

### Welcome!

Baptism is a time of great joy, and all Christians are blessed by those baptized. Baptism is about our journey together as Christians, and we at St. Thomas are here to support you and answer any questions you might have. We welcome you and invite you to *Come with us on a journey with Christ.*

The Rev. Marek P. Zabriskie, Rector

### What is Baptism?

#### Baptism is God's promise to us

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 Book of Common Prayer*, 858). The sacrament marks the beginning of a new life in which we are promised a new relationship with God – opening us to new possibility and hope through Jesus Christ.

#### Our promise to God and one another

At baptism, the person to be baptized vows to accept Jesus Christ as savior, to trust in his grace and love, and to follow and obey him as Lord (*BCP* 302-303). In the case of infants and younger children unable to answer for themselves, these vows are made by their parents and godparents who promise to raise the child in the Christian faith and support him or her in a Christian life through their prayers and by example.

*For in the one Spirit, we were all  
baptized into one body*

*– I Corinthians 12:13*

I am interested in Baptism at St. Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Baptism Dates for 2009

\_\_\_\_\_ All Saints Sunday, November 1, \_\_\_\_\_ Pentecost, May 23, 9:30 a.m.  
9:30 a.m. \_\_\_\_\_ June 20 \_\_\_\_\_ July 18

#### Baptism Dates for 2010

\_\_\_\_\_ Epiphany, January 10, 9:30 a.m. \_\_\_\_\_ August 15  
\_\_\_\_\_ Easter Vigil, April 3, 7:00 p.m. \_\_\_\_\_ All Saints Sunday, November 7

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.  
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.  
This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.