

preparing for the sacrament of

# HOLY BAPTISM

a family guide



St. Timothy's  
Episcopal Church

## BEING THE CHURCH

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We're excited to celebrate the gift of baptism with you! May this renew the whole family's commitment to Christ! We commit to being present with you as we raise our kids in the way of the Lord and uphold each other in our baptismal life. We invite you to attend our Sunday worship service regularly and get connected with our congregation to continue to grow in your relationship with Christ. We believe that through baptism, we are joined together as the Body of Christ and are entrusted with the responsibility of "Being the Church." This calling is for all the baptized, young and old, and each one of us plays an important role. We invite you to participate with us by practicing our faith in a way that changes us and benefits others.

This brief guide is designed to help the parents and family better understand the sacrament of Holy Baptism and give some ideas on teaching and living into their baptismal identity. Our hope is to help your family, and the rest of our church family, raise your kids in the way of the Lord. May God grant us his blessing and peace as we live into this together.



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## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

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To understand Holy Baptism we have to first understand the Gospel. The Gospel is the announcement that the Kingdom of God is breaking into the world through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> It's time to rethink everything and put our trust in this news that God is making a home with us and setting everything right.

The Gospel is ultimately an announcement of what God is up to in the world and in our lives. It is the good news that God is making all things new. (Revelation 21:5) He is reconciling all of creation to himself, freeing us from captivity to sin, filling us with knowledge of him, making us citizens of his Kingdom, and enabling us to worship, serve, and glorify him now and forever.<sup>2</sup>

## HOW DOES GOD SAVE US?

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God saves us by grace, which is his undeserved love given to us in and through Jesus. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

## WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

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Jesus is the Messiah, our Rescuer, fully divine and fully human. He bore our sins, dying in our place on the cross, then rose from the dead to rule as anointed king over us and all creation. (Colossians 1:15-26)

## HOW CAN WE RESPOND?

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We can repent and have faith. “Repent” means that we have a change of heart, turning from sinfully serving ourselves to serving God as we follow Jesus Christ. We need God’s help to make this change. (Acts 2:38; 3:19) To have faith means that we believe the Gospel is true; We acknowledge that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead to reign in our lives; We entrust ourselves to him as our Savior; and we align ourselves with him as our Lord above all else. As the Apostle Paul said, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). Anyone may repent and place their faith in Jesus Christ at any time. One way to do this is by sincerely saying a prayer similar to the following. (John 15:16; Acts 16:31-34; Romans 10:9; Hebrews 12:12)

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 1:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15, Romans 5:15; John 1:12; 1 John 5:11-12

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; 1 John 5:11-12; 1 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 2:19; 3:19; Colossians 1:9

*Lord Jesus Christ, I confess my faults, shortcomings, sins, and rebellious acts, and ask you to forgive me. I embrace you, Lord Jesus, as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for your atoning death on the cross in obedience to your Father's will to put away my sins. I enthrone you, Lord Jesus, to be in charge of every part of my life, and I ask you to indwell and empower me with your Holy Spirit, so that I may live as your faithful follower from now on. Amen.*

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO ONCE YOU HAVE PUT YOUR FAITH IN JESUS?

You should be baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and thus into membership in his Body, the Church! (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:13)

When we put our faith in Jesus, God grants us reconciliation with him (2 Corinthians 5:17-19), forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14), adoption into his family (Galatians 4:4-7), citizenship in his Kingdom (Ephesians 2:19-21, Philippians 3:20), union with him in Christ (Romans 6:3-5), new life in the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-5), and the promise of eternal life (John 3:16; 1 John 5:12).

God desires to transform us into the image of Jesus by the power of his Holy Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18) He will transform us over time through corporate and private worship, prayer, and Bible reading; fellowship with God's people; pursuit of holiness of life; witness toward those who do not know Christ; and acts of love toward all. The first Christians set this pattern as they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25)



## WHAT IS HOLY BAPTISM?

*Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin: Grant that we, being reborn to new life in him, may live in righteousness*

*and holiness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*<sup>3</sup>

This prayer expresses what we believe is happening in baptism. On the one hand, baptism is a humble ritual: a bath which we accompany with the telling of our story and a series of prayers. On the other hand, we hold fast to the mystery that our Lord Jesus Christ promises is at work in baptism: the translation of God's people from death to life by being plunged into Christ's death and resurrection and being incorporated into his church.

Baptism is one of two sacraments, the other being the Eucharist, which are "ordained by Christ, and...generally necessary for our salvation."<sup>4</sup> A sacrament is, in the simplest terms, God miraculously bringing life where there is death by working through the material means he has appointed: water, and bread and wine. As Christians, we believe that these meager rites are mighty acts of God. In Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, he inaugurated the kingdom of God, and he commissioned the church to be a beachhead of the kingdom.



As Christians who live in the United States, we are often tempted to think of the church as a club or a voluntary society that exists to help us grow in our personal relationship with Jesus. Actually, the New Testament teaches us to think of the relationship in much different terms: the church is the visible body of Christ that prolongs his presence in the world (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Col. 1:24). The church is the visible temple of the Lord being "built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22). The visible church precedes us, and we only belong to Christ insofar as we belong to his church. And baptism is the means by which we move from outside to inside of the church. The church's response to the newly baptized emphasizes this move: "We receive you into the fellowship of the Church."

Baptism, in this sense, takes on a much deeper meaning than merely joining Kiwanis or a country club. It is more like passing through death into life (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). Peter teaches us to think about the church as if it were Noah's ark (1 Pet. 3:20-1). If we are not inside the ark, the waters will kill us. But in order to get into the ark, paradoxically, we have to pass through the waters.

<sup>3</sup> 1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism, Q. 104.

We have to be drowned before we can be recreated and given new life in Christ's church. That is why Peter tells us that "baptism now saves you." Similarly, Paul likens baptism to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. The Israelites were "baptized into Moses" by passing through it, even as Christians are baptized into Christ by passing through the waters of baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

Paul gives us an additional image in Titus. He teaches us to think of baptism as the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). Paul wants us to think of the Tabernacle in this passage. The Tabernacle was meant to be a "microcosm" of the creation. The outer court is the dwelling of humanity; the holy place symbolized the heavens that we see and its light sources; and the holy of holies represented the throne room of God, the invisible dimension of creation which is the dwelling of God.<sup>5</sup> To pass into the holy of holies, the priest had to purify himself by washing his hands and feet in the water in the bronze basin (Ex. 30:17-21). What Titus is telling us is that the church is now the holy of holies, the place where God dwells with humanity, and the bath that cleanses us so that we might come into this temple is baptism.

Our baptismal liturgy sums up the Scriptural witness to baptism in the Thanksgiving over the Water. It highlights the momentous role that water has throughout the canon of Scripture; in fact it tells our story as Christians through the lens of this element of water. And it connects baptism to our new life and our new creation by the Holy Spirit through our entrance into Christ's church:

*W*e thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

Baptism is thus a remarkable privilege. But the prayer with which we started this discussion points us to another dimension of baptism, moving us beyond privilege to responsibility. As

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<sup>5</sup> G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 31-3.

<sup>6</sup> 1979 Book of Common Prayer, 306-307.

## Preparing for Holy Baptism

baptism is the entrance into the life of the church and the passage from death into divine life, it is also the principle by which we may live “in holiness and righteousness all our days.” Baptism puts us to work, inviting us into the tasks of the kingdom: working for justice and mercy, feeding and clothing the hungry, visiting the sick and the imprisoned, caring for widows and orphans.

We are invited into a life of continual conversion in which we are conformed to what our baptism declares us to be. As the Anglican theologian Francis Hall says, “Baptism makes us branches of the true vine, members of Jesus Christ...But the branches may none the less remain unfruitful, and finally be cast out for burning.”<sup>7</sup> So we must not think that baptism will save us independently of a life lived in faith and lived faithfully.

Fourth-century church father, Cyril of Jerusalem, brings this all together well as he describes the waters of baptism: “Great is the baptism that lies before you: the ransom of captives, the forgiveness of sins, the death of sin, the regeneration of the soul, the garment of light, the holy perpetual seal, a chariot to heaven, the delight of paradise, a welcome into the kingdom, the gift of adoption.”<sup>8</sup> Given the gravity of what we are doing when we come to the baptismal font, let us approach it with earnest and humility. Let us prepare our hearts to receive the mystery. Let us express in our lives what we have been declared to be in our baptism.



<sup>7</sup> Francis Hall, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. ix, *The Sacraments* (New York, 1921), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatechesis* 16.

“Baptism of Christ” by Joachim Patinier c. 1515. Depicting Matthew 3:13–17.

## WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN FOR THE FAMILY?

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As we have already seen, Paul has a number of images that he draws from to talk about the nature of the church. One image we haven't touched on yet that is unique to Paul is the image of adoption. Paul says that when we are brought into the church through baptism, we are adopted as sons of God (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). By using this term, Paul is drawing on social and legal conventions of the Roman world to show what the Christian's relationship is like with God. Adoption in the Roman world cut off relationship with one's old family and created new obligations with one's new family - it is as if the adopted person were the biological child of the new family. Adoption was also irrevocable: although one could disown one's biological children, one could not do so with an adopted child.<sup>9</sup>

Through our adoption in baptism, we are given a new family in the church. Indeed, the church becomes our *principal family*, more important even than the biological ties of kinship.<sup>10</sup> Blood is not thicker than water for Paul; water is thicker than blood! In Christianity, the biological family is placed at the service of the church family, and in the church family every adult, married or single, becomes a parent, a spiritual father or mother. As Stanley Hauerwas writes, "All Christian adults have a parental responsibility because of baptism. Biology does not make parents in the church. Baptism does. Baptism makes all adult Christians parents and gives them the obligation to help introduce these children to the gospel."<sup>11</sup> So the biological family, relativized as it is in light of baptism, becomes, as John Chrysostom put it, a "little church," at the service of the church's mission.<sup>12</sup>



The Catholic tradition, of which Anglicanism is a part, gives institutional expression to this reality by appointing godparents for children who are baptized. The office of godparent is not a formality, nor is it something you ask someone to do just because that person is a close friend. The godparent has a responsibility, along with parents, to raise children in the "nurture and admonition

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<sup>9</sup> Trevor Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, NSBT (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 65-9.

<sup>10</sup> As Jesus said would be the case with his disciples. Mark 10:29-30; Luke 9:59-60.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, "Abortion, Theologically Understood," in *The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 612.

<sup>12</sup> John Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*, trans. Catherine Roth and David Anderson (Crestview: SVS Press, 1986), 57.



of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). At a minimum, this means that the godparent must be among the baptized. But more than that, the godparent should be a person of wisdom and spiritual maturity.

In our baptismal liturgy, parents and godparents present the children together. As one, they

promise to raise the child in the Christian faith and life and help the child “grow into the full stature of Christ” through their prayers and witness.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, parents and godparents speak on behalf of the child. They renounce Satan, evil, and sinful desires by turning to Jesus Christ, putting their whole trust in him, and promising to follow and obey Jesus as Lord. Being a parent or godparent is a solemn responsibility and lifelong commitment to this child.



While this responsibility is entrusted to parents and godparents, it is not theirs alone. The church also vows to come alongside them and do all in our power to support baptismal families in their life in Christ. The church’s vow is one of the most beautiful parts of our service. If you’re not prepared, it can be startling to hear the church boldly affirm this vow.

What we affirm theologically has real-world consequences. When adults other than biological parents in a congregation take an interest and get to work making “spiritual apprentices” of the young people in our congregations, young people flourish more, and they remain Christians and joyfully transmit their faith to others at greater rates, than when baptized adults shirk this responsibility.<sup>14</sup> We need parents to shoulder the burden of apprenticing our kids in the faith, but we need the baptized family, both its single and married members, to step up and be spiritual fathers and mothers to our children.

You might be wondering now about something this discussion has presupposed: infant baptism. Why do we baptize those who are incapable of taking vows for themselves? The principal answer to this question is that we believe that it is the practice of the New Testament. The New Testament records the baptizing of entire households when the head of household converts (Acts 16:33; 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:16). Based on family structures during this time period, these households would have

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<sup>13</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, 302.

<sup>14</sup> Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 152.

included not only children who could not take vows for themselves, but also slaves and retainers that belonged to the household.<sup>15</sup>

More importantly, however, the New Testament explicitly connects baptism to circumcision (Col. 2:11-12). Baptism is a “circumcision made without hands” that is performed not just upon baby boys alone, but on baby girls, demonstrating the universality of the new covenant in Christ. In discussions in the early church, this was understood as express warrant for baptizing babies: the only question was whether priests had to wait to baptize until the eighth day (Lev. 12:3)! The North African bishop Fidus posed this question to Cyprian of Carthage in the third century, and Cyprian responded that “we think that no one is to be hindered from obtaining grace by that law which was previously established, and that spiritual circumcision ought not to be hindered by fleshly circumcision, but that absolutely everyone is to be admitted to the grace of Christ.”<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, from the New Testament, we know that infant baptism was widely recognized as a legitimate practice. Hippolytus, a bishop of Rome in the third century, in giving instructions on baptism, writes “first baptize the small children. And each one who is able to speak for themselves, let them speak. But, those not able to speak for themselves, let their parents or one belonging to their family speak for them. Afterward, baptize the the grown men, and finally, the women.”<sup>17</sup> Origen, another third-century theologian, writes that “since the baptism of the church is given for the remission of sins, that, according to the observance of the church, that baptism also be given even to infants; since, certainly, if there were nothing in infants that ought to pertain to forgiveness and indulgence, then the grace of baptism would appear superfluous.”<sup>18</sup> He writes elsewhere that “the Church has received the tradition from the apostles to give baptism even to little children.”<sup>19</sup>

So let us bring our children to the font, and do not hinder them from receiving the grace of this mystery. Let our families be transformed and reconfigured by the new family that God is making from every tribe, tongue, and nation in his one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. And whoever we are, let us be spiritual fathers and mothers, growing the children that God has given our church family, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

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<sup>15</sup> James Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 457-8.

<sup>16</sup> Cyprian, Letter 64 to Fidus, in *Letters 1-81*, trans. Sister Rose Bernard Donna, C.S.J., *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 218.

<sup>17</sup> Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, 21.16.

<sup>18</sup> Origen, Homily 8, *Homilies on Leviticus*, trans. Gary Barkley, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1990), 158.

<sup>19</sup> Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Books 1-5*, trans. Thomas Schenk, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 2001), 367.

## UNDERSTANDING THE BAPTISM SERVICE

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Take some time to read through the baptismal liturgy found on p. 299 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. If you don't have a physical copy handy, you can find an online version of the [Holy Baptism Liturgy](#). If you have a family, host a dinner and invite the godparents and other adult friends over to discuss the upcoming baptism. You could take time to unpack the liturgy together. If you are single, meet up with friends to discuss some of these questions. However you do it, think through some of these questions:

- What parts of the baptism service feel especially meaningful to you?
- What practices should you adopt or in what ways should your life change in light of what the liturgy says is happening in baptism?
- What are some of the more difficult things to understand?

There's a lot happening in the baptism service. We wanted to help clarify some of the things that we will experience together on Sunday. After the sermon, the priest will invite the church to turn to the middle of the sanctuary where the baptismal font is located. All of this will have been rehearsed before the service, so you'll be familiar with where to stand and the order of the liturgy.

## Vows

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The candidates, or if they are babies, their parents, will take baptismal vows. In addition to their vows, the church also takes vows to uphold their baptismal covenant. This is a family affair, and everyone has a part to play. We take these vows very seriously and want to fulfill them faithfully as the baptized community of Christ.

## Baptism

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After the vows comes the baptism, by sprinkling with water. At St. Timothy's, our tradition is to baptize by sprinkling water on the head of the candidate. For children, this is normally done while a parent is holding the child. As we sprinkle water the priest says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

We do our best, but sometimes baptisms can be messy. Please plan your outfits accordingly.

## Chrismation

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Finally, each of the baptized are marked with Holy Chrism oil, specifically blessed by the bishop to seal the gift of the Holy Spirit on them in baptism once and for all. The priest will say, “you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever. Amen.”

## Baptism Candle

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After each candidate has been baptized, the priest lights their baptismal candle from the Christ candle, signifying that we have received the light of Christ, passing from darkness to light. We now live in light of the Gospel, the good news that we are children of God living in the light of Christ. The priest will say, “receive the light of Christ, you have passed from darkness into light.”

## Welcome to the Family of God

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After all of this, the church welcomes the newly baptized in to the family of God! The entire church is sprinkled with holy water so that they remember their own baptism—they are included this family of God, and they have work to do to help these newly baptized grow in their relationship with Christ. Then comes the exchange of peace, where everyone passes the peace of the Lord with each other. This is a great time to go change into some dry clothes and prepare to come to the altar to receive Holy Eucharist.

## Godparents

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As we mentioned in section “What does baptism mean for the family” above, if you are baptizing a child, think about who you want to name as a godparent or godparents for your child. Again, godparents should be baptized Christians, who are currently following Jesus. You should trust the spiritual maturity of the godparent(s), and this means something more than that you think they are generally trustworthy and good people. It means that they have manifested a clear understanding of the gospel, and you can see evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in the way that they live their lives.

## LIVING AS A CHILD OF GOD

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Paul tells us that if we have been “baptized into Christ,” then we “have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Some translations say that “you have clothed yourselves with Christ” (NIV), making it clear that Paul is drawing an analogy here to having a soiled garment removed and a fresh one provided for us. In another place, Paul can deploy this analogy as a command: “put on Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Romans 13:14)!

So our baptism into the death of Christ is simultaneously something that happens once and for all, and something that we must consciously return to every day. Martin Luther grasped this point perhaps better than anyone: he conceived of the confession of sin and the receiving of forgiveness in absolution as “a return to baptism.” Baptism is our means of entry into the church, and therefore it is also a source of grace for us for the entirety of our Christian lives. For Paul, as for Luther, “baptismal grace never ran short.”<sup>20</sup>

Baptism, as we have said, really accomplishes something in us. It brings us into new life, and it plunges us into the mission of the church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism does not just do this once, but continuously, as we are always enjoined at every moment to put on the identity that has been given to us when we were ushered into the church.

This is a nice sentiment, but how do we do it? Let’s get practical. How do we follow Jesus in our everyday lives and routines? Below we make a few suggestions about how to get started. Our clergy will be in touch with you as you begin to live as a child of God to encourage you and see how we can help you.

## Prayer

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Prayer is utterly central to following Jesus in our everyday lives. Here’s a clear diagnostic: if you aren’t praying, you aren’t following Jesus. Maybe you’ve never learned how to pray, or maybe prayer is really challenging for you. If you grew up in an evangelical church, you were most likely taught that authentic prayer is spontaneous prayer, that you need to make it up as you go along. But that’s not what the Bible teaches, nor is it what the tradition of the church teaches. Thankfully, the church teaches us to how to pray.

The Scriptures are filled with liturgical prayers that were memorized and prayed repeatedly: the psalms and the Lord’s prayer are the most obvious, but they are by no means the only examples.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ronald Rittgers, “Luther on Private Confession,” in *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther’s Practical Theology*, ed. Timothy Wengert (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 225.

<sup>21</sup> For a capable survey of the practice of daily liturgical prayer in the New Testament and early church, see Paul Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

The Jews worshipped in the Temple and the Synagogues according to a fixed liturgy, and the early church in its worship took over the basic shape of the Synagogue liturgy, adding to it the “breaking of the bread,” that is, the Eucharist (Acts 2:42).<sup>22</sup> This “unbreakable unity” between word and sacrament remains the shape of our liturgy, which consists of two parts, the Liturgy of the Word of God and the Liturgy of Holy Communion.<sup>23</sup> We encourage you to read through this liturgy, which begins on p. 323 of the Book of Common Prayer, and to pay close attention so that you can pray with intention the prayers we pray each week in worship. The weekly Eucharistic liturgy is the foundation and source of the other prayers we offer to God throughout the week.

The Bible also makes clear that Jews prayed at appointed times during the day, in some cases morning and evening<sup>24</sup> and in others morning, afternoon, and evening.<sup>25</sup> The early Christians took over this pattern of sanctifying secular time by marking the day’s rhythms through prayer.<sup>26</sup> Our Book of Common Prayer is designed to help you follow this ancient practice of sanctifying secular time through prayer.

The Daily Office, which consists of Morning and Evening Prayer, is the basic pattern of daily prayer. You can find Morning Prayer in contemporary language beginning on p. 75, and Evening Prayer on p. 115. Morning and Evening Prayer take about 20-25 minutes each to pray. All priests and deacons are required to pray Morning and Evening Prayer each day, and all of the baptized are invited to join us.<sup>27</sup> In addition, our prayer book has an order of service for noonday worship beginning on p. 103.

If thumbing through the Prayer Book feels overwhelming to you, you can pray the Office through various apps on your smartphone. My favorite app for this is the Mission St. Clare app. You can also join our Morning Prayer livestream Sunday-Friday at 8:00 AM.

It really has never been easier to pray the Daily Office. But, if it feels like too much to begin by incorporating these devotions into your routine, our prayer book has you covered. There are much shorter Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families for morning, noon, and night, which will take you no more than five minutes each, beginning on p. 136.

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<sup>22</sup> On the Jewish synagogue liturgy, consisting of prayers, the reading of the Scriptures, and a homily or meditation on their meaning, see Abraham Zebi Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (Mineola: Dover, 1995), 24-5.

<sup>23</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 69.

<sup>24</sup> The *Shema* was to be prayed “when you lie down, and when you rise.” Deut. 6:4-9.

<sup>25</sup> This was especially the case in Rabbinic Judaism, but already in Daniel we see the pattern emerging of getting “down on [one’s] knees three times a day” to pray and give thanks. Dan. 6:10.

<sup>26</sup> We have explicit mentions of the practice in Acts 3:1: Peter and John go up to the Temple “at the house of prayer, the ninth hour (3 p.m.); and in Acts 10:3, 30, where Cornelius keeps the ninth hour of prayer at his house.

<sup>27</sup> The 1662 Prayer Book, which is the normative prayer book for the Anglican Communion, stipulates that “all Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer privately or openly.” Brian Cummins, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of the 1549, 1552, and 1662* (New York: Oxford, 2006), 214.

Once you have begun praying the Daily Office or, at a minimum, the Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families, begin to add your own petitions (prayers for yourself or others) and thanksgivings (thanking God for the good things that have happened or for privileges you possess). This threefold pattern of prayer, weekly Eucharist, Daily Office, and private devotions, is the pattern handed down to us by the early church.<sup>28</sup> If you pray this way, you connect your prayers to the whole communion of saints. When we do this, “we join our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven.”<sup>29</sup>

## Hospitality

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Hospitality is a central Christian discipline and a basic way in which our church extends the witness of our church family to our neighborhoods. Hospitality is like alchemy: it turns strangers into friends, it turns suspicious and hostile people into allies. Hospitality is so important that the rule of St. Benedict, a text that created communities that preserved civilization through a long dark age after the fall of Rome, says “Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ, for he is going to say, ‘I came as a guest, and you received me’ (Matt. 25:35).”<sup>30</sup>

The late Roman empire was a deeply suspicious and inhospitable place, characterized by vast economic disparities between rich and poor and rampant pornography and exploitative sexual behavior, not unlike our own day. But in that time Christians were known as those “who have a common table, but not a common bed.”<sup>31</sup> They were known, in other words, as people who quietly embodied and spoke of a different way to live, one characterized by deep joy, confidence in the infinite worth and dignity of the person, and commitment to sacrifice of one’s self for the flourishing of others.

We are betraying our legacy as the baptized at Resurrection if we don’t also live this way. So we want you, as the newly baptized, to get into the habit of opening your home. In the next month, we want you to practice hospitality in both inward and outward-facing ways. If you are baptizing your children and have selected godparents for them, we want you to have them over for dinner in the next month. If you haven’t selected a godparent, invite someone from the church that you don’t know yet but want to get to know for dinner. Begin the process, in other words, of discernment to figure out who your child’s godparent will be. Get to know the people you are hosting. What do they love? What do they hope for? How do they feel called into the mission of the church? If you

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<sup>28</sup> This catechism states that we “can cultivate a fruitful prayer life by following the ancient three-fold rule: weekly Communion, Daily Offices, and private devotions. This rule teaches me when to pray, how to pray, and for what to pray, so that I may grow to love and glorify God more fully.” *To Be a Christian*, q. 255.

<sup>29</sup> The Sanctus, *Book of Common Prayer*, 362.

<sup>30</sup> *Rule of St. Benedict* 53. <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/rbeaad1.html#53>.

<sup>31</sup> *Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus* 5. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0101.htm>.

are being baptized, invite someone over from the church that you want to get to know. Get past small talk, and get to know how Jesus is at work in that person.

Secondly, we want you to have someone from your neighborhood, your school, or your work over for dinner within the next month. We want this to be someone that you think is probably not following Jesus. Be curious about this person. Don't just make small talk. Get to know what's important to them. Get to know what they hope for. What is their purpose in life? What gets them out of bed in the morning? And be open and transparent about yourself.

## Service

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As we have said over and over in this guide, when we are baptized we are put to work. Our regeneration is given to us as a free gift, but it is given to us so that we might use our lives to give life to others. The faith by which Christians live is not a dead faith, but faith animated by works. As the great nineteenth-century theologian John Henry Newman said, “Dead faith is the faith of the dead; lively faith is the faith of the living.”<sup>32</sup> If we are alive in Christ, which we assuredly are because of baptism, our faith must be active in works. Martin Luther is credited with the saying, “God doesn't need your good works. Your neighbor does!”<sup>33</sup>

We want to know how God is stirring you to the service of your neighbor. The baptized body of Christ needs your contributions to the common good to be “the Incarnation continued” in Raleigh.<sup>34</sup> Where do you believe that God is calling you to serve in the church to build up the body? Where do you believe that God is calling you to serve outside the walls of the church in service and mission to the world? Serve together with us so that we become known as a people of hope, who bless when others curse.

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<sup>32</sup> John Henry Newman, *Lectures on Justification* (London, 1840), 288.

<sup>33</sup> He may not have said these exact words, but they express his mind on the relationship between salvation and vocation. Jordan Cooper, *The Great Divide: A Lutheran Evaluation of Reformed Theology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 192.

<sup>34</sup> Henri de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery* (Alba House, 1969), 24.



## PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE

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Here are a few things you should prepare for as you get ready for baptism Sunday.

### The Week Before

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- If you haven't already, complete the baptism application and email it to [admin@stcraleigh.org](mailto:admin@stcraleigh.org)
- Pray as a family during the week. You could invite your kids or friends to reflect on the coming baptism together and share any thoughts or questions they may have. You could pray using the words of the Lord's Prayer.
- Invite your family and friends to attend the baptism.

### Packing List

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1. Change of clothes
2. Camera

### Sunday Morning

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- Arrive at the church at 9:00 to rehearse the baptism with the priest.
- Ask questions and get familiar with the liturgy.
- Pray with the priest and find a seat conveniently near the baptismal font.

Learn more about St. Timothy's Episcopal Church by visiting [sttimothyschurch.org](http://sttimothyschurch.org).

"Holy Baptism: A Family Guide" is a resource developed by [Resurrection South Austin](http://ResurrectionSouthAustin.org) and adapted for use at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church.