

Baptism Policies

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
5900 7th Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53140

"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" (Catechism—*Book of Common Prayer* 823). This is perhaps the greatest of the sacraments that Christ gave us: to be adopted as one of His own. As you prepare for your own baptism or the baptism of your child, there should be a time of prayer and reflection about what it means to join the faithful and become one of Christ's own.

Cardinal Baptismal Days

*Baptism in the Episcopal Church is almost always part of the principal Sunday service. This is to give a connection between the candidate for baptism and the community into which he/she is being baptized. This also demonstrates the connection between the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.

*In the Episcopal Church there are four Cardinal Baptismal Days on which baptisms normally take place: The Baptism of Christ (Sunday after January 6th), Easter Sunday (varies by year), Pentecost Sunday (50 days after Easter), and All Saints' Sunday (near November 1st).

*At St. Matthew's, we try to keep baptisms on these four Sundays to stay in line with the church and because they hold special significance in relation to the sacrament of Baptism. Please consider these dates when planning the baptism.

Preparation Time

*First, prayer is essential. This is a time to prepare for becoming a Christian, joining the Church, and declaring one's self as a follower of Christ. Establishing a relationship and connection with God is of utmost importance at this time.

*To assist in preparation, the candidate for baptism (if of an age of reason), parents (if the candidate is a child), and sponsors will meet with the rector two times during the preparation time.

*During the preparation time, if they live in the Kenosha area and are able, the candidate and parents (if applicable) should regularly attend Sunday services at St. Matthew's to help form an understanding of Episcopal worship and theology.

*If they do not live in the area, they should attend a local faith community in their own area and have the clergy person in charge speak to St. Matthew's rector.

*The time of preparation may vary from candidate to candidate, but at least two months of preparation is recommended.

The Service of Baptism

*On the day of the baptism, the candidate, parents (if applicable), and sponsors need to meet with the rector one hour before the start of the service to do a rehearsal. *As there is not much time for this, **please be punctual!***

*There are many ways to do baptism. At St. Matthew's, baptisms are normally done at the font by sprinkling small amounts of water over the candidate's head. If you have a strong theological reason for wanting a different form of baptism, please let the rector know so that we may accommodate.

*This is a joyous time for the whole congregation. If you like, you may arrange a reception, in collaboration with the rector, in order that the whole parish may celebrate the baptism following the service.

Photography

*Because baptism is part of a worship service, flash photography is discouraged except during times designated by the rector as it detracts from the sacredness of the moment.

*Posing for photographs may take place immediately before and/or after the service.

*Videotaping, digital photography without flash, or high-speed film may be used during the ceremony if taken from a non-intrusive location and if no artificial lighting is used.

