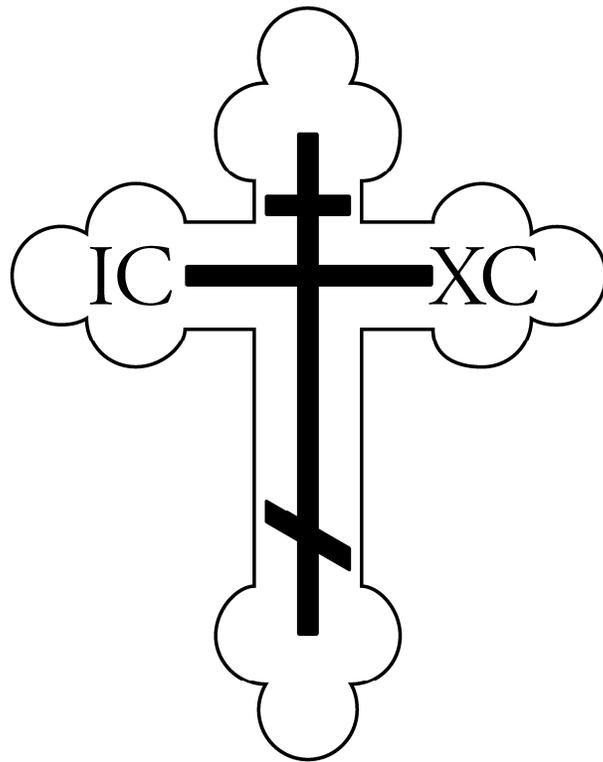


BAPTISM

IN THE ORTHODOX
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church
5501 Old Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA
www.CTSHBG.org

BAPTISM

“Do you not know that all of us who have been Baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” (Romans 6:3-5)

BAPTISMAL GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST

Baptism brings about the birth of new life in Christ. The Orthodox Church practices infant baptism because historically it never required “understanding” as a pre-condition. To “know” God is the **fruit** of baptism. Baptism makes a person a participant in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and a member of His body - the Church. This is the first step in becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. The Church does have a responsibility to administer the sacrament only to those who have shown that this is the **primary** purpose for the baptism.

REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO THE BAPTISM FOR THE PARENTS:

A Baptism is a privilege that requires a commitment on behalf of the parents to raise the child in the Orthodox Church. If parents are not active members of the Church, you must demonstrate a desire to become active for the sacrament to be approved. Parents are the primary role models for their children in living a committed life to Christ. Commitment to Christ is expressed in regularly attending Sunday Liturgy (and also Saturday Vespers, as well as the Feasts of the Church), participating in the sacramental life of the Church and being financial stewards of the Church.

- **Active Church Membership.** If parents themselves are not regularly (*that is weekly*) attending an Orthodox Church, an appointment should be made with the Priest in order to discuss the situation.
- **Married in the Orthodox Church.** If you were not married in the Orthodox Church, your marriage should be “blessed” in the Church in order to be in “good standing”. This is *not required* prior to baptizing a child, but will allow the parent(s) to again receive the Holy Eucharist with their child.
- **Selecting a Sponsor(s).** The Godparent(s) serve to guide, teach, and counsel their godchildren in the Orthodox faith. The Church requires that the Godparent the sex of the child be a practicing Orthodox Christian in “good standing”; there are no exceptions to this rule, as they are *vouching* to help raise them as Orthodox Christians. The priest can help couples in the selection of a Godparent(s) if needed.

REQUIREMENTS TO SERVE AS A GODPARENT

- The Godparent needs to be the same sex of the child and MUST be an Orthodox Christian.
- Only one sponsor is “required”, however a complementary Godfather or Godmother may participate.
- If the Godparent is married, it must have been in an Orthodox Church; or have had an Orthodox Marriage Blessing.
- If the Godparent is not known to the Priest, they should have his/her parish Priest write a letter stating they are active members of their home parish and eligible to be Godparents.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GODPARENTS AFTER THE BAPTISM

- It is customary for the Godparent to bring their Godchild to Holy Communion for the first three (3) Sunday after the Baptism. This is done in order to form the habit of frequent communion for the child.
- The Godparent should pray for their Godchild daily, offer annual greetings to the child on their Saint names-day, and live a pious Christian life-style.

BAPTISMAL CHECKLIST

The following items are either provided by the parents and/or the Godparents:

- Cross & Chain
- White Outfit (*note: hat and shoes will not be put on during the service, only afterwards*)
- 1 Bottle of Olive Oil
- 1 White Blanket
- 1 Large White Bath Towel
- 1 Candle
- Icon of the Patron Saint of the child

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **Scheduling your Baptism** If you would like to schedule a baptism for your child, parents need to schedule an appointment to speak with our Priest.
- **Invitations:** The printing of invitations should not be done until the date and time for the baptism has been confirmed with the Priest.
- **Naming the Child:** If the child was not given a Christian name (a saint’s name) one must be selected. The giving of a Christian name establishes a life long relationship between the child and their Patron Saint. If you have questions about this, please talk with our Priest.
- **Length of the Baptism:** The Baptism service is approximately 1 hour long.

- **Photography.** Photographs may be taken during the service, however there are some guidelines. Those taking photographs should not cross over the center aisle or stand between the Priest and the Altar at anytime during the service. Minimal use of flash is appreciated.
- **Days when baptisms are not permitted:**
 - Christmas Day** (*Dec 25*) - **Theophany** (*Jan 6*)
 - Holy Week** (*see church calendar*)
 - Great Feast Days of the Lord** (*see church calendar*)
- **Fee's:** There are no "fee's" for Baptism, however it is presumed that the family of the Baptized are actively supporting the parish through their financial stewardship. If the family would like to make a special donation to the church in thanksgiving they are encouraged to do so.
- **Parish Hall.** Our parish hall is available for a modest fee for a reception following the service. Please see a council person to review the rental agreement and to reserve the date for the hall.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The Baptism of your child is a day of great joy! They will become members of the Body of Christ, and full participants in the life of the Orthodox Church. Like many other aspects of their life, they are now dependent upon you to set a good example, and to provide a firm foundation. Below is a quote from a respected monk that all Orthodox Christian parents, Godparents, and adults ought to bear in mind:

I f we expect our children and grandchildren to grow into adulthood as practicing Orthodox Christians, we must give daily witness to the importance of our faith in our everyday life.

If we are lax in our fasting, church attendance, and piety, our children will see by our lack of seriousness - a faith, that will mean nothing to them.

If they do not see us keeping a prayer rule, they will not have prayer as a part of their lives.

If they do not see us putting the divine services before entertainment [and sporting events], they will abandon Orthodoxy, once they've left the nest.

- Abbot Tryphon

NOTES

*Please use this page to write down your
Questions for your meeting with the Priest*