
This is all too confusing!

If all of this seems entirely too confusing, don't worry! You can always call the Parish Office to make an appointment and sit down with the Rector.

The most important thing is that you know that the Episcopal Church welcomes you and invites you to practice your faith in our community. That welcome extends from those who prefer to only come, sit in the back, and receive communion all the way to those who go through the formation process to become full confirmed members of the Church.

“When I first became a Christian, about fourteen years ago, I thought that I could do it on my own, by retiring to my rooms and reading theology, and I wouldn't go to the churches and Gospel Halls. . . . I disliked very much their hymns, which I considered to be fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music. But as I went on I saw the great merit in it. I came up against different people of quite different outlooks and different education, and then gradually my conceit just began peeling off. I realized that the hymns (which were just sixth-rate music) were, nevertheless, being sung with devotion and benefit by an old saint in elastic-side boots in the opposite pew, and then you realize that you aren't fit to clean those boots. It gets you out of your solitary conceit.”

– C. S. Lewis,
God In The Dock
pages 61-62.



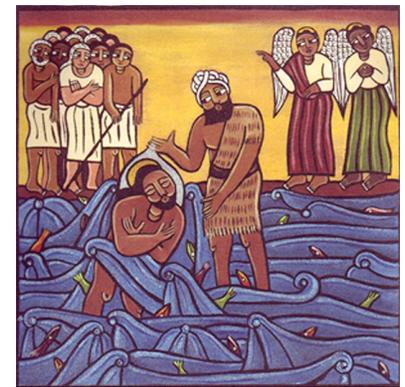
St. John's Episcopal Church

www.stjohnsepiscopal.com

The information contained herein draws from the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, and guidelines from the Episcopal Church office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan.

Membership at St. John's

*Common Questions about
Membership, Baptism, and
Confirmation*



St. John's
Episcopal Church

524 Washington Ave.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.6260

www.stjohnsepiscopal.com



*St. John's is a diverse
Christian community
following Jesus'
teaching through
liturgical worship,
education, and outreach.*

All are Welcome!

All people, regardless of background, are always welcome at any of our worship services. Everyone who attends a worship service may always come to the altar during Communion. If you are not baptized, simply cross your arms over your chest and you will receive a blessing. If you are baptized, you may extend your hands for the bread and guide the chalice to your mouth for the wine.

Parish Membership

The Episcopal Church recognizes all those baptized with water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as members of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Those whose baptisms have been registered in the Episcopal Church are then considered baptized members.

So, if you are new to the Episcopal Church, but have been baptized in another Christian tradition, you simply need to inform the Parish Office so we may register your baptism. If you have the date and location of that baptism, it is helpful but not necessary.

Those who have not been baptized may be baptized at one of the four feasts of the church given by the *Book of Common Prayer* for Holy Baptism:

- Easter Vigil
- Day of Pentecost

- All Saints' Day
- The Baptism of our Lord

You can contact the Parish Office for information on when these days occur so that you may be added to the list of baptismal candidates.

Those who have been baptized in the Episcopal Church or in the ELCA only need to request a letter of transfer from their previous parish.

A Mature Affirmation

Though not required for membership, the church does expect all adult members, after appropriate instruction, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism by being either confirmed or received.

This mature affirmation involves a substantial process of formation which includes a retreat at the beginning with the Dean, a retreat at the end with the Bishop, and classes twice a month from September through May. There may also be other opportunities for formation throughout the process. Candidates must be at least sixteen years of age at the time of their confirmation or reception in order to enter the process.

Confirmation

Confirmation is intended for those who have been baptized in this or any church but who have not made a mature affirmation of their

faith. Those seeking confirmation now desire to “confirm” their earlier baptism and commit to the Christian life within the fellowship of the Episcopal Church.

It is appropriate for those baptized as infants or children but who have not yet made an adult affirmation of their faith. It may be appropriate for those who were baptized as adults in another church but who have not yet had hands laid on them by a bishop of this Church.

Reception

Those who have received the laying on of hands at confirmation by a Bishop in apostolic succession are considered confirmed and may, therefore, be received by a Bishop in this church. This would include Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians as well as those who had been members of a church in communion with this Church (e.g., the ELCA).

Those who have previously made a mature public commitment in another Church (e.g., adult baptism or confirmation by a pastor or bishop not in apostolic succession) may also choose to be received by the Bishop rather than confirmed.

Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

Those who were baptized as adults in this Church but have not yet had hands laid on them by the bishop are invited to reaffirm their baptismal vows. In addition, any Episcopalian who wishes to make a marked change in their life and go through the formation process may be a candidate for this rite.