

## **HOLY BAPTISM AND CHRISMATION**

All plans must be made in consultation with the parish priest.

Most baptisms and chrismations take place on Sunday mornings prior to the Divine Liturgy or Saturday before vespers.

Adults are baptized or chrismated after an extended period of preparation and instruction called the catechumenate. For those who desire to join the Orthodox faith in our parish, we have regular catechumenate classes in the fall and the spring. Please contact Fr. Joshua for more information.

For those desiring to know more about the Orthodox faith but not ready to commit to completing the formal catechumen classes, they are welcome to begin attending the catechumen classes with the understanding that they will still need to attend the entire course of instruction before being received into the Church even if this means repeating a portion of the class.

Infants are baptized only if their parents are already members in good standing of our parish community. A member in good standing is someone who attends services at least every three weeks and is committed to the parish by offering their time, talents, and treasure.

All those being received into the Church must have a Sponsor (Godfather or Godmother). The Sponsor must be an Orthodox Christian and an active participant in the life of the Church. An infant will usually have two sponsors: a Godfather and a Godmother. An adult will usually have one sponsor of the same sex.

In the case of infant baptism, as is custom in the ancient practice of the Church, the Sponsor confesses the faith (the Nicene Creed) the infant will be nurtured in from the time of his or her baptism throughout the rest of their life. Therefore, the Sponsor should not only believe the theological tenants of the Creed but should also be ready to recite it on the day of the baptism.

For three consecutive Sundays after the baptism, the Sponsor should carry or accompany with the baptismal candle the newly baptized/chrismated to

the Holy Altar to receive Holy Communion. Therefore, it is necessary for the Sponsor to prepare for Holy Communion by fasting and confession.

The Sponsor should be prepared to offer prayer and spiritual guidance as the newly received (whether infant or adult) grows in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.

According to the tradition of the Orthodox Church, one name of Orthodox Christian origin should be given to the child or adult at the time of their reception into the Church.

On the day of the baptism/chrisamation, the Godparents/Sponsor traditionally provides the following, where appropriate:

- A complete change of clothes: baptismal clothes for a child; or a baptismal robe for an adult
- A cross
- A candle that may be decorated (often white)
- A white bath towel
- Bringing the child to the Eucharist on day of Baptism and Communing with him or her

The day, time, choosing the Sponsors, and other arrangements of the baptism/chrisamation must be made with the priest – these may not be made in advance and without the priest's blessing.

## **MARRIAGE**

We only schedule weddings after one of the engaged couple has been a member of our parish community for at least twelve months and only after a period of premarital counseling.

The most appropriate time for a wedding is Sunday, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Marriages are not to be celebrated on:

- evenings before Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year,
- Saturday evenings throughout the year,

- evenings of the twelve Great Feasts or patronal feast of the parish,
- during the course of all the fasts,
- the Great Forty Day Fast, Apostles' Fast, Dormition Fast, and Nativity Fast,
- from Sunday of Meatfare to the Sunday of Cheesefare,
- during the course of Bright Week,
- from the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord (Dec. 25) through the Feast of the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist (Jan. 7),
- on the evening and day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Aug. 29), and
- on the evening and day of the Elevation of the Cross (Sept. 14).

Anniversary Blessings are offered at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy; at least one of the participants in an Anniversary Blessing must be an Orthodox Christian and a member in good standing of our parish community.