

**SHERWOOD EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
5 SHERWOOD ROAD  
COCKEYSVILLE, MD 21030**

**BAPTISMAL INFORMATION**

Note: The information on this sheet is recorded in the Church Register for posterity and is used for our Church Records

Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

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full name of person to be baptized

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date of birth

place of birth

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current address

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phone number

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parent #1's full name

date of birth

raised in the \_\_\_\_\_ Church; currently a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

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parent #2's full name

date of birth

raised in the \_\_\_\_\_ Church; currently a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

sponsors'/godparents' names

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## Customary for Baptism

Holy Baptism is a sacrament of inclusion and adoption – God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ’s Body. As the *Book of Common Prayer* states, “Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble.”

By “full initiation,” the prayer book intends that no further rite or action is necessary to make us fully members of the church.

Generally speaking, two categories of people come to baptism: 1) adults and older children who, not having been baptized before, claim their belief in Christ and have undergone a period of education (known as *catechesis*) in preparation; and 2) infants and young children who, though perhaps unable to articulate their own faith claim, are brought for baptism by their parents and other sponsors who are willing to make the vows of faith on the child’s behalf and to take responsibility for the child’s upbringing in the Christian faith. In the latter case, the parents and sponsors undergo a period of catechesis.

The prayer book specifies that baptism takes place in the church, in the context of a Sunday Eucharist, except in emergency situations. The clergy will be happy to discuss the reasons with you, and of course, in any emergency (whether or not it may occasion a baptism) we hope you will call the priest for pastoral assistance.

We sometimes agree to baptize infants or children who are not attending Sherwood Parish but who have strong family ties here. However, it is usually preferable for children to be baptized in the parish in which they will be living, since that is the particular part of Christ’s Body where they will become engrafted through their Christian upbringing. If you have reason to want a non-attending relative to be baptized here, please talk with the priest.

Baptism is not a social event, not a “naming ceremony,” and not a magic rite to ward off bad luck. It is a sacrament of the church which needs to be entered into with great seriousness. The promises made by the parents and godparents mark a solemn commitment both to bring the child up in the Christian faith and life and to live Christian lives themselves. For some families, the rite called “Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child” (*BCP*, p. 439-445) is a more appropriate way of marking the infant’s arrival, and the child can then later make her or his own decision to be baptized.

In choosing sponsors (godparents), remember that their primary role is to assist you in making sure that your child is brought up in the Christian faith and life. That means that their character is the most important consideration, along with their willingness to be involved in your child’s life and upbringing.

Remember that the prayer book says at least one of the sponsors must be a baptized Christian. There is no “right” number of sponsors: quality is more important than quantity.

Baptism is full initiation into the body of Christ, the Church, and every baptized person is welcome to receive communion. Remember that although communion consists of both bread and wine, receiving either one constitutes a full and valid communion. People who can’t eat the communion wafer (including small infants as well as many sick people) can receive communion by being given a drop of wine; conversely, toddlers and young children often receive the wafer only, without wine.