

## Pastoral Guidelines for Baptisms

Baptism is necessary for salvation and in accordance with Tradition must be performed by triple immersion in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and it is conferred only once.

- Baptisms may be performed at any time except from December 25 through January 6, during Holy Week, or on Major Feast Days, unless it is an emergency.
- To schedule a baptism at our church, please contact us at (519) 438-7951.
- Parents need not be Orthodox Christians for a child to be baptized in the Orthodox Church.
- The role of the Sponsor is directly related to infant baptism. Since the infant is unable to make the necessary confession of faith, the Sponsor stands and vouches for it.
- A person who wishes to sponsor a candidate for Baptism or Chrismation must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing and a supporting member of an Orthodox parish. A person may not serve as a godparent if the Church has not had his or her marriage or, if civilly divorced, if he or she has not been granted an ecclesiastical divorce, or for any other reason he or she is not in communion with the Orthodox Church.
- Sponsors should be ready to recite the Nicene Creed either in Greek or English. For three consecutive Sundays after the Baptism the Sponsor should carry the neophyte to the Holy Altar to receive Holy Communion. Additional preparations for becoming a godparent can be found at [www.londongreekcommunity.org](http://www.londongreekcommunity.org)
- According to the Tradition of the Orthodox Church, only *one* name of Orthodox Christian origin should be given to the child at the time of baptism.
- If the Sacrament is to be performed in a parish other than his own, the sponsor must obtain from his priest a written verification of his spiritual good standing in the Orthodox Church.
- Articles necessary for the Sacrament of Baptism are:
  - one small bottle of olive oil
  - one bar of soap
  - two small white hand towels
  - one white crib-size sheet
  - one large white bath towel
  - a complete change of white clothes (include diaper & undershirt)
  - a cross and chain
  - & one large and two small white candles (decorated or plain)
- Three days following the date of the baptism, the newly baptized infant may be bathed. The water that is used to cleanse the newly baptized infant should not be flushed down the drain, but should be taken and spread about the parent's garden close to the foundation of their home in a place with no traffic. The same should be done with the water used to wash the baptismal

clothing the newly baptized wore. This clothing should be washed separately from any other clothing.

- At any time of extreme emergency, any Orthodox Christian may baptize an infant. This is done by either by sprinkling a small amount of clear water, or by lifting the child into the air while saying, "The servant of God (name) is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen". Under no circumstances should any duly baptized Orthodox Christian be re-baptized. Even a Baptism of extreme emergency performed by layperson is regarded as valid and is merely completed by the priest by the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation.
- When a person comes to the Orthodox Church voluntarily from another faith, the Orthodox priest will accept the candidate by means of whichever of the three modes prescribed by the sixth Ecumenical Council is appropriate (Canon.95): Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by Triune Immersion; Chrismation; Confession of Faith
- Those who have been baptized in another Christian Church (in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are to be received into the Orthodox Church through a separate service of Chrismation. This takes place only after having completed a course of instruction (catechism) and having involved themselves in the liturgical life of the Church. Those who have not been baptized in a Trinitarian Christian Church, must complete Orthodox catechism and then be received through Baptism and Chrismation. In either case, one should seek out a mentor, a sponsor/godparent (see the guidelines in the Baptism section).
- Those who are able to enjoy the blessing of adopting children can have a special service of adoption performed. If the child is not already baptized in the Orthodox faith, the service of adoption would be performed first followed by the service of Baptism.