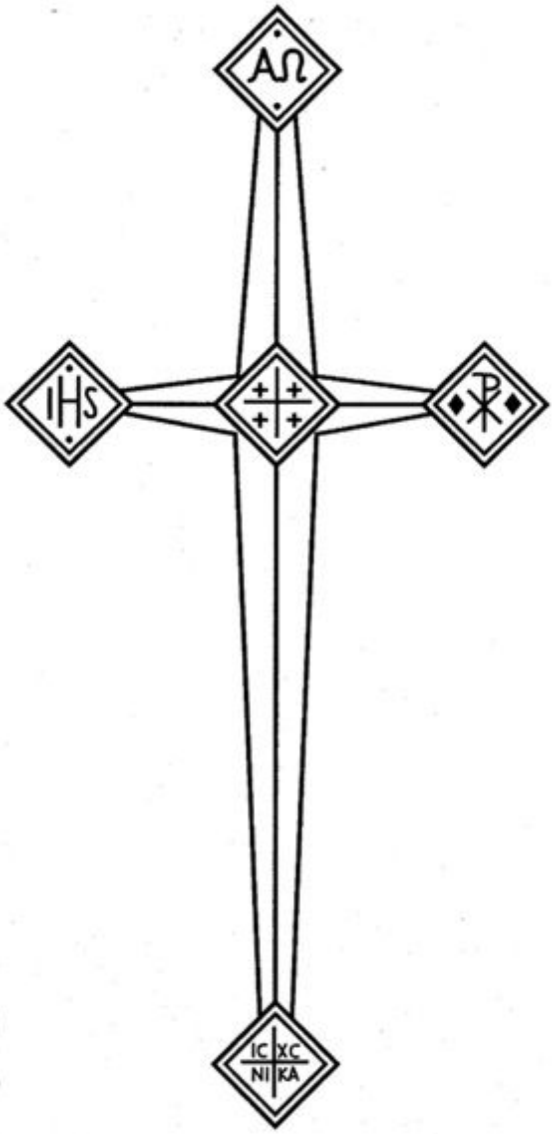
Baptism Customary



Church of the Redeemer
Sarasota, Florida

Revised 7/21/2026

A Welcome from the Rector

You are making the best decision you will ever make! To follow Jesus as Lord and to put your whole trust in His grace and love is the foundation of life well-lived. We often speak of grace in many settings – sometimes as a cliché or catch-all word for things like "nice" or "good." But, when we talk about the life of grace in Christ begun at baptism, we mean something very specific. For Christians grace is the unearned, unmerited – yet constant – love of God given freely to unworthy sinners for life and salvation. In Holy Baptism you and I die to the old life of sin, shame, and guilt, and we are raised to the life of grace (holy water is indeed powerful stuff). Baptism, therefore, is the Sacrament of New Birth.

Baptism is the beginning of the life of faith, not the end. Each baptized person should play an active role in the life of the parish. Redeemer is a growing family of faith with literally dozens of opportunities for ministry, growth, and service.

I am personally looking forward to growing in grace with you.

Your servant,



The Reverend Charleston D. Wilson, Rector

Baptism Policies

Introduction

We are thrilled you are exploring baptism for yourself or a member of your family at Church of the Redeemer! Baptism is how we are made members of God's household and heirs of the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Holy Baptism is a sacrament of the Church, and the liturgy must be conducted according to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and the directives of our Rector. While elements of this planning guide may appear stringent at first glance, please remember the parish and clergy are bound by the canons (i.e., the rules) of the Church. Holy Baptism, while joyful and celebratory, is also a serious commitment wherein we renounce "Satan and all his works, and promise to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church" (BCP 292).

Eligibility

Anyone may be baptized at Church of the Redeemer. A prior relationship to the parish is not required. However, it is expected that those baptized at Redeemer be active participants in the life of the parish. Those who live out of town are encouraged to find a local Church to take part in, so they can continue to grow in grace in their community.

Baptism Preparation

Adults & Older Children:

Candidates who can speak for themselves are expected to meet with the clergy for a time of preparation for baptism. A baptism preparation class is offered every other month at Redeemer on a Sunday Morning between the 9 and 11 a.m. masses. Please contact the office for more details. Private meetings can be arranged when necessary.

Younger Children (8 years of age and younger):

For children who cannot speak for themselves, the parents will meet with the clergy for a time of preparation. Godparents should also attend when possible. A baptism preparation class is offered every other month at Redeemer on a Sunday Morning between the 9 and 11 a.m. masses. Parents who have recently had another child baptized do not need to attend the class. Likewise, the class may be completed before the birth of a child and "banked" for the future. If there is a gap of more than four years, we recommend attending the class again. Please contact the office for more details.

Godparents & Sponsors

For children who cannot speak for themselves, it is expected that the parents appoint two godparents who will be role models for the child of faithful discipleship. Godparents should not be picked simply because they are family friends (though they may be!) but on account of their faithful Christian living. At least one godparent is customarily the same sex as the child. If you need help finding a godparent, please contact the parish office.

Older candidates should appoint a sponsor who will present them for baptism at the service. If you need help finding a sponsor, please contact the parish office.

Both sponsors and godparents should be baptized.

Private & Public Baptism

Baptisms at Redeemer customarily take place during the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Baptism is not simply a family rite of passage but initiation into the full body of Christ and should take place when the whole congregation can be gathered. We call these **fully public** baptisms, and the service is about 70 minutes.

We recommend these baptisms be scheduled for:

The First Sunday after Epiphany (the Sunday after January 6th)
The Great Vigil of Easter (the evening before Easter Day)
The Day of Pentecost (late May/early June)
All Saints' Day and the Sunday following (early November)

When these dates don't work (especially for young children), we recommend any Sunday of Ordinary Time (typically January-February and June-November).

We are aware that not all family situations allow for this, so we also offer **semi-private** baptisms. These take place at the daily (Monday-Saturday) 10 a.m. mass in the chapel. The benefit is that this service includes a celebration of the Eucharist and has a few members of the general congregation present, but it is much more intimate. This service is about 40 minutes.

Finally, for serious pastoral need, **fully private** baptisms might be available. When approved, these take place at 11:30 a.m. Monday-Saturday or 6 p.m. Monday-Friday. These do not typically include a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and the service is about 25 minutes.

For Baptisms occurring at times other than the first Sunday after Epiphany, the Easter Vigil, Pentecost, and All Saints', a two-week lead time is appreciated.

Paperwork

Upon inquiry, you will receive an electronic copy of the Baptism Information Form. Please complete this digitally (not by hand) and return via email to the email address noted of the form. Please avoid photos of the form or hard copies if possible—this helps the office in preparing for the service.

Other Preparations

Livestream, flowers, and music are included for baptisms on Sundays and other feasts celebrated at the High Altar. For private and semi-private baptisms, these are available for an additional fee (please inquire). Additional lead time is necessary in this case. All such arrangements must be made through the parish office—private vendors are not allowed.

The Day of Baptism

The candidate, immediate family, and sponsor/godparents should arrive 20 minutes before the service. A pew will be reserved for you at the front of the church/chapel depending on the location of the service. On Sundays/feasts, we recommend that additional family members sit in the baptistry or balcony for a prime view of the baptism itself.

Photography

Because a baptism is a sacramental service of worship, photographers must abide by the rules established by the Rector. The following rules must be observed:

1. During the service, the photographer may take pictures from the balcony using available light. It is assumed even then that there will be no noise or motion that calls attention to the photographer and thus detracts from the service.
2. At no time may the photographer step into the main part of the church during the service to take photographs (photographers are allowed in the narthex and balcony for non-flash photographs during the service portion).
3. All photography must be finished 15 minutes prior to the service.
4. Photographs may be taken in the church for 15 minutes after the liturgy. Please keep in mind that the Altar Guild and staff must wait to complete their work until the photography is over.
5. Guests may not take photographs, flash or no flash, during the service.

Concerning the Clergy Gift (or Honorarium)

As a Sacrament of the Church, baptism is offered by the priest without charge; however, in thanksgiving for the baptism, a family might feel moved to make a gift to the priest who officiated. This is entirely at the discretion of the family/candidate. When given, this should be made out directly to the priest by name.