



Holy Baptism

St. Mary of the Hills Episcopal Church
Blowing Rock, North Carolina

*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.*

—*Book of Common Prayer, page 298*

Baptism at St. Mary's

Holy Baptism is especially appropriate and normatively administered on these days in the Church year: the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after the Epiphany). Additionally, baptism may be administered any time during the Great Fifty Days of Easter, at the Bishop's Annual Visitation, and on the Feast of Saint Mary the Virgin (observed).

In 2024, baptism will be administered on May 19th, August 18th, November 3rd.

In 2025, baptism will be administered on January 12th, April 19th, June 8th, August 17th, and November 2nd.

Other dates may be considered at the discretion of the Rector. Baptism will normatively be offered at the 10:10am Eucharist on a Sunday; however, baptism may also take place at the 8:00am Eucharist.

Baptism is full initiation and inclusion in the assembly of Christ's Body, the Church. The gathered assembly has a role in making promises with and to the newly baptized. For this reason, private baptism is not offered at St. Mary's or by the parish's clergy, except in cases of extreme pastoral emergency.

Please contact the parish office as early as possible to confirm a date for baptism.

The Day of the Service and Arrival at St. Mary's

The candidate(s) for baptism, godparents/sponsors, and family members should plan to arrive at the church approximately thirty minutes before the service. Upon arrival, family members may gather in the Library, or another location, if needed. Ten minutes before the service begins the officiating priest will join the family for a prayer and to speak briefly about the service. The family may be seated in the Church immediately after this prayer.

Preparation and Instruction

The priest performing the baptism will meet with the candidate for baptism or the parents of infants to be baptized for an instruction on baptism and its significance. This is also an opportunity to rehearse the logistics of the service, so that all feel prepared on the day of the baptism. These sessions last approximately one hour. Godparents/Sponsors are most welcome and are strongly encouraged to participate in this meeting, if at all possible.

Sponsors/Godparents

Sponsors for baptism (godparents for infants and children) are vitally important and should be selected with discernment. Our journey in the way of the resurrected Christ is travelled in community and never in isolation. Sponsors present the candidate for baptism and also promise to continue supporting the newly baptized in the life of faith.

All sponsors/godparents must be baptized in a Christian tradition and should be someone who will have a continuing presence in the life of the newly baptized. Candidates for baptism must have at least one sponsor/godparent; two are common, however more may be selected.

Flowers

Family members are welcome and encouraged to sponsor altar flowers for the service. Please contact Greta Wilson, Parish Administrator, for more information about sponsoring altar flowers.

Reserved Seating

Pews will be reserved at the front of the church or near the baptismal font for the candidate, sponsors, and family members. Please inform the officiating priest ahead of time how many family members will be seated in the reserved area, so that adequate seating may be provided.

Photography

We kindly ask that photography during the baptism be limited to no more than one or two 'action shots' so that the service of worship is not disturbed for all in attendance. Cameras must be silenced, flash may not be used, and no one may move into the aisle for pictures during the service. Photography before and after the service is welcomed and encouraged. The officiating priest is happy to 're-create' the baptism for pictures after the service.