

**Assumption of the Theotokos
Greek Orthodox Church**

Baptism Guidelines

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Matthew 28:19). Those were the last words that Jesus Christ spoke to His disciples in the Gospel of Matthew, and since one’s last words are typically among the most significant, we may conclude that for Jesus, Baptism is of paramount importance.

Undoubtedly, Baptism is the greatest of sacraments because without it we may not partake of the other sacraments of the Church. Baptism not only washes away all sin—original, voluntary, and involuntary—but recreates and restores the image of God within us, giving us the potential to live a new life in Christ.

The mystery of Baptism is our personal Paschal experience where we participate in the death and three-day resurrection of Christ through our triple immersion into the sanctified waters. In Baptism, we die with Christ by descending into the font, and we rise and live with Him through our emergence.

The Baptismal Font is called both the “tomb and the womb of the Church.” As a “tomb,” we die with Christ that we may live with Him. As the “womb” of the Church, we are born anew by water and the presence of the Holy Spirit, making us children of God, and uniting us with the Church in heaven and on earth. Moreover, we piously believe that at the moment of Baptism God appoints a guardian angel over the soul of the one being baptized.

After the triple immersion, the priest immediately Chrismates the newly baptized into the Orthodox Faith. Chrismation bestows the fruits of the Holy Spirit: it is the child’s personal receiving of the Holy Spirit, a personal Pentecost.

After Chrismation, the priest cuts four locks of hair from the child’s head in the sign of the Cross. Family members dress the newly baptized in a white outfit, and the godparent holds both the child and a candle, signifying that Christ is the true light of life. After a procession around the font chanting, “All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” and the reading of two New Testament passages, the priest administers the child’s first Holy Communion. By the conclusion of the service, the child becomes a full member of the Church having received the three sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Communion.

Planning a Baptism at our Assumption Parish

- Contact the church office to set the date for the Baptism. Upon setting the date, we will send you a baptismal packet with additional information. In the packet will be a stewardship card and a form that needs to be completed and submitted to our church office promptly.

- We recommend that infants be baptized after the 40-day Blessing and within six to nine months of birth.
- The baptismal name of your child should be of Christian or Biblical origin.
- The parents and godparents must be Orthodox Christians in good sacramental and financial standing with a canonical Orthodox Church. If not a parishioner of Assumption, a letter from one's home parish should be sent to our church well in advance of the date, stating their good standing.
- Although not obligatory, we recommend that parents and godparents meet with the priest prior to the baptism to explain the sacrament and address any concerns.

What is Needed for the Baptism

It is customary for the godparents to provide the following. However, some parents may wish to provide some of these items:

1. A new white baptismal outfit for the child to be worn after baptism
2. A new white undergarment (t-shirt or one-piece garment)
3. A baptismal Cross to be worn by the child (not a crucifix)
4. A new large white bath towel
5. A new single bed sheet (not a fitted sheet)
6. Two new white hand towels
7. A small bottle of olive oil
8. One large decorated baptismal candle & three smaller candles
9. Martyrika or witness pins

After the Baptism

By custom, three days after the Baptism, bathe the child in a portable tub. Pour the water from the tub around the foundations of your home or in an area where no one would walk. Do not pour the water down a drain. Care must also be taken with the towels and sheets that were also used for the Baptism. Rinse them in the same tub before washing conventionally. Dispose that water in the same manner mentioned above.

The godparent or parents bring the newly baptized child to church for the next three Sundays in its baptismal outfit and with the baptismal candle to receive Holy Communion. Bring the child to church regularly and frequently.

When Baptisms are not Conducted

Baptisms may not be performed from Christmas Day through the feast of Theophany (December 25th to January 6th), during Holy Week, or on any of the major feast days of the Lord unless the Metropolitan bishop approves. Baptisms may be done during seasons of fasting, such as Great Lent, the Dormition Fast, and during the Christmas Advent. However, due to the solemnity and fasting expectations of these days, it is preferred to schedule Baptisms outside these sacred seasons. Any questions or concerns may be brought to the priest's attention.