

***THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
WELCOMES YOU***

***Membership at  
The Church of the Good Shepherd***

*Including Baptisms, Transfers, and Confirmation and Reception*

**The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd**

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***We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ  
crucified, proclaim his resurrection,  
and share with us in his eternal priesthood.***

- Book of Common Prayer, p. 308

## Baptism

*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.*

*Holy Baptism is appropriately administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast.*

*The bishop, when present, is the celebrant; and is expected to preach the Word and preside at Baptism and the Eucharist...*

*In the absence of a bishop, a priest is the celebrant and presides at the service. If a priest uses Chrism in signing the newly baptized, it must have been previously consecrated by the bishop.*

*Each candidate for Holy Baptism is to be sponsored by one or more baptized persons.*

*Sponsors of adults and older children present their candidates and thereby signify their endorsement of the candidates and their intention to support them by prayer and example in their Christian life. Sponsors of infants, commonly called godparents, present their candidates, make promises in their own names, and also take vows on behalf of their candidates.*

*It is fitting that parents be included among the godparents of their own children. Parents and godparents are to be instructed in the meaning of Baptism, in their duties to help the new Christians grow in the knowledge and love of God, and in their responsibilities as members of his Church.*

*Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at 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.) It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 298

**Baptism** is membership in the Body of Christ, the Church. All baptized persons are invited to receive communion and participate fully in the life of the Church.

At the **Church of the Good Shepherd**, all baptisms are public services of worship. There are **NO** private baptisms celebrated, unless it is an emergency situation. As recommended by the Book of Common Prayer, our practice is to have Baptisms on the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus (the First Sunday after the Epiphany – 6 January), at the Easter Vigil, the Sunday of the Good Shepherd (the Fourth Sunday of Easter), the Day of Pentecost, and the Sunday after All Saints' Day – 1 November. Baptism appropriately is the first part of the Eucharist. Our custom is also to have the newly baptized person's first communion at the same service.

**All baptisms require preparation.** For adults, this means meeting with the Rector or other designated person for an inquiry into the faith of the Church and the person's faith. For children and infants, this means the parents and godparents meeting with the Rector or other designated person for an inquiry into the faith of the Church and the rearing of the child in this faith.

It is appropriate for both adults and children that there be **sponsors**, persons who agree to work with and walk with the individual in their early baptized life. Sponsors need to be baptized persons who agree to be models of faith for the individual.

Baptisms are not automatically “done” on newborns or other young children. A family needs to be regular in attendance and worship in order to model the faith for their children. Time is needed for being a part of the congregation and baptismal preparation, and also to live a sense of commitment to the congregation and the Church.

**Baptisms done with water in the Name of the Trinity** in any Christian denomination are not repeated in the Episcopal Church. If there is a question about whether or not one has been baptized, then there can be a conditional baptism.

**Baptized persons eighteen years of age** and older are eligible to vote in parish elections (the age is determined by New York State Religious Corporation Law), become members of the Vestry, and hold other elective offices (other than Wardens).

*Please see the Rector as far in advance as possible of a baptismal date if you wish to be baptized, or if you have a child to be baptized.*

The **Episcopal Church** is part of the worldwide **Anglican Communion**. Members of the Episcopal Church are welcome to receive communion and participate in the life of other Anglican Churches around the world and with Lutheran Churches that are part of the Lutheran World Federation (such as the ELCA in the United States and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) and other Christian denominations (as determined by that denomination. We believe that one is baptized as a Christian that happens to occur in an Episcopal Church, rather than being baptized an Episcopalian.

**RECEIVING COMMUNION:** In the Episcopal Church all baptized persons desiring to receive the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ are invited to do so. This includes children. At the Church of the Good Shepherd it is our practice to welcome everyone who wishes to receive the Body and Blood of Christ to receive communion, both bread and wine.

## **Confirmation**

Baptized members who wish to receive the Sacrament of **Confirmation**, the laying on of hands by a Bishop of this Church, are asked to speak to the Rector. Our custom at the **Church of the Good Shepherd** is to participate in the deanery confirmation service, which is held annually at St. Paul’s Cathedral in the Easter season or shortly thereafter. This service celebrates confirmation with other congregations, and is a sign of the wider dimension of the Church celebrating its baptismal membership as the Body of Christ.

There is **no magical age** for confirmation. Youth who wish to take on for themselves the baptismal promises made by their parents and sponsors, and adults, who wish to confirm their faith in the Church, all are invited to consider the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In the Episcopal Church, there are three actions that have been referred to as confirmation:

- **Confirmation** itself, in which a person who has not been confirmed by a bishop comes before the bishop for the laying on of hands.
- **Reception**, in which a person who has been confirmed by a bishop in a church other than the Episcopal Church, is received by the bishop as a confirmed member of the Episcopal Church.

For example, this would apply to members of the Roman Catholic Church who have been confirmed in their denomination and who now seek to become confirmed members of the Episcopal Church.

- **Reaffirmation**, in which a person who has been confirmed or received by a bishop in the Episcopal Church desires to reaffirm their faith commitment. This might be someone who had left the Episcopal Church and is now returning, or a spouse of someone who is being confirmed, or an adult confirmed as a youth who desires to make a renewal of faith in this way.

Confirmation requires preparation, which at the Church of the Good Shepherd usually is an **Inquirer's Class** or individual work with the Rector or designated person. Generally classes or meetings begin during Lent. Please ask the Rector about details.

In Church governance, **Wardens** must be confirmed (or received) members of the Episcopal Church.

The Canons of the Church state that it is the expectation of the Church that all adults be confirmed members of the Church.

## Membership

- Any person baptized in the parish is considered a **baptized member**.
- Any person who is a **parishioner** in another Episcopal Church who wishes to become a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd may do so by requesting a **letter of transfer** from their previous parish. If asked, the parish administrator can help with this request.
- Any person who is a member of another church in communion with the **Episcopal Church** (for example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and who wishes to become a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd may do so by requesting transfer of membership from their previous congregation. If asked, the parish administrator can help with this request.

- Any person who wishes to become a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd and is not a parishioner in either another Episcopal Church or in a church in communion with the Episcopal Church may establish membership by having **proof of their baptism** recorded with the parish office. Please call the parish administrator or speak with the Rector about how to do this.
- Membership in the Church of the Good Shepherd ends either with the death of a parishioner or with the transfer of a parishioner to another congregation. Inactive members are those who have not participated in the life of the congregation in the previous year through attendance and financial commitment. Inactive members remain on the rolls of the Church until they either transfer out or die.
- Members, also known as **communicants**, are considered active members, or **communicants in good standing**, if they have been faithful in corporate worship and faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Reign of God in the past year.
- **Adult communicants** are those sixteen years of age and over. Unfortunately, according to New York State Religious Corporation Law, persons under the age of eighteen are not eligible to vote in parish elections or to have a vote on parish vestries.
- “No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons.” (Canon I.17.5) Other than minimum age requirements there are **no barriers for full participation** in the Episcopal Church or at the Church of the Good Shepherd.

## **Good Shepherd Membership**

Communicants in good standing, that is, those persons who are members of the parish and have regularly participated in the worship life of the parish and have made regular contributions (either a pledge to the parish or regular offerings) for the past year, and are eighteen years of age and over, are eligible to vote in parish elections and to hold office.

## **QUESTIONS**

Please contact the Rector or Parish Administrator if there are any questions.

## **FEES**

There are **NO** fees for any of the Sacraments of the Church, including Baptism or Confirmation.

There is a \$25.00 administrative fee to certify a record of baptism, marriage, etc. from the parish register.

## THE CANONS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### **CANON 17: Of Regulations Respecting the Laity**

#### **Sec. 1**

- (a) All persons who have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, whether in this Church or in another Christian Church, and whose Baptisms have been duly recorded in this Church, are members thereof.
- (b) Members sixteen years of age and over are to be considered adult members.
- (c) It is expected that all adult members of this Church, after appropriate instruction, will have made a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and will have been confirmed or received by a Bishop of this Church or by a Bishop of a Church in communion with this Church. Those who have previously made a mature public commitment in another Church may be received, not confirmed.
- (d) Any person who is baptized in this Church as an adult and receives the laying on of hands by the Bishop at Baptism is to be considered, for the purpose of this and all other Canons, as both baptized and confirmed; also,

Any person who is baptized in this Church as an adult and at some time after the Baptism receives the laying on of hands by the Bishop in Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows is to be considered, for the purpose of this and all other Canons, as both baptized and confirmed; also,

Any baptized person who received the laying on of hands at Confirmation (by any Bishop in apostolic succession) and is received into the Episcopal Church by a Bishop of this Church is to be considered, for the purpose of this and all other Canons, as both baptized and confirmed; and also,

Any baptized person who received the laying on of hands by a Bishop of this Church at Confirmation or Reception is to be considered, for the purpose of this and all other Canons, as both baptized and confirmed.

**Sec. 2** For the purposes of statistical consistency throughout the Church, communicants sixteen years of age and over are to be considered adult communicants.

**Sec. 3.** All communicants of this Church who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered communicants in good standing.

#### **Sec. 4**

- (a) A member of this Church removing from the congregation in which that person's membership is recorded shall procure a certificate of membership indicating that that person is recorded as a member (or adult member) of this Church and whether or not such a member:
  - (1) is a communicant;
  - (2) is recorded as being in good standing;
  - (3) has been confirmed or received by a Bishop of this Church or a Bishop in communion with this Church.

Upon acknowledgment that a member who has received such a certificate has been enrolled in another congregation of this or another Church, the Member of the Clergy in charge or Warden issuing the certificate shall remove the name of the person from the parish register.

- (b) The Member of the Clergy in charge or Warden of the congregation to which such certificate is surrendered shall record in the parish register the information contained on the presented certificate of membership, and then notify the Member of the Clergy in charge or Warden of the congregation which issued the certificate that the person has been duly recorded as a member of the new congregation. Whereupon the person's removal shall be noted in the parish register of the congregation which issued the certificate.

- (c) If a member of this Church, not having such a certificate, desires to become a member of a congregation in the place to which he or she has removed, that person shall be directed by the Member of the Clergy in charge of the said congregation to procure a certificate from the former congregation, although on failure to produce such a certificate through no fault of the person applying, appropriate entry may be made in the parish register upon the evidence of membership status sufficient in the judgment of the Member of the Clergy in charge or Warden.
- (d) Any communicant of any Church in communion with this Church shall be entitled to the benefit of this section so far as the same can be made applicable.

**Sec. 5.** No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons.

**Sec. 6.** A person to whom the Sacraments of the Church shall have been refused, or who has been repelled from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, or who has been informed of an intention to refuse or repel him or her from the Holy Communion under the rubrics, may appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. A Priest who refuses or repels a person from the Holy Communion, or who communicates to a person an intent to repel that person from the Holy Communion shall inform that person, in writing, within fourteen days thereof of

- (a) the reasons therefore and
- (b) his or her right to appeal to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall be required to admit to the Sacraments a person so refused or repelled without the written direction of the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority. The Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority may in certain circumstances see fit to require the person to be admitted or restored because of the insufficiency of the cause assigned by the member of the Clergy. If it shall appear to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority that there is sufficient cause to justify refusal of the Holy Communion, however, appropriate steps shall be taken to institute such inquiry as may be directed by the Canons of the Diocese; and should no such Canon exist, the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority shall proceed according to such principles of law and equity as will ensure an impartial investigation and judgment, which judgment shall be made in writing within sixty days of the appeal and which shall also specify the steps required for readmission to Holy Communion.

**Sec. 7.** No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church.

**Sec. 8.** Any person accepting any office in this Church shall well and faithfully perform the duties of that office in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of this Church and of the Diocese in which the office is being exercised.

# **The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd**

## *Staff*

**The Rev. David Selzer**  
Rector

**The Rev. Edith Patterson**  
Deacon

**Michael Salmon**  
Director of Music

**Janice Beam**  
Parish Administrator

Sextons

December 2006