

All Saints Day Eucharist and Holy Baptism

It is with great excitement that we share with you some of the wonderful things taking place this Tuesday, November 1st at our All Saints Day Eucharist service. All Saints Day, celebrated each year on November 1st (or the first Sunday in November) is the time when the church remembers and honors all the Christian faithful (saints), both known and unknown. This festival had its origins in the Roman Catholic church in the Middle Ages. Reflecting on the lives and examples of the saints had been a widespread practice of Christians since the earliest days of the church. By the early Middle Ages, the liturgical (church) calendar was filled with the commemorations of hundreds of saints and martyrs. Many of these lesser observances were combined into a joint celebration called All Saints Day. The English word "saint" derives from the Latin *sanctus*, which means "holy." In His word, God declares everyone who had been baptized and believes the promise of the gospel to be justified, holy and blameless. This means saints are those still living on earth, and those who have died and now live in heaven.

This All Saints Day, we will also usher in two new "saints" into our community of faith, through the water of baptism. Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church. It is a public statement of one's intentional decision to follow the way of Jesus. In the case of infant baptism, it is the parents' declaration of their intent to raise a child in the way of Jesus. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble, so in the Episcopal Church baptism is only administered once. When someone chooses to be baptized, or to have their child baptized in the Episcopal Church, it means they are choosing to live out the Baptismal Covenant in the context of an Episcopal Church community, taking part in the worship, mission and ministries of the local parish. Baptism is open to all people, regardless of age or background. Baptism can be regarded as the beginning of a spiritual path and not the culmination of one. It is not necessary that a candidate for baptism fully understand nor be comfortable with every word of the Christian creeds and doctrines from the onset, but rather be ready to embark on the rich path of discovery into the way, truth and life of Jesus Christ.

One of our school families has expressed an interest in having their children baptized. Because their children worship here at Holy Spirit, we view this is an incredible opportunity to allow our students to see, first hand, what baptism looks like. So, during the service of Holy Eucharist (Communion) on November 1st, there will also be two baptisms!

We encourage you to take some time this weekend to talk with your child regarding your family's choices about baptism (i.e. infant baptism and waiting until they express a desire to be baptized, etc.) Discuss with your child what baptism means to you and memories you have about your own or their baptism. Below you will find a series of question that might spark great discussion with your child about baptism. We welcome you to join your child on Tuesday, at the All Saints Eucharist service as well. If your faith tradition does not include baptism, please use this opportunity to talk with your children about both the differences and similarities between your traditions and those of Christianity.

Questions for discussion on Baptism:

- Where was I baptized?
- When was I baptized?
- Did I wear anything special?
- Why did you choose to baptize me then?
- Who came to my baptism?
- How did you feel when you handed me to the priest/preacher?
- How did I act when they put the water on my head?
- Were there any parts of the service that were special to you that day?
- Were there any special scriptures that you chose for me; promises that you claimed over me as a child?
- Did you have a favorite hymn - Did I?
- When you pray for them, what do you ask God to bless me with?

We are excited about this opportunity to share as a community, this wonder-filled experience called Baptism. Please hold these two precious children and their parents in your prayers as they prepare their hearts and minds. Join us at 8:15 AM on Tuesday, November 1st in the Nave. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to email me at dcfm@hsechurch.org.

Godspeed,
KariAnn Lessner
Director of Children's & Family Ministries
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