



We Invite you to Join the Church and Become a Member of St. Paul's Ventura

We would love to have you join!

Here are some common questions and answers.

Please let us know if you would like any further information.

Q. How do I become a member?

A. To join, simply complete the Membership Form and return it to the welcome table on Sunday or to the church office.

Q. What does it mean to transfer my membership?

A. If you are a member of another Episcopal congregation, or were ever confirmed in an Episcopal Church, you can transfer your membership. Provide our Parish Office with the name and location of the Church and the approximate dates of your membership. Or, if you were confirmed there, the approximate date of confirmation, and we will send for a letter of transfer. Or you may wish to contact your previous parish yourself.

Q. What's the difference between a member and a baptized member?

A. A member is anyone who wishes to join the church. It is our hope that everyone will choose to follow in the way of Jesus and participate in beautiful and meaningful sacrament of baptism. A baptized member has been baptized and recorded that information with the church.

Q. What if I was baptized in a different church?

A. If you've been baptized with water in the Name of The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in any Christian denomination, you may become a "baptized member" of St. Paul's. Just provide the Parish Office with your birth date and place, as well as baptismal date and place. Those whose baptisms have been registered in the Episcopal Church are considered baptized members. Upon reaching 16 years of age, baptized members are considered adult members.

Q. What if I haven't been baptized?

A. You are still welcome here. We hope that you will be open to exploring your faith and consider baptism as a next step on your journey.

Q. Is there any difference between members and baptized members?

A. There is one more thing to consider. Not all members are qualified electors which means they can vote in Annual Meetings. In order to be a qualified elector, one needs to be a baptized member for at least the last twelve months, be sixteen years of age or older, and in good standing with the parish.

Q. What is baptism and why is it important?

A. We become members of the body of Christ through the sacrament of baptism. In the waters of baptism, we are lovingly adopted by God into God's family, which we call the Church, and given God's own life to share and



reminded that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ. Holy Baptism, which can be performed through pouring of water or immersion in it, marks a formal entrance to the congregation and wider Church; the candidates for the sacrament make a series of vows, including an affirmation of the Baptismal Covenant, and are baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are marked as Christ's own forever, having "clothed [themselves] with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). All people of any age are welcome to be baptized; we believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, as the "bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble" (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 298). This is a very important and moving occasion. The prayers and presence of the community are always requested for baptisms.

Q. How can I learn more about baptism?

A. We'd be happy to give you more information. You're welcome to call the church office, send us an email, or speak with the clergy to learn more.

Q. How can I arrange for a baptism?

A. Please call the church office, send us an email, or speak with the clergy to arrange for a baptism. Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil (Easter Eve), on the Day of Pentecost (fifty days after Easter), on All Saints' Day (November 1) or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the First Sunday after January 6). It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a bishop is present. However, Baptisms may be arranged on other days. Please check with the church office if another day is preferable.

Q. What does it mean to be Confirmed in the Church?

A. The Book of Common Prayer defines Confirmation as "The rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from The Holy Spirit through Prayer and the laying on of hands by a Bishop." Confirmation classes are offered in the weeks prior to our Annual Bishop's Visit. Any baptized adult, and any baptized youth 16 years or older is eligible.

Q. What does it mean to be Received into the Church?

A. Persons who have been confirmed in another denomination by a Bishop in the Apostolic Succession (most often Roman Catholic or Orthodox) are received by The Bishop rather than confirmed. Those who have been confirmed or received are classified as "confirmed communicants."

Q. What does it mean to formally Reaffirm My Baptismal Vows:

A. Reaffirmation is for people who have already been confirmed in the Episcopal Church. Those who wish to formally reaffirm their Christian vows may be presented to the bishop during the service of confirmation. Everyone participates in the renewal of baptismal vows as a part of this service, but only those who prepared in advance are presented to the bishop.

Q. How can I arrange to be Confirmed, Received or Reaffirmed?

A. Please contact the church office or speak to our clergy. We will be happy to make the arrangements.