

Baptism Guidelines

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

Wilmington, NC

“Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life” Romans 6:3-4

Baptism brings about the birth of new life in Christ. The Orthodox Church practices infant baptism because the Church does not require “understanding” as a precondition. To know God is the fruit of baptism. Baptism makes a person a participant in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and a member of His body, the Church. This is the first step in becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. The Church does have a responsibility to administer the sacrament only to those who have shown that this is the primary purpose for the baptism.

Here are the guidelines for scheduling a baptism at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church:

1. Setting the date – Fr. Jon must approve the date and time of the baptism before it can be put on the church’s calendar.
 - a. Please note – Do not print or mail invitations or save-the-date cards before Fr. Jon approves the date. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church cannot guarantee any date unless Fr. Jon has approved it.
 - b. Please note – baptisms cannot be scheduled on the following dates:
 - i. September 14 – Exaltation of the Life-giving Cross
 - ii. August 29 – Beheading of St. John the Forerunner
 - iii. Holy Week
2. Parents wishing to baptize their children– One or both parents of the child must be an Orthodox Christian in good financial standing with St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. He or she must be an active steward of the church and must be current with financial obligations. More importantly, he or she should be living the liturgical life of the church, including regular reception of Holy Communion and participation in the sacrament of Confession.
 - a. Please note – Orthodox Christians not living in Wilmington, NC, are permitted to baptize their children at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. However, they must provide a written letter from their parish priest attesting to their status as Orthodox Christians in good standing.
3. Adults wishing to be baptized into the Orthodox Church – Any adult who wishes to be baptized needs to first become a Catechumen (learner) and participate in religious education prior to scheduling the date for baptism.
 - a. Please note – the duration of religious education classes for all

Catechumens is determined by Fr. Jon. This duration is different for everyone.

4. Sponsors/Koumbaroi –Sponsors must be Orthodox Christians in good standing ecclesiastically and financially at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, or they must be Orthodox Christians in good standing ecclesiastically and financially at another Orthodox Church and are required to provide a letter stating such from their parish priest.
 - a. Please note – This letter must be received 4 weeks prior to the baptism.
5. Fees – Parishioners who are currently in good standing at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church will need to pay a \$100 cleaning fee so that the facilities can be cleaned after the baptism. If the Hellenic Center is reserved for a reception, an additional \$50 cleaning fee will be added.
 - a. Parishioners who are not currently in good standing need to fulfill any past stewardship obligations they have and also need to complete a stewardship card for the current year. A separate cleaning fee of \$100 will need to be paid so that the facilities can be cleaned after the baptism. If the Hellenic Center is reserved for a reception, an additional \$50 cleaning fee will be added.
 - b. Orthodox Christians who are not parishioners at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church will need to pay a \$300 usage and cleaning fee. Checks can be made payable to St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. If the Hellenic Center is reserved for a reception, an additional \$50 cleaning fee will be added.
 - i. New parishioners must be active in our community and contributing financially for a minimum of 3 months to be considered a parishioner at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.
 - ii. Please note that the cleaning/usage fee is for the facilities only and is not an honorarium for the priest, chanter, or neokoros. A separate honorarium can be offered to these individuals.

Here are the guidelines for all baptisms at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

1. Items necessary for the baptism:
 - a. A small container of olive oil
 - b. Three Baptismal candles
 - c. A white garment for after the baptism
 - d. Baptismal cross
 - e. White sheet (infants only)

- f. One large White bath towel
 - g. One white hand towel
 - h. A small dispenser of liquid hand soap.
 - i. Favors/bombonieres: optional, can be provided by the Godparent(s) if they so choose.
2. Photographers/Videographers – Photographs and video recordings of the baptism are permitted as long as they do not impede or distract from the sacrament. Photographers and Videographers are required to meet with Fr. Jon prior to the baptism to discuss all necessary restrictions.
 3. Byzantine chanting during the service – Traditional Byzantine music is chanted during an Orthodox baptism. If you have a friend or family member who is a chanter, he needs to contact Fr. Jon so he can receive his blessing prior to the baptism. If you do not know a chanter, then St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church will provide you with the contact information of our chanter. It is the responsibility of the parents/adult to contact the chanter.
 4. Promptness – It is necessary that the baptism start on time. All care must be taken to ensure promptness.
 5. Invitations to the Reception – If you wish for Fr. Jon and his family to attend the reception, please mail an invitation to the church office prior to the baptism.