



CHRIST CHURCH
EPISCOPAL

A JOYFUL COMMUNITY SHARING LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST

Welcoming A New Child To Your Family

*Prayers for your new family, a guide to Baptism, and information
about beginning Christian Education plus more.*



Christ Church Episcopal • 10 N. Church Street, Greenville
864.271.8773 • www.ccgsc.org

Caregiver Guide for adding a new Child/Children to your family while at Christ Church

This guide intends to answer some of the most prevalent questions you might have about adding a new child to your family while at Christ Church through fostering, adoption, or birth. We know that adding a new child to your family is exciting, overwhelming, and perhaps even a little intimidating. We will be praying for you throughout the process- from your eager anticipation for their arrival all the way to when your child leaves your home as an adult. We will partner with you as your child grows to enable them to encounter and know God.

Included in this guide are prayers, information for arrival resources and registration, the typical baptism process at Christ Church, and so much more. Take the time to scan this document prior to your child's arrival and refer to it as your child grows.

If you need additional information that is not contained in this document, please let us know. We would be happy to provide it to you.

Yours in Christ,

Addie

Addie Tapp | Director of Young Adult Ministries
864.282.3116 direct
864.271.8773 main

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1. Prayers for those anticipating a new child joining their family

a. Primary caregiver prayers

“Heavenly Father, you sent your own Son into this world. We thank you for the life of this child, *N.*, entrusted to our care. Help us to remember that we are all your children, and so to love and nurture *him*, that *he* may attain to that full stature intended for *him* in your eternal kingdom; for the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

- For the gift of a child, Book of Common Prayer

“Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen”

- For the care of children, Book of Common Prayer

“Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless [the parents names]. Grant them wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their common life, that each may be to each other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. And so knit their wills together in your will and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may live together in love and peace all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

- Prayer for the parents, Thanksgiving for a Child, Book of Common Prayer

“God our Creator, thank you for the waiting and the joy, thank you for new life and for parenthood, thank you for the gift of [name of child], entrusted to our care. May we be patient and understanding, ready to guide and forgive, that in our love [child] may know your love. May s/he learn to love your world and the whole family of your children; through Christ our life. Amen.” - Thanksgiving for a Child, New Zealand Prayer Book

“God of the humble and hopeful, you bless those who believe when you promise. Help us, like Mary and Elizabeth, simply to delight in the good things you prepare for us, to say ‘yes’, and to trust that your strength and your love will provide the wisdom needed by those who care for [name of child]. Amen”

- Thanksgiving for a child, New Zealand Prayer Book

b. Extended care network prayers

“We thank you, Father, that you have set us in family groups, with relatives and friends of all ages. Help us to respect and care for one another, and for this child, so that in our family s/he may see and enjoy many loving relationships; through Jesus, our Savior, who loves us. Amen”

- Thanksgiving for a Child, New Zealand Prayer Book

2. Preparing for a new child to join your family

a. Meet the Pastoral Care Team at Christ Church

Pastoral Care is the ministry of us all, both clergy and laity, to bring kindness, care, or simply a presence to those in need or joy as we accompany our church family on their individual journeys. The pastoral care team at Christ Church is made up of clergy and lay staff.

a. ***Letting your church know about the new arrival and what to expect from us***

As you prepare to welcome the new child into your family, reach out to Lisa Hunt, the Coordinator for Pastoral Care. She will let the rest of the Pastoral Care team know, and they will begin praying for you! Her email is LHunt@ccgsc.org. Our pastoral care team includes:

- The Rev. Scott Fleischer, Priest Associate for Pastoral Care.
- Lisa Hunt, Coordinator for Pastoral Care.
- The Rev. Kellie Wilson, Senior Associate Rector.
- The Rev. Dr. Harrison McLeod, Rector.
- Annette Cook, Director of Senior Adult Ministries.
- Addie Tapp, Director of Young Adult Ministries.
- Anne Green Buckner, Director of Family Ministries.
- Kevin Mertens, Director of Faith in Action.
- Chantal Smith, Director of Welcome Ministries.

When you email Lisa Hunt, please provide the following information to her:

- your due date/child arrival date
- your preferred contact information

After emailing her, you should then log into the church website and check that the contact information for all of your family members (including you) is correct along with your address(es), and membership status.

You can expect to hear from a member of the Pastoral Care team about once a week for a quick check in until the arrival. If a need arises, you can also reach out to any member of the Pastoral Care team. Anything you share will be kept confidential within the Pastoral Care team members.

All current staff contact information can be found at the Christ Church website, www.ccgsc.org.

b. ***Resources for primary care providers***

i. *Caregiver (parent/grandparent/foster parent) gatherings*

Once a quarter, caregivers of young children are invited to gather as a group by our church. This helps you to be in community together- ask questions, answer questions of others and provide support to others. Caregivers will be able to meet the nursery staff, baptism coordinator, the children's minister, and get a tour of the rooms and spaces your child will be using while at the church.

For information about the next gathering, contact Addie Tapp at atapp@ccgsc.org.

ii. *Mental health + healthy relationship resources*

Welcoming a new child into your family is a major transition. While a child brings a lot of joy, their arrival can also add personal, spiritual, financial, and relational stresses.

We are here to help. If you are struggling, please reach out to our Pastoral Care Priest, the Rev. Scott Fleischer. His contact information can be found on the church website, www.ccgsc.org.

Canterbury Counseling Center is also available. There, you or your child can receive quality pastoral counseling from licensed professionals. This center is located on Christ Church's campus. If the cost is prohibitive for you or your child to attend counseling, please reach out and let us know and we will assist you.

iii. Your faith (Sunday School Classes, etc.)

As you embark on this new chapter, your own faith remains just as important as ever. We encourage you to find ways to continue to grow in your faith. Small groups, Bible studies, Sunday school classes, Wednesday night offerings, daily morning devotionals, and Sunday morning worship are all great avenues to encounter God in your life. Take a look at what is currently being offered at Christ Church at our website, www.ccgsc.org.

iv. Other Church Resources/Ministries Caregivers Appreciated

1. Meal for arrival period (soup)

As you arrive home with your new addition, the church would love to bring you a meal! Someone from the pastoral care team will likely offer you a quart of soup or a homemade frozen dinner to be dropped off at your home. Please take us up on the offer!

2. Wednesday Night Meals

Every Wednesday during the program year (September – May with breaks for holidays), there is dinner at Christ Church. For a few dollars, your family is welcome to share a meal with other parishioners at the parish house, and participate in programming for all ages. Nursery is available on Wednesday nights, as well as children and youth programming. The weekly menu and registration are available at the Christ Church website, CCGSC.org/Wednesday-night-suppers.

v. Attending Safe Church Training

Christ Church, and all Episcopal Churches, are committed to keeping all children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe from harm. Part of this commitment includes training all adults who work with children or youth in the Episcopal Church's abuse prevention program, Safeguarding God's People. If you have not already been trained, you will be asked to do so before you are able to assist with nursery or children's programming at Christ Church. The training is online and takes a few hours. Contact Lisa Hunt at LHunt@ccgsc.org to get login information. Thank you for helping us keep all children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe.

3. Arrival of Child/Children

a. Clergy calls and visit options

If you know the arrival date of your child (such as an induction date, adoption date, etc.), a member of the clergy would love to pray with you in person or over the phone the day before. This can be arranged by contacting Lisa Hunt, the coordinator for Pastoral Care at Christ Church. You can also ask the member of Pastoral Care team during their regular check-ins.

The clergy are also available to pray with you and offer a blessing after your child arrives (at a hospital, your home, etc.).

b. Priest on call contact information

Christ Church office hours are Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30PM. Should you need anything during those hours, the church phone number is 864.271.8773.

A priest is always available, regardless of the hour. The on-call number is 864.553.0737. Utilize this number when you need prayers or support.

Contact information for all staff members and clergy are listed on the Christ Church website, www.ccgsc.org.

c. Information the church will need for your family record

To add your child to your family in our parish records, we will need their full name, date of birth, and a nickname if you plan to use one. Pictures are always well received, but not necessary. This information can be sent to Lisa Hunt (LHunt@ccgsc.org).

Unless you request otherwise, we will announce your new arrival in the bulletin and in the weekly community news email so your church family can celebrate and support you!

4. Practicing faith at home with your family

Studies show that primary caregivers are the number one influence in their child's faith, followed by a godparent/mentor, with church workers coming in 3rd.

If you, like many caregivers, feel intimidated by that prospect and want a little more guidance in fostering faith at home, we are here to help!

The most important first step is to practice your own faith at home. Continuing (or establishing for the first time) consistent habits of prayer (morning, evening, bedtime, at meals, etc.), worship, study of scripture, and service will not only help you build your faith, but provide a model of a faithful life for your child.

Even before your child learns to talk or is able to participate in family prayers, you can include your child in your conversations with God. Building a short prayer said out loud into feeding, changing, or bedtime routines can help alert your child to God's presence in their life. Simple prayers like the Lord's Prayer or a family favorite mealtime prayer can work, or

you can borrow pieces from Morning prayer, Evening Prayer, or Compline (bedtime), found in the Book of Common Prayer.

Traci Smith's book "Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home" can also guide you in fostering faith at home. Included in her book are bedtime prayer activities, ways to mark holidays and birthdays, activities to help older siblings prepare for a new sibling, and more.

5. Bringing your child to church services

a. Nursery and Childcare options at Christ Church on Sundays

All children are welcome to join in worship services. There is no age requirement or expectation that your child will be quiet.

Your family will want to pick a service style that allows you to worship with the most focus. Many families choose to worship at the 10:30 AM Markley Chapel service, as it is slightly shorter than the 10:30 AM Church service. Both are Rite II.

The nursery at Christ Church is available to children birth through age 2 (until 3rd birthday) every Sunday. The nursery is located on the 1st floor of the Parish House and is staffed by parents and volunteers. During the program year (September – May, with breaks for holidays), nursery care is available during the Sunday School hour, and Sunday school is offered for children beginning at age 3. A baby in the nursery may be dropped off at the nursery before the start of Sunday school (the nursery opens at 9:00 AM) and may remain there until the conclusion of the 10:30 AM church service.

i. What to expect from the nursery & what is expected of you

The nursery at Christ Church is staffed by a mix of nursery staff and primary care volunteers. Following best practices and Episcopal church policies, two or more adults will be in the nursery at all times.

Families who would like to use the nursery should plan to bring diapers and formula and/or juice for their child. If the child has an allergy or a situation caregivers should be aware of, please make sure to note that to the caregivers upon arrival. Children with allergies will be given a special name tag and should bring their own snack.

b. Helping older children attend Sunday Services with you

All are welcome in the Episcopal Church. If you have an older child that has never been to an Episcopal church service before, they will feel most comfortable participating in the service if they understand what is expected of them, and what to say. Our service of Holy Eucharist is outlined in the Book of Common Prayer beginning on page 355. If you do not have a Book of Common Prayer (BCP) at home, one is available for free online at www.BCPonline.org. We suggest arriving to church a few minutes before the start of the service to be able to turn to page 355 in the red Book of Common Prayer found in the pew rack, so your child can feel

confident participating in the service. Hymns sung in the service are listed in the bulletin, as well as posted as hymn numbers on the wooden wall signs hung up around the church. Almost all hymns can be found in the blue hymnals, also in the pew racks in both the church and the chapel.

6. Baptism for infants and older children

a. Who to contact, and when you should reach out

Baptisms occur on special Sundays in the church calendar, as appointed. These Sundays include the Baptism of our Lord, Holy Saturday, at the Easter Vigil, Pentecost, and All Saints Day. The exact dates of these days change from year to year. Sarah Marczynski, baptism coordinator, will let you know the exact dates and services in which baptisms will be available when you meet with her.

Baptisms are folded into the Sunday morning Eucharist so the congregation can serve as witnesses and welcome the newly baptized. There is no age minimum or maximum for baptism. To begin scheduling a baptism, contact Sarah Marczynski, Liturgy and Music Program Coordinator. You may also begin the process by filling in the baptism form on the Christ Church website, found under Worship / Life Events / Baptism & Confirmation.

b. What to expect as you prepare for baptism

The Saturday prior to baptism, our clergy offer a baptism instruction class that is required for parents and godparents. This class will not only walk you through the logistics of what to expect from the service, but also provide more of an explanation of the sacrament of Baptism. As you prepare your child for baptism, look at the service of Baptism as it is found in the Book of Common Prayer (beginning on pg. 299). The promises that you and the godparent(s) will make at baptism can be helpful as you decide who will serve as your child's godparent. Godparents do not need to be Episcopalian, but they do need to be Christian. Baptisms in the Episcopal church are done by pouring water over the child's head, not full submersion underwater.

c. What to expect the day of baptisms

Baptisms happen in the Church or Chapel during the 10:30 AM service on Sunday mornings as part of the worship service. It is typical for a family to choose between one and four (often two) adults to serve as godparents for a child. Godparents can be singles or couples, and do not need to be related to the child, or to each other. Godparents need to be physically present at the baptism to make their baptismal promises. When choosing who will serve as a godparent, we have eight suggestions for godparents to guide your choice.

1. Form the habit of praying regularly for your godchild by name, especially at celebrations of the Eucharist.
2. Be present and receive Communion on the day your godchild begins to receive Communion regularly. Encourage frequent Communion.
3. Encourage attendance by your godchild at Church services – go along when possible.

4. Cultivate your godchild's friendship. Multiply helpful contacts. Remember birthdays and baptismal anniversaries with appropriate letters or gifts.
5. When your godchild is old enough, see that the child is enrolled in Church school and attends faithfully.
6. See that your godchild has a Bible and Prayer Book and see that they are used.
7. Remember your responsibility as a sponsor for the Christians growth and education of your godchild. Be prepared to discuss the Christian life with your godchild whenever possible.
8. Teach your godchild to look forward eagerly to Confirmation. Try to be present at that service.

When you meet with Sarah Marczynski to coordinate the baptism, you will fill out a baptismal form which includes the child's full name. The name on that form will be used to make a personalized banner for the child, which will be present at the baptism. Due to the labor involved in the banner, only the first and middle name are sewn on. If a child's first name is particularly long or a double name, just the first name may be used. Pictures are not allowed during the service itself, but are allowed after the service is dismissed. Please remember that this is a sacrament that occurs as part of our larger Sunday worship service. Three pews will be reserved for the family of the child at the baptism. While it is not required, many families choose to dress the child being baptized in white, or wear a traditional baptismal gown.

9. Children's programming, youth programming, and CCEP

a. *Children's programming overview*

Children's Ministry at Christ Church engages children to study Scripture and participate in age-appropriate programs and opportunities and works in tandem with other ministries to provide intergenerational experiences and programs. Children's ministry begins with the nursery (available at infancy) and continues through 5th grade. Nursery is available year-round during church services and is also available during the program year (September-May) during the Sunday School hour. Starting at age 3, children begin attending age-appropriate Sunday School. Children's ministry also offers summer Vacation Bible School (VBS), occasional weekend events (picnics, movie nights, service events), and more. Stay up to date with Children's Ministry through the church website, or the Facebook group Christ Church children.

b. *Youth Ministry overview*

Youth Ministry at Christ Church is led by Eric Travis, Director of Youth Ministries, and is for youth from 6th - 12th grade. Youth ministry regularly meets for EYC (Episcopal Youth Community), Sunday school, service opportunities around the church and Greenville, weekend trips and retreats, and summer domestic and international mission opportunities.

c. *Christ Church Episcopal Preschool information*

Christ Church has a fully accredited preschool for infants through 6-year old's that is open Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM. Due to the excellence of the preschool, there is a

waiting list for children to join. To apply for the waiting list and to learn more about the preschool, visit their website www.ccgsc.org/preschool.

10. Children with special needs

All are welcome at any service at Christ Church. Depending on your family's needs, different services may be more accessible to you. If the 10:30 AM service in the church is too loud, the 10:30 AM chapel service may be a better fit, although it is still very well attended. The 8:00 AM service on Sunday mornings in the chapel is even smaller and quieter, with no music offerings. The 5:00 PM service in the chapel may also be a good fit if your family would prefer a smaller gathering, although there is music at 5:00 PM. Christ Church does not typically use incense during their services, and will announce in advance if a special services will include incense (normally only around Christmas and Easter).

Once a month, Christ Church also offers Rhythms of Grace, a service of Holy Eucharist specifically designed for individuals and families with special needs. This service is held on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 3:00 PM in Markley Chapel. If you have questions about the service or a particular accommodation you would need to attend the service, do not hesitate to reach out to the Rev. Kellie Wilson or our children's ministry director, Holly Melton at hmelton@ccgsc.org.