

Emergency Holy Baptism in Pandemic

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer makes provision for Baptism in case of emergency on pages 313 and 314. Until we can gather for public worship again safely, Bishop Hughes has determined that the 2020 pandemic constitutes a state of emergency across the Diocese of Newark, permitting use of this form generally until our churches can celebrate Holy Baptism in person. This form is also suitable, as always, for use in direct emergency situations, such as serious illness or injury.

This form may be used within a household that is sheltering together. Distancing requirements prevent someone outside the household performing the Baptism, whether in outdoor or indoor in-person worship.

If it is desired to invite the congregation to witness the Baptism via online worship, the Emergency Baptism takes place after the conclusion of the regular service, whether it is Morning Prayer, Ante-Communion, or Holy Eucharist. The presider invites the congregation to remain online for the Emergency Baptism and, afterwards, notes that a public celebration will take place in-person, when permissible. This may be viewed live, if the church's online worship is designed that way (such as zoom or by providing a link to a personal Facebook live feed), or by recorded video in other platforms.

Emergency Baptism

In case of emergency, any baptized person may administer Baptism according to the following form.

Using the given name of the one to be baptized (if known), pour water on him or her, saying

“[Name,] I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

The Lord's Prayer is then said.

The Lord's Prayer

Traditional

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Contemporary

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Other prayers, such as the following, may be added

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed on upon this your servant the forgiveness of sin and have raised *her/him* to the new life of grace. Strengthen *her/him*, O Lord, with your presence, enfold *her/him* in the arms of your mercy, and keep *her/him* safe forever. *Amen.*

The person who administers emergency Baptism should inform the priest of the appropriate parish, so that the fact can be properly recorded.

When the congregation can gather in person (or in the case of illness or injury, after the baptized person recovers), the Baptism should be recognized at a public celebration of the Sacrament with a bishop or priest presiding, and the person baptized under emergency conditions, together with the sponsors or godparents, taking part in everything except the administration of the water.