

First Rite:
**Welcoming Returning Members and Members Baptized in Other Traditions
and Celebrating Current Members Entering this Process**
Adapted from the Book of Occasional Services, pages 139–140

This rite is used at the principal Sunday Eucharist. It is provided for baptized persons who have returned to the life of the Church after a time away and for members baptized in other traditions. It is also provided for those current members (whether young people preparing for Confirmation or older members preparing for Reaffirmation) who are entering the process. Through this rite, those who wish to pursue a disciplined exploration of the implications of Christian living are hereby recognized by the community and welcomed to begin this process. During the Prayers of the People, those about to be welcomed and celebrated are prayed for by name.

After the Prayers of the People, the senior warden or other representative of the community presents the baptized to the celebrant with these or other words:

N., We present to you these persons (or N., N.,) who are baptized members of the Body of Christ and we welcome them to our community as they undertake a process of growth in the meaning of their baptism.

The following may be added,

N., We also present to you these persons (or N., N.,) who are baptized members of the Body of Christ and have been members of our community, that we might likewise celebrate and welcome them into this process of growth in the meaning of their baptism

The Celebrant addresses the Candidates,

Celebrant (to each baptized person) What do you seek?

Candidate Renewal of my life in Christ.

Celebrant In baptism, you died with Christ Jesus to the forces of evil and rose to new life as members of his Body. Will you study the promises made at your baptism, and strive to keep them in the fellowship of this community and the rest of the Church?

Candidate I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you attend the worship of God regularly with us, to hear God's word and to celebrate the mystery of Christ's dying and rising?

Candidate I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you participate in a life of service to those who are poor, outcast, or powerless?

Candidate I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you strive to recognize the gifts that God has given you and discern how they are to be used in the building up of God's reign of peace and justice?

Candidate I will, with God's help.

The Celebrant addresses the Sponsors,

Celebrant You have been chosen by this community to serve as companions to these persons. Will you support them by prayer and example and help them to grow in the knowledge and love of God?

Sponsors We will, with God's help.

The Celebrant addresses the Congregation,

Celebrant Will you who witness this new beginning keep (N., N.) in your prayers and help them, share with them your ministry, bear their burdens, and forgive and encourage them?

People **We will, with God's help.**

Those being presented remain standing. The sponsors place a hand on their shoulders. The Celebrant extends both hands toward the baptized, saying,

Celebrant Blessed are you, our God, our Maker, for you form us in your image and restore us in Jesus Christ. In baptism, N., N., were buried with Christ and rose to new life in him. Renew them in your Holy Spirit, that they may grow as members of Christ. Strengthen their union with the rest of his Body as they join us in our life of praise and service; through our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

In full view of all, the baptized who are new members may now write their names in the church's register of baptized persons. The deacon or a sponsor calls out the names as they are written.

Celebrant Please welcome the new members of the community.

People We recognize you as members of the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.

The service continues with the Peace. It is appropriate for the new members to greet as many of the faithful as possible. Some may also read the lessons, present the Bread and Wine, and perform other liturgical functions for which they have been previously qualified.