

Episcopal Church in Marlboro offers “open baptism” to all who want sacrament: Old rite gets new welcome

The Episcopal church in Marlboro will again offer “open baptism” at it’s 7 p.m. Easter Vigil, 7 p.m. on Holy Saturday, April 3.

“We are trying to find those who have fallen between the cracks and help them out. That’s what the church is supposed to do,” the vicar of Christ Church, Father Jerry Brooks, explained. Our congregation hopes to show that the Church exists to include people, not exclude them.

On Holy Saturday night, the church will welcome—with “no strings attached”—any unbaptized person who wants to be baptized. Those interested are asked to either call Father Jerry (845-231-3412) or arrive at the church around 6:30 p.m.

Christ Church is reaching out to all those who have been denied baptism in the past for whatever reason. Members hope that parents and adults who forgot or never quite got around to it, as well as those who were formerly turned away, will take full advantage of this invitation.

For Christians around the world, Holy Week is the most solemn time of the year, enacting Jesus’ last days before his crucifixion and resurrection. “I know this invitation seems to be controversial for a few who believe we are offering “cheap grace,” Father Jerry admitted, “but our understanding that grace is never cheap. It’s free.” Also, he said, the Episcopal Church, theologically, is sacramental rather than confessional. “We don’t ask if you believe what we believe. We ask if you will break bread with us before God.”

The Saturday night service will begin with the church in darkness, symbolic of the world plunged into darkness with the death of Jesus. A small fire will be prepared outside the front door of the church, representing the light of God’s love. Then the paschal (Easter) candle will be lit from that fire and carried into the church, followed by the congregation, including those who wish to be baptized.

The Episcopal Church in Marlboro is located at the northern intersection of Old Post Road and Rt. 9W. Facilities are handicap-accessible, and plenty of parking is available. For further information, check www.episcopalmarlboro.org.

Christ Episcopal Church is affiliated with the Episcopal Diocese of New York, headquartered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk is diocesan bishop.

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Caption:

Photo from 2009 Easter Vigil: A small fire is prepared outside the front door of the church, representing the light of God’s love. Then the paschal (Easter) candle is lit from that fire and carried into the church, followed by the congregation, including those who wish to be baptized. Left to right: William Borchert, Bill Ogden, and Fr. Jerry Brooks.