

# Holy Baptism at Christ Church

Baptism is a sacrament of belonging. It marks a significant moment, both in the life of the candidate, and in the life of the church community, family and friends. It is a celebration of a new beginning in becoming a member of Christ's body the Church. Baptism immerses us in the new life given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter. When we come for baptism we are saying "yes" to God's love and desire for us to belong to the community of God's people. We are baptised into membership of the universal Christian Church, not merely as members of a particular denomination or parish.

Christian parents bring their children for baptism because they want them to be part of the community of faith. Parents and Godparents (or Sponsors in the case of older children and adults) make promises on behalf of the children they bring for baptism. They also take on the responsibility of raising their children as active members of the church.

In the Christian life, we are not alone. God provides us companions on the way and we share our faith and our struggles with the community of the Church. In baptism, the Church says "yes" to you. Welcome!

## Preparation

Before taking any significant step in life, it is appropriate to prepare for it. The same is true in beginning the Christian life with baptism. When we bring children to be baptised, the parents and godparents need to prepare for their new responsibilities. In baptismal preparation we seek to explore our faith and to understand the promises being made at baptism. At Christ Church baptismal preparation is arranged before the date of each baptism through making an appointment with one of the parish clergy.

## Parents & Godparents (Sponsors)

In bringing a child to be baptised in the Church we seek to give the child something of value which we already have: active membership in the Church and the joy of the Christian life. Children are baptised in response to the faith of their parents who, together with the Godparents, make the Baptismal Promises on behalf of the child.

Godparents have an important part to play in the Christian life and nurture of their godchild. They should be chosen with great care. Godparents or sponsors do not need to be Anglican, but they must be baptised themselves, and they should be practicing Christians who are worshipping members of a church.

## The Promises in Baptism

In the baptism service we make several promises to God and God's Church. You will be asked:

Do you affirm the faith of the Christian Church?

**We believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

Do you turn to Christ?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you repent of your sins?

**I repent of my sins.**

Do you reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust?

**I reject them all.**

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

**I renounce all that is evil.**

Will you each, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

**I will, with God's help.**

In other words, we promise to be active members of the worshiping community, seeking to strengthen our faith by being active members of the Church's worshipping community, and seeking to bring God's love into the world through our daily lives. If you feel that you are unable to make this commitment at the present time, then it may be best to postpone the baptism. In this case we encourage you to discuss this with one of the parish clergy.

## **Baptism of Adults**

Although most of the above implies that baptism is for children, we often baptise adults. Preparation in this case is more intense because we are preparing the individual for the Christian life, where for baptism of children we begin with faithful parents who will spend a number of years nurturing their children in the Christian faith. For more information about baptism of adults, please contact one of the parish clergy.

## **Fees**

Often we are asked what the fee is for baptism. As a sacrament of commitment to God and membership in the church, there is no fee for baptism at Christ Church. We do encourage all members to make responsible Christian stewardship, which includes support for the church, a regular part of baptismal commitment and life.

## **Dates for Baptism**

Baptism is a sacrament that involves the whole Christian community. Therefore it takes place at the church font and is celebrated during one of the Sunday worship services. Normally this would be in the parish where the baptismal family lives; if this is not the case it needs to be discussed with the Vicar, Fr Richard.

At Christ Church there are a number of specific dates scheduled for baptisms each year. Baptisms are not celebrated during Advent (the four weeks prior to Christmas) and Lent (the six weeks prior to Easter).

**For dates, please see separate file on the Baptism page**

## **What to do next...**

1. Contact the Parish Office to make an appointment with one of the Parish Clergy to discuss the meaning of Holy Baptism and the commitment which it involves.
2. If you then wish to proceed with the Baptism, arrangements will be made for preparation and a walk through of the Order of Service.

## Please remember...

1. Normally, no dates for Baptism will be confirmed until the above procedure has been carried out.
2. All Godparents (Sponsors) MUST be baptised persons.
3. Baptisms are only celebrated in the church and on the advertised days and times on Sundays.

## Parish Office

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