



*Bearing public witness to
Jesus Christ, the source of life*

St John the Baptist Anglican Church
The Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn

45 Constitution Avenue
Reid, Canberra

BAPTISM AT ST JOHN'S

Dear baptism enquirer,

Thank you for enquiring about a baptism at St John's. We welcome all spiritual seekers and all who join our community in search of a deeper relationship with God. We especially recognize many parents want the best for their children - not just physically and emotionally, but also *spiritually*. At St John's, we are eager to help you on this journey.

We believe baptism (sometimes called 'christening') is '*an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given to us by Christ himself.*'¹ In other words, it is a symbol of the forgiving and cleansing love of God, which joins us to Jesus Christ and marks our formal entry into the life of the Church. It is a serious act in which God is at work, and so we must therefore take it very seriously and approach it with genuine humility and openness to God.

The Christian life is both deeply challenging and powerfully enriching. Jesus invites us to 'take up our cross', as well as offering us 'life in abundance'. I invite you to consider responding by turning to Christ and being baptised. The 'frequently asked questions' (over the page) address the practical considerations involved in baptism.

We look forward to welcoming you into our church community and walking with you on our shared journey of faith.

David McLennan

Rector

St John's Canberra

April 2023

¹ The Catechism of the Anglican Church of Australia

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can be baptised at St John's?

Anyone who wishes to enter the Christian faith and the life of the church is invited to be baptised. In addition, Christian parents who wish for their children to grow up following Jesus are also welcome to present their children for baptism.

Because baptism assumes an ongoing commitment to follow Christ and participate in the life of the church, those requesting baptism must themselves be on a journey of faith. At least one of the parents seeking baptism for a child must be a baptised Christian. Likewise, sponsors (sometimes known as 'godparents') are called upon to encourage the child in the life of faith. Therefore, they too must be baptised Christians. (As with parents, this baptism may have been in any Christian church - not necessarily an Anglican one).

How much does baptism cost?

Baptism is free. It expresses the free offer of God's love and forgiveness to all who trust in Jesus Christ. (Families are welcome to make a donation to the ministry of the church if they wish to, but there is no expectation.)

Will baptism help my child get into an Anglican school?

No. Schools should be consulted directly about their enrolment policies, but it is our understanding that merely being baptised does not grant favourable treatment - and it is certainly an invalid reason to bring a child for baptism.

What if we do not live in Canberra?

It is best for a person to be baptised in the church where they will find support and encouragement in their journey of faith. This is why we only conduct baptisms for families outside the ACT after receiving a specific request and recommendation from the family's local priest or minister.

What is the process for baptism at St John's for infants (i.e. children aged 2 or younger)?

1. Attendance at church.

Parents seeking to have a child baptised should be on a genuine spiritual journey themselves. This includes involvement in the life of the church. If you are not already doing so, your first step should be to commence regular attendance at worship and make yourself known to the clergy.

2. Baptism information session

After attending at least one service of worship you will need to make contact with the church office (baptisms@stjohnscanberra.org) to book your place in a 'baptism

information' session. Any parent who wishes to participate in the baptism service is to attend a session.

These sessions explain in more detail the meaning of baptism and the baptism service. Attendance will also help you clarify in your own mind if baptism is really the most appropriate next step. (If it isn't, that's OK - we will be glad to find another way to help you express your gratitude to God for your child.)

3. Secure a date

After attendance at a baptism information evening, we can discuss with you possible dates for the baptism. Note that baptisms only occur on Sundays, either in a regular worship service or an afternoon baptism service (2.30pm or 3.30pm). We do not conduct baptisms during the season of Lent (i.e. the six weeks leading up to Easter).

4. The baptism

All that remains is to attend the baptism service, and then to continue to help your child live out the meaning of this event.

What about older children and adults?

For those who are no longer infants, baptism requires a more thorough process of preparation - whether this be through our kids@church ministry (part of the 9.30 service) or, in the case of adults, other appropriate preparation. St John's frequently conducts sessions introducing people into the basics of Christian faith. Please contact the church office for more information.

What happens after the baptism?

Baptism marks the start of a journey, not its end. We want to help you and your family as you continue your journey of faith.

There are many ways to do this, the most important being participation in the regular life of the church. We are a very family-friendly church, with an active ministry to children (kids@church) focussed mainly around our 9.30am Sunday service. We also run a music-based playgroup ('Mainly Music') during the week for preschool aged children.

To help ease your introduction into the life of our church, we would like to publicly welcome your family during a Sunday service in the weeks shortly following the baptism. The clergy person who conducts your baptism will confirm the date for this with you.