

<http://anglicanng.wordpress.com/parishes/the-parish-of-mount-isa/>
Christian Baptism at St James' Anglican Church, Mount Isa

Welcome! We look forward to meeting you and arranging your baptism and/or that of your child. Strong stable family life and a living faith are vital ingredients for anyone's happiness and future. Research shows that a strong sense of identity, a reasoned faith in God and a sense of both direction and hope prepare us well for life and adulthood.

We value this opportunity to share with you on this occasion. Although this brochure places an emphasis on parents bringing their children for baptism, we are not excluding any adults enquiring about this all important step of Christian discipleship. Please talk to us if you want to follow Christ in the waters of baptism.

This brochure contains

- practical information
- helps to prepare for baptism
- ideas to bring God into the day, and
- an invitation to journey with us on the pilgrimage of faith and life.

We want this day to be just right for you either as an individual, or as a parent and also for your family. Please do not hesitate to ask questions. We will be praying for you and your family and we look forward to you sharing with us. Be assured of our best wishes and prayer.

What you must do

Confirm arrangements on the request for Christian Baptism form. You need to take care with the spelling of all names and include the full and correct names of parents and godparents/sponsors for entry in the register and on the certificate of baptism.

Set a date for the baptism – As a rule baptism is only available at the 9am service, by arrangement, on the 1st and 5th Sundays of the month.

This service is a Eucharist (Holy Communion), where we remember with gratitude all that Jesus Christ has done for us as we participate in what Christians have traditionally called *The Lord's Supper*. At this meal, we share bread and wine, which we eat and drink in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and risen life amongst us. In this service we are encouraged to "feed on Christ in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving", as the Prayer Book reminds us.

You and all your guests are asked to stay for the whole service, which lasts about 75 minutes.

Usually you should allow 8 weeks notice for preparation.

Baptisms may be held at other times by special arrangement, especially in extraordinary circumstances.

Is there a fee? – There is no set fee. You may, however, discuss a thanksgiving gift with the clergy. An offering is taken in the church service. Please inform your guests there is a *free will* offering/collection.

Are you baptised? – If you are not baptised or confirmed and would like to personally consider this, please feel free to raise this.

It is not unusual for one or both parents to seek baptism (and subsequent confirmation) at the same time as their child's baptism.

Is church attendance compulsory? – We encourage you to attend church as often as you can before the day. We will, by arrangement, have someone to welcome you.

What is baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament or sign of God's grace to us in Jesus. The Bible teaches that God in his love and kindness sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to live and die for the sins of the world. Through faith (believing trust) in the Son we receive salvation (freedom from our rebellion and evil) as a free gift from God. The sacrament of baptism marks out the baptised as now belonging to Christ. Of course a baby has no personal faith but is baptised into the faith of his or her parents. That is why this occasion is an opportunity for parents to question, perhaps rediscover, or discover more personally, their own faith. Importantly, in the service of baptism the congregation pray that all those baptised, whatever their age, may *be born again and made an heir of everlasting salvation*.

As parents, we want the very best for our children. We encourage you, therefore, in this step of bringing your child for baptism, because God's gift of eternal life and a relationship with God is fundamental for life's preparation, for hope and for personal assurance of the love of God.

What makes a family Christian?

We encourage parents to explore their own faith and their questions about hope, life and God. Faith and hope are two of the important dimensions of a strong and growing family life. Research shows that Christian faith strengthens both marriage and family life.

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus, the Son of God, wants us to know his heavenly Father as God and Friend. The gospels portray Jesus as a human being like us of deep compassion and grace and love. As the unique One who stands between us and God, He offers reconciliation with His Father and life to the full. He taught that eternal life is a hope we can know and live by, day by day. It really does make a difference! So a Christian man or woman (and a Christian family) has Christ at the centre.

This is a discovery not an imposition.

You may not have a firm understanding of Christian faith or you may not be a practising Anglican. This is a great opportunity to re-examine your own commitment. We invite you to join the community of faith at St James and not just be a passing visitor.

We are not here to indoctrinate you but we do invite you to consider –

- Coming to Church on at least three occasions before the baptism.
- Perhaps participating in an *Alpha*¹ course before or after the baptism.
- You will only be asked to join in the responses in bold type in the Prayer Book, as has been discussed with you.
- Reading or watching at least one story of Jesus, known as a *gospel* (good news). We will give you a copy of St Luke's Gospel in a modern easy to read format. We will also loan you the *Jesus Video*, a dramatised account of that Gospel.
- How you will share your faith with your child. We will give you a copy of the excellent booklet "*Raising kids with faith*" to encourage you and give you many helpful and practical tips, as your child grows.

We will, however, in the case of parents, require you, as a basic minimum, to watch a 10 minute DVD (called *First Steps*) at home with one of our staff. This is a very accessible parents' guide to baptism. Without a willingness on your part to genuinely engage in all of this pre baptismal preparation, we would not feel ready to take this step with you. You could, therefore, consider, as an alternative arrangement, a *Service of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child*. Please talk with us about this.

Must I come to Church?

We invite you to discover the community of faith at St James. You will be most welcome and you need not, as our guest, put any money in the collection (although you may if you like!) We will have a *welcomer* meet you a few minutes before the start of a service and to *watch out* for you each week you attend. Again there is no compulsion but we expect that you will attend church, and if possible as a whole family, prior to the baptism.

What else?

We will give you a copy of the service to read.

We will try to answer any questions you may have.

You will need to meet with one of our clergy on at least one occasion to make preliminary arrangements and also share in a pre-baptismal interview by arrangement.

Godparents (sometimes called sponsors) should also, where possible and practical, attend the interview.

Questions you may ask might include:

- "Why baptism?"

¹ *Alpha* is a ten week basic introduction to the Christian faith built around video talks with the Reverend Nicky Gumbel from the church of the Holy Trinity, Brompton, London, UK, a shared meal and group discussions, in which no question is considered too simple or too hostile. See the website at <http://www.alphaaustralia.org.au/>

- “What is the Anglican view of baptism?”
- “What are the candidates and godparents promising?”
- How is it administered? By pouring or immersion?

We can give you more simple brochures to help answer these and other questions that you might have. Most of all, we want to help you make a good start to this vital aspect of your individual and family life.

How many Interviews are required?

There are usually two interviews.

1. At the first interview we will set the date and time and we will answer any preliminary questions, while filling in the necessary paperwork.
2. The second interview is a longer one where we will help you with any questions about baptism and explore any ‘faith’ questions. You may want to ask questions about any aspect of the service, faith, or doing a short course. We are excited that you are planning this step and/or having your child baptised. We hope and would expect that both parents will participate in this interview.

What next?

We look forward to assisting you in the future with helping you and /or your child to grow in the faith.

Your child’s name is now put on a cradle roll. Children receive a card on the anniversary of baptism.

You will be invited to family services or other functions such as a children’s Christmas service.

From time to time we may run family courses or special events and will advise you of these.

Finally please keep your address current with us, including any email address.