

What is Baptism?

Baptism is the way in which the church receives people into the family of God to live life in a new way and with new meaning. At the time of baptism, the person is formally received as a member of the Church, and may receive Holy Communion-the Lord’s Supper.

According to the Book of Alternative Services “baptism is the sign of new life in Christ and unites Christ with his people” (p.146). As such, the bond which God establishes in baptism is indissoluble, and is celebrated only once in an individual’s life. Throughout life individuals renew their baptismal covenant with God to strengthen and reaffirm their relationship with Christ.

When we are baptized, we make a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. This means that we are willing to let go of our old ways of seeing ourselves and others. We make a conscious decision to respect others, to grow in our ability to live in harmony with others, and to forgive when others hurt us. We believe that we have a responsibility to resist evil in our own lives and to work to transform our society into a caring family which is centered on Christ’s passionate love for the world.

If we have children to be baptized, we make a commitment to bring them up to understand God’s purpose for the world and to be a part of the local parish church of which they are members.

As baptized individuals or parents of a child being baptized we promise to support the work of our local church and diocese through our gifts of time, talents and financial resources.

If parents are not ready to make baptismal promises or wish to defer baptism until the child is able to make his or her own decision, the church offers a service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child. This service provides an opportunity for a family to give thanks for the birth of a child and to pray for God’s help in the child’s care and nurture.

Who may be Baptized?

Adults who believed God is calling them into the Christian way of life are invited to become baptized. As well, a parent who has been baptized and wishes his or her children to participate in God’s creative activity may bring a child forward to receive this sacrament. If there is a second parent who is not baptized, it is customary for that parent to consent to the baptism of the child.

May an unmarried parent present a Child for Baptism?

Any baptized adult may present a child for baptism. In the community of God’s people both the child and the single parent will find a church family committed to their support and nurture.

Who are Sponsors/Godparents?

Sponsors are witnesses to the baptism and accept responsibility for supporting the child’s spiritual development. It is important to choose sponsors wisely to ensure that the child has good examples of the Christian life. At least one sponsor will be baptized and confirmed Anglican; other sponsors can be baptized and confirmed adult members of other Christian communities. When a child is baptized, the sponsors, popularly called godparents, present the child and join with the parents in making the baptismal promises on behalf of the child.

When does a Baptism take place?

Because baptism is the way a person becomes part of the church community, the witness and welcome of the congregation is an essential part of the service. Normally baptism is administered on Sunday or other major feast days of the church, when the congregation is assembled for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

In the service, members of the congregation commit themselves to support and care for the newly baptized persons and to help them and their families grow in faith.

In our parish, we celebrate baptism on Sundays as designated by the Priest.

How much notice is required for Baptism?

Our parish requires that parents and sponsors have received baptism preparation and baptisms are coordinated with this in mind. Baptism preparation is a course led by the Baptism Preparation Team. A rehearsal for the Baptism will be scheduled.

How is Baptism in the Anglican Church celebrated?

The service of baptism includes the reading of scripture and preaching of a sermon, the presentation of the candidates, and the affirmation of beliefs by the candidates, or in the case of children, by the parents and sponsors. In the Anglican Church, candidates may be fully immersed in water, or the water may be poured onto the head of the candidate with the words: **“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen”**

Immediately following the baptism, the priest signs the candidate’s forehead with the sign of the cross. The use of holy chrism oil restores one of the most ancient baptismal practices. Chrism evokes a rich variety of biblical images; the anointing of kings (1Samuel 16:13), the royal priesthood (1Peter2:9), the seal of the saints of heaven (Rev.7). Its traditional association with the Holy Spirit interprets

baptism as the new birth by water and the Spirit (John3:5). In a similar manner, Chrism interprets the name Christ, the anointed one, and relates the baptism of each Christian to the baptism of Christ.

The candidates are given a candle as a sign of their new life in Christ, the light of the world. In this symbol Christians understand Jesus’ words, “your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matt.5:16).

The Congregation then welcomes the new members of the community and urges them to confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share in his eternal priesthood. The service normally continues with the sharing of the Peace and the celebration of Holy Communion.

What if someone dies unbaptized?

Sometimes, when a child or adult dies unbaptized, members of the deceased’s family worry about what happens after death. It is important to remember that God’s love is far greater than human love. Therefore, when we say that God judges each of us in perfect love, mercy and justice, we can trust in God’s loving care for all who have died, baptized or unbaptized.

How does Baptism differ from Confirmation?

Those who were baptized as children often wish to make a mature affirmation of the baptismal promises made on their behalf by their parents and sponsors. This affirmation is done through the Sacrament of Confirmation, in the presence of the Bishop.

Confirmation Guidelines for the Diocese indicate the minimum age for affirming one’s baptismal promises through Confirmation is 15. Confirmation, like baptism, is undertaken following a period of preparation on the part of the candidate, parents, sponsors and the parish community.

What if I want to become an Anglican but am already Baptized?

Baptism in other Christian churches or denominations is acknowledged as valid within the Anglican Church. Any baptized person may become a member of the Anglican Church, following a period of preparation. Parishes may acknowledge this publicly, such as through services of confirmation or reception by the Bishop.

A rich life in Christ.

As the World Council of Churches document **Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry** has reminded Christians, the scriptures of the New Testament and the liturgy of the Church unfold the meaning of baptism in various images which express the mystery of salvation. Baptism is a participation in Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12); a washing away of sin (1Corinthians 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Ephesians 5:14); a reclothing in Christ (Galatians 3:27);

a renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the Flood (1Peter3:20-21); an exodus from the bondage of sin (1Corinthians 10:1-2); and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division, whether of gender or race or social status, are transcended (Galatians 3:27-28); 1 Corinthians 12:13). The images are many but the reality is one.

Community initiation.

Several dimensions of baptism became clear as the early Church developed its practice. Initiation into the Church was a vital concern of the whole Christian community and not only of the candidates for baptism and their immediate families. Preparation for baptism was a responsibility shared among various members of the community, both ordained and lay. Becoming a Christian had as much to do with learning to live a new lifestyle with the Christian community as it did with specific beliefs.

This information is taken from the Book of alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Guidelines of the Diocese of NS & PEI.

More information will be given during Baptism preparation.

Baptism

So you are interested in
Baptism
For yourself or your child?

Anglican Church of Saint Andrew
Rector: Reverend Katherine Bourbonniere
2 Circassion Drive, Cole Harbour, NS
462-1818

