



A Guide to Baptism at St Hilda's

Baptism

Baptism is the rite of initiation into the Church. No person is baptised into a specific denomination, but rather to the Christian Church universal. In the Anglican Church baptism is possible at any age. In baptism one's faith is publicly professed and the decision is made to follow the teachings of Jesus throughout one's life.

When an infant or child is baptised, their parents and godparents make this profession and decision for them and speak on their behalf. In order to fulfil their duty of encouraging the child to grow in faith, all godparents must be baptised members of a Christian church. Ideally, at least one parent should also be baptised, though this is not essential. In time, it is expected that parents and godparents prepare their child for Confirmation.

When adults are baptised, their Confirmation takes place at the same service, or very soon after, and this is presided over by a Bishop. There is no requirement for adults to have godparents as they are able to speak on their own behalf, but they are encouraged to have sponsors who support them in their faith.

Some form of baptism preparation will be required and the Chaplain will explain this after you make your initial enquiries. The exact nature of this preparation will vary depending upon your circumstances, the date of the service and your proximity to Perth.

Thanksgiving Service

This service offers an opportunity for parents to give thanks to God for the birth of their child, or their adoption into the family. Some parents choose to have a Thanksgiving Service when their child is quite young, leaving baptism to a later date or even to a time when the child makes their own decision to be baptised. If you feel that baptism may not be quite right at this stage, perhaps a service of Thanksgiving may be appropriate. The Chaplain can provide you with further information.

Godparents

For children being baptised it is important that a group of godparents are chosen to support their faith development in the coming years. During the baptism service godparents will make certain promises, along with the child's parents, to nurture and encourage the child as they grow in faith. It is therefore essential that they themselves are baptised, and preferably current members of a Christian church. They may belong to the Anglican Church or another Christian denomination. Evidence of each godparent's baptism will be required, usually by providing the Chaplain with a copy of their baptism certificates.

Traditionally, each child has three godparents: two of the same sex as the child, and one of the opposite sex. There is flexibility in this so please speak with the Chaplain regarding your personal circumstances. Persons may be chosen as godparents even if they cannot attend the baptism service, such as interstate relatives or friends, but it is preferable that they do attend. Parents may also act as godparents for their own children, so long as at least one other godparent is nominated.

Please note: Godparents do not automatically have legal guardianship responsibilities in the event that their godchild's parents die or are otherwise unfit to care for them. If you wish for your child's godparents to also be their legal guardians you will need to make this arrangement with your solicitor.

Baptism Services

Baptism services are held on Sundays at 9am or 11am. You are welcome to book by using the online booking form and contacting the Chaplain to set a date. There may be more than one baptism on any given date. No fees are charged for baptism.

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