



# Baptism

All Souls' Sandringham

Growing together in Christ  
and community

## Baptism of children at All Souls' Church, Sandringham

Thank you for your enquiry about the baptism of your child here at All Souls' Church. Please take a moment to consider carefully the following information:

When giving thought to the most appropriate service for your child please consider the options:

- 1) Thanksgiving for a Child.** This service acknowledges a new life has begun, gives thanks to God for it and also names the child. Some Christian parents prefer this Thanksgiving or Dedication in order to permit their child to make a personal choice as to whether he or she is Baptised when they are of age.
- 2) Holy Baptism.** During this service the parents and god-parents make declarations on behalf of the child who is then baptised in the name of the Trinity.

### What is Baptism?

Baptism is more than a private family celebration. It marks the child's entry into the Christian community (i.e. the Church) and the beginning of a faith journey with your child into the fullness of life as we develop our relationship with God, who makes himself known in the worshipping fellowship of his people, the church.

We are aware that you may be among those parents who bring their children for Baptism, who have been 'away' from that fellowship for some years. There may be some surprises as you discover that the Church, like everyone else, has been changing in that time. One of those changes is the way we view Baptism.

Baptism is about new beginnings and this is a new step for you. This precious new life for which you have been given responsibility is a new beginning. Parents wanting the very best for their children come seeking baptism.

Birth is usually associated with great joy; it is an encounter with the mystery of life. The desire for baptism can be a response to this – an unspoken meeting with the transcendent God.

It is also a response to the call of God to repent, to turn away from living a life that is based on self, to living a God-centred-life.

### **What do you do as parents?**

We would ask that you read carefully the copy of the Baptism service, taken from "A Prayer Book for Australia".

We then look forward to a meeting between yourselves and our Vicar, the Rev'd Philip Higgins (phone 9598 1264). This meeting is usually at the parents' home where we discuss the significance and appropriateness of baptism for your child.

### **What about godparents/sponsors?**

**Godparents/Sponsors** have an important part to play in the Christian life of an infant. They should be chosen with great care. Godparents need to be baptised and should be worshipping members of a Church, not necessarily Anglican. Parents may be godparents to their own children, although usually they would have one or two others to assist them.

Godparents/sponsors are asked:

- to accept the responsibilities placed upon them in bringing the child to baptism
- to answer on behalf of the child
- to encourage the child in the life and faith of the Christian community by their own prayers and example, by their friendship and love

Godparents/sponsors promise, on behalf of the child:

- to turn to Christ
- to repent of their sins
- to reject all that is false and unjust
- to renounce evil

**Parents** – the quality of your faith as parents will have a deep effect on your child. If you are unable to answer the vows and make the promises at this stage, then you may prefer the alternative service called "Thanksgiving on the Birth of a Child". This can be followed by baptism at a later stage, if appropriate. This can be discussed at our preparation meeting.

### **What about other children in your family?**

If the other brothers and/or sisters are old enough and willing to be involved in their sibling's baptism, they are very welcome to stand with you.

### **When and Where?**

Baptism usually takes place at one of the Sunday morning services in the parish where those desiring baptism live. However, sometimes people think about going back to the place where they were baptised or married for the baptism of their infant.

Parents who want their child to be baptised at All Souls, and who are not members of the parish, should discuss this with the clergy when arranging the baptism.

It is our practice, as with most other Anglican churches today, to have baptisms within the main Sunday service, usually at 10 am. The first Sunday of each month is the less formal service with no Holy Communion. Other services have a choir and sung service. Children of all ages are welcome at All Souls. After the baptism, children aged three years of more are invited to join the Sunday School children in the lounge. They return in time for a blessing while adults receive Holy Communion.



## Have you any questions?

Some common ones we are asked:

- **How long is the baptism service?** – Approximately 20 minutes. When it is conducted during the 10 am service of Holy Communion, the whole service takes about 65 to 70 minutes.
- **When should the family arrive?** – It is suggested that you arrive about ten minutes before the service, so that when you enter the building you can be shown to your seats at the front of the church near the baptismal font.
- **What if I cannot fully complete the application form?** – Return the form with as many details as possible to the church office at the above address and we will contact you to confirm the baptism date and discuss any other issues.
- **Who can be a godparent?** – Sponsors or godparents must have received Christian baptism but need not be Anglicans. Sponsors stand with the candidate at baptism as a support and witness and share responsibility with parents for the progress in Christian growth in the life of the person baptised.
- **How many godparents?** – Traditionally, there are two males and one female for a boy, and two females and one male for a girl. However, you may prefer to have two or four godparents. Please discuss this with us further if needed.
- **What if one or more of the proposed godparents cannot be present at the service?** – People can act as a stand-in or proxy for the godparent(s) but it is requested that their names be given to the parish office prior to the baptism.
- **Can the service be videoed and photographs be taken?** – Yes, within reasonable limits. To assist in video quality it is suggested that camera operators arrive at the church building early to check light quality and positioning. Friends and family are welcome to take photographs while remaining seated, while standing in the side aisles and in the centre aisle behind the last person seated to the rear of the church. Please ensure that other people are not distracted or inconvenienced.
- ☺ **What if little children become restless during the service?** – There is a larger area in the back pew that allows children to sit and play quietly with toys - it is there for children, please feel free to use it. If your child becomes really unsettled, you may prefer to take them into the narthex (foyer) of the church where we have more toys in

the bottom drawers of the cabinet. The service can still be heard from here but the glass masks any noise coming from this area.

- **How much will the service cost?** – There is no set fee. Baptism is a sacrament of the Church. It is, however, common practice to offer a donation towards the ministry of the church. Donations may be put into the offertory plate, given to the clergy after the service or cheques mailed to the church office.
- **Do I have to say anything during the service?** – Everything that is to be said will be explained at your baptism preparation meeting when looking at the service with the clergy.
- **What baptism preparation is required?** – In our parish there is a policy that with each baptism parents are asked to meet with the minister conducting the baptism service. Godparents are most welcome to attend this meeting also.
- **How long does this meeting last?** – Approximately one hour, usually in your home at a time mutually convenient for both parents and clergy.
- **Who can receive Communion on the day of the baptism?** – Anyone who is a baptised member of a Christian church and normally receives Communion is welcome to receive the bread and wine. Children and others who do not normally receive Communion will be invited to come forward to receive a blessing.
- **Do we need to come to church a certain number of times in order to be baptised?** – We are delighted to get to know you and your family and to help support you in raising your child. We encourage you to attend a Sunday service prior to the baptism so you can be introduced to the congregation. We suggest you work out a realistic commitment to regular church going – perhaps monthly or fortnightly.
- **What does my child wear for baptism?** – some families have white christening gowns (for girls & boys). These are suitable for young babies. By about 6 months or so many parents may prefer a little suit or dress. These may be white (to signify new life) or any suitable colour (eg navy blue & white). Please don't feel pressure to purchase new clothes.

## What next?

Please contact the church office on :

9598 1264 or [allsoulsoffice@bigpond.com](mailto:allsoulsoffice@bigpond.com)

and we will send you an application form and organise a time to meet.

We look forward then to seeing you to discuss further details.

Philip Higgins

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**All Souls Anglican Church Sandringham**  
**48 Bay Road Sandringham Victoria 3191**

**VICAR: Reverend Philip Higgins** 9598 1264  
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**FAMILY MINISTRY CO-ORDINATOR: Leonie Dekker** 9598 1264  
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**CHURCH OFFICE: Monday - Friday 10 am - 12 noon** 9598 1264  
Answering machine in use when office is unattended  
[allsoulsoffice@bigpond.com](mailto:allsoulsoffice@bigpond.com)

[www.allsouls.org.au](http://www.allsouls.org.au)