

We do not baptise babies and children at Christ Church. However we are delighted for children of Christian parents to receive a **dedication**. This is a simple ceremony where members of the family and friends declare publicly their intention to bring a child up to understand the Christian message and that they will encourage the child to put their trust in Jesus.

What if I have been baptised as an infant?

If you have been baptised as an infant but feel that you would like to be baptised as a believer we are happy to do this.

If you have been baptised as an infant and feel that you do not wish to be baptised as a believer there is no pressure on you to do so. Whatever your own experience and beliefs about baptism you are welcome to be involved as an active member of the church. However we ask all members to respect the church's views on baptism as set out in the Doctrinal Distinctives (above) and this is the view the Elders will teach from the Bible in our church when the subject of baptism comes up.

What will being baptised do for me?

- Baptism, with its amazing symbolism, is a fantastic opportunity to remind yourself of the wonderful truths of the message of Jesus Christ.
- Baptism is an encouragement to other Christian people as they see you declare your beliefs to the church and that you desire to live as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- Baptism is also a great chance to invite many non-Christian friends, family and colleagues to hear you speak of your faith in Jesus and to hear the gospel explained.

What should I do if I am interested in getting baptised?

Speak to one of the Elders who will arrange to meet up with you for an initial chat.



Baptism

What is baptism?

Throughout the history of the church Christians have practised two “ordinances” that the Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to perform – **baptism** and **the Lord’s Supper** (or Communion).

Our beliefs about baptism are set out in our Doctrinal Distinctives:

“We believe that Baptism into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is an outward sign which marks a person’s regeneration and baptism by the Holy Spirit into membership of the Church of Jesus Christ. As such it should only be administered to a person who publicly professes faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism should, wherever possible and practicable, be administered by immersion in water, symbolising that the person baptised has been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and is the possessor of the benefits thereof.”

Normally at Christ Church we carry out baptism by immersion in water. This seems to be the way in which baptisms were done in the New Testament (the Greek word “baptizo” means to plunge, dip or immerse). Where it is impractical to do this however we will baptise people by pouring water over them. *Bible reference: Acts 8:36-39.*

Baptism in the New Testament is a symbolic reminder of what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross and of our response to his grace and mercy.

Paul, in *Romans 6:3-4*, says that baptism symbolises going down into the grave and being buried. This means that rising from the water symbolises being raised with Christ to a new life.

Peter (*1 Peter 3:18-22*) shows us that God’s judgment was seen in Noah’s day through his flooding the earth and that his people were saved through water in the ark. He says (*3:21*) that baptism corresponds to the saving of Noah and his family through the water.

Some passages in the Bible, while not speaking directly of baptism, use images of washing to symbolise the fact that by trusting in Christ’s death on the cross, bearing God’s judgment, our sin has been washed away and we are cleansed. *Titus 3:5* is a good example of this.

Baptism is a reminder of “the amazing truths of passing through the waters of judgment safely, of dying and rising with Christ, and of having our sins washed away” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*).

Baptism is a symbol, or outward sign, that we have begun the Christian life.

What baptism isn’t

Baptism does not make anybody a Christian. And it is not necessary to be baptised in order to be a Christian. The New Testament is very clear that we are justified (made right with God) by faith alone – not faith plus “works” (anything we “do”). People who say that baptism is required in order to be saved are like the false teachers Paul argued against in the Galatian church who said you had to be circumcised in order to be saved (*Galatians 5:2-6*). Paul said that their message was a different gospel (*Galatians 1:6*) and that it would bring God’s curse on them (*Galatians 1:10*).

Who can get baptised?

It follows from our definition of baptism that anybody who shows evidence of having begun the Christian life can get baptised.

At Christ Church we would normally expect people who want to get baptised to have a good understanding of how what Jesus has done for them on the cross can make them right with God and to be seeking to grow in their Christian faith. As long as people show evidence of believing and understanding the Christian message and seeking to live as a follower of Jesus there is no minimum (or maximum!) age for baptism.

People do not have to be members of the church to be baptised and there is no expectation that people will join the church after they have been baptised. However we would encourage anyone who wants to continue to grow as a Christian to be committed to membership of and accountability to a local church.