

*I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

With these words, a person becomes a Christian. It is such a simple formula. But with these words, your life will change forever. This booklet is to help you in your consideration of baptism in the Christian faith.

THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM?

There are many reasons why people think about having a child baptized, or being baptized themselves. Do not be pressured into a decision because of family tradition or fear. God loves each person from the beginning, and will not reject anything made in love.

Baptism is not only our recognition of the love of God active in our lives from the moment of birth. In baptism, we choose Him who has already chosen us, and we do so in the sight of God and others. It is a crucial turning point in our lives, for we turn to Christ to forgive us, heal us, and strengthen us for a new life of service. We use the language of dying and rising again, of being washed clean, of becoming part of a new humanity. It is the biggest decision that you can make for yourself or your child, and should not be entered lightly. At the same time, baptism is a starting point, and we have the rest of our lives to work out God's purpose.

NEW LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Although we come to God one by one, we live out our new life with the support and encouragement of others.

St. Timothy's is a welcoming and caring community in which you can grow and learn as a new Christian. Children's programmes are offered on Sunday mornings and there are small groups during the week where you can feel at home. Your ongoing participation in a Christian community is how you live out your new life in Christ.

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

In order to prepare an individual for the promises of baptism, instruction is offered by the priest and others in the church. This may be done individually or in a group, depending on the number of candidates. It will be tailored to your needs and your family's availability. Normally, this preparation will be three or four sessions in the months leading up to the baptism date.

THE ROLE OF SPONSORS OR GODPARENTS

Both children and adults to be baptized are required to have one or more sponsors who will stand by them in their commitment to Christ. For children, it is traditional to have three godparents, who share the responsibility of bringing the young person up in the faith with the parent(s). Any baptized person may stand as a godparent, but someone whom the child knows and sees on a regular basis is a good choice. The priest will instruct godparents on their responsibilities. An adult makes the promises of baptism for himself or herself, but still chooses a mature Christian as a sponsor and mentor in the faith.

THE CHURCH YEAR

Baptisms are normally conducted on the high holy days of the church year. The foremost of these is Easter –

the Sunday of the Resurrection. At St. Timothy's, baptisms take place at the Easter Sunrise service. Other dates which may be appropriate for baptism are: The Baptism of the Lord, in early January, Pentecost, usually mid-May, Holy Cross Day, on the Sunday nearest September 14, Thanksgiving, usually the 2nd Sunday in October, All Saints Day in early November.

Baptisms are never held during the season of Lent. Please consider family and sponsors who travel when choosing a date with the priest.

THE BAPTISMAL SERVICE

Baptism takes place at the main Sunday service of worship. It is a public event, to which all family and friends are welcome to attend, whatever their faith tradition. The service follows the normal pattern of worship. We begin with prayer and scripture, followed by a sermon. Everyone then moves to the font for the baptismal rite, which is followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. For the newly baptized, this is their first communion. The Anglican Church welcomes all baptized persons at the table to receive bread and wine. You may have family or friends who wish to come forward to receive a blessing instead, however.

RECEPTIONS

Sunday worship is normally followed by a fellowship time in the hall with the whole congregation. The family of the baptized is welcome to bring a cake or other food to add to the festivities, but this is entirely up to you.

JOINING A PILGRIM PEOPLE

In our mobile society, we understand that it is not always easy to stay connected to a faith community. St. Timothy's will try to help you when you are unable to attend regular worship on a Sunday morning. You may be able to gather at a Sunday night prayer or a midweek service, or join a fellowship group. Help the church by supplying any changes in contact information, or letting the priest know if you are sick or in hospital.

If you or your family is moving out of the area, let us assist you in making the link to a Christian community near your new place of residence. You can keep in touch through our website, and by becoming a "Friend of St. Timothy's".

FURTHER STEPS

If you were baptized as a young child, or if you are coming to a point in your life when you feel it is important to make a public declaration of your faith, you might want to consider the rite of Confirmation. Once a year, in the Easter season, the Diocesan bishop celebrates a special service of Confirmation for candidates from local churches. Confirmation comes after a time of preparation in the parish, when you are instructed in your baptismal promises and encouraged to explore and ask questions about your faith in Jesus Christ. Speak to the parish priest about joining a Catechism, or "Cat" class.

FEES?

There is no fee for baptism. It is one of the pastoral offices of the Church, and we do not charge for such a sacrament. Of course, if you would like to make a freewill offering to St. Timothy's in thanksgiving, you are welcome to do so. As with any donation to the work of the Church, your contribution is tax deductible, and you will receive a tax receipt for it with your other offerings at the end of each year.

For more information, contact
The Rev. Stephanie Shepard, parish priest

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BAPTISM AT SAINT TIMOTHY'S



A Parish of the Anglican Church of Canada,
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