

*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 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 can 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in October

All Saints Day in early November

Baptisms are never held during the season of Lent. Consider family and sponsors who travel when choosing a date with the priest. Please do not make travel arrangements for visiting family or friends before confirming a date with the church.

### **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. Parents of very young children should discuss whether the child will receive bread and wine immediately following baptism, or wait until the child is old enough to accept this physical and spiritual food. The Anglican Church welcomes all baptized persons, regardless of age, at the table to receive bread and

wine. You may have family or friends who prefer to come forward to receive a blessing, however.

### **RECEPTIONS**

Sunday worship is normally followed by a fellowship time in the hall with the whole congregation. Families of newly baptized are welcome to bring a cake or 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 us 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 Group".

### **FEES?**

There is no fee for baptism. It is one of the pastoral offices of the Church, and we do not charge for 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. Your donation to the work of the Church is tax deductible. You will receive a tax receipt for your offerings at the end of each year.

As active participants in the new life of Jesus Christ, all baptized Christians are expected to be good stewards of what God has blessed them, and to contribute a proportion of their treasure, time, and talents. Your heart will lead you to give according to your circumstances. You can arrange for authorized withdrawals from an account or give through assigned offering envelopes. Your financial gifts are receiptable as charitable donations through St. Timothy's.

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# **BAPTISM AT ST. TIMOTHY'S**



A Parish of the Anglican Church of Canada  
Diocese of New Westminster