

Baptism

What, How and Why?

Thanks for enquiring about Infant Baptism at Mitchelton Presbyterian Church. Even though we live in a time when many “Christian rituals” have fallen out of favour, many parents still consider Infant Baptism a significant rite of passage, and a cause of much celebration. We rejoice with you at the arrival of your child!

It's important to realise, though, that Infant Baptism is just a symbol! It doesn't magically make a child into a Christian, or give any special spiritual status.

What are you saying?

The first question to ask is, what are *you* saying in bringing your child for baptism? It's important that what we do honestly reflects your own intentions and prayers for your child. It would be good to spend some time reflecting on this question.

What is the Bible saying?

The New Testament treats baptism as the visible, outward sign of a “new deal” with God. When a person made a new start in life by trusting and following Jesus, baptism with water was a sign of washing away the old life, and starting the new life with the inner washing of God's Spirit.

In short, baptism follows *repentance* - which means turning from your old life, asking forgiveness, and committing yourself to serving the Lord Jesus. Usually, in the New Testament, the head of the household made the decision to turn to Jesus on behalf of the family unit. Because of this, baptism was a “family event.” Notice this account in Acts 2:

³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹*The promise is for you and your children* and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

A family event

Infant baptism is still very much a *family event*. But, of course, the significance of the baptism itself depends on your commitment as parents. Because of that, you, the parents, are asked a series of questions, in which you have the opportunity to publicly state your faith in Jesus Christ, your intention to serve him as a family, and your intention to raise your child as part of the church family. Significantly, the whole church is then asked to promise to take a nurturing and encouraging interest in your child in the years to come. It is assumed, at this point, that you are seriously committed to being part of the life of the Mitchelton Presbyterian Church family.

Promises, Promises

Here are the baptismal promises of the Presbyterian Church in their traditional form:

A and B, have you put your trust in Jesus Christ as your saviour, and do you seek to serve him faithfully as your Lord?

Yes; we do

Do you bring N to be baptized with the prayer he/she will come to faith in God by trusting Jesus as his/her Saviour and accepting him as his/her own Lord?

Yes, we do

Do you promise to teach N to trust in the Lord Jesus and rely on his death and resurrection for forgiveness and New life?

Yes, we do

To the Church family: Do you as their church family promise to support A & B as they teach N about Jesus; do you promise to set before him/her a faithful example of godliness; and to encourage him/her to put his/her trust in Jesus Christ and to grow in faith and love?

We do

N. *we baptise you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

Where to from here?

Are you comfortable with the traditional promises of baptism? Is this the step you're wanting to take with your new child? If not, please be open with your thoughts and feelings. Perhaps we can arrange a service that suits exactly what you desire as you celebrate God's blessing in the life of your new child.

Contact

If you're interested in celebrating the arrival of your child in this way, feel free to contact Phil Campbell, our minister, on 07 38555615, or email phil@mpc.org.au

infant baptism

