



What is Infant Baptism?

A Baptism of a new-born or young child is a wonderful opportunity for the extended family and friends to gather together and celebrate, giving thanks to God for this gift of life. But it is also a lot more than that: Baptism is a Sacrament, which means that when a child is baptised it is more than simply a good excuse for a party, it is also a spiritual act of worship.

The Apostle Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, says this in Acts Chapter 2: *"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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call".... Those who accepted this message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*" (Acts 2:38-41)

According to these verses Baptism is a sign of three things:

1. It's a sign of our Obedience to God:

By undergoing this sacrament you are humbly obeying God's command to be baptised and to baptise your children, and you are publically committing yourselves to raise your children in obedience to Christ the Lord.

2. It's a sign of God's Promise:

The Bible says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. None of us have perfectly obeyed God's laws – we've all done things which have hurt God and others.

But God promises that if we believe in him and follow him then he will forgive us and make us spiritually pure, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for us.

Baptism, either of an infant or an adult, does not accomplish this – only faith in Jesus can do this. However, it is a reminder of these promises, and an encouragement to pray for the child and raise the child in such a way that, when they are older they might have every opportunity to accept Jesus for themselves.

3. It's a sign of Welcome in God's Family:

We baptise to celebrate that this child has been added to our family and to formally welcome the child into the fellowship of God's people, the Church.

The rest of the church will be present at the baptism service to rejoice with this new member of God's household and to promise to support the family in the Christian upbringing of the child through on-going love, prayer, fellowship and support.

What Happens at an Infant Baptism Service?

Below is a rough guide to how a Baptism Service in our church will look. Most elements of the service are flexible and open to suggestions and revisions. If the family wish to include something different or change certain parts of the service then please speak to the Minister in advance.

Introduction

The service will usually begin with a time of worship and prayer, after which the Minister will give a short explanation of what baptism is all about.

He will then introduce the child and their parents to the congregation and perhaps ask them to come to the front and say a few words about themselves and why they want their child baptised, if they are willing to do so.

Promises

The Minister will then invite the parents to make a promise in the presence of God and the congregation, this is simply:

“Do you confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life?”

“Do you promise to raise your child, with God’s help, in the Christian faith and in the fellowship of the local church, so that he/she may have the opportunity to know and accept the Lord Jesus as his/her Saviour?”

“Do you promise to pray for him/her, and to teach him/her to pray, and to set him/her a good example in your life?”

The parents should respond by saying “I do” or “we do”. If there are Godparents present then they too will be asked to make similar promises.

The minister will then address the congregation and ask: “Do you as a congregation of God’s people, promise to play your part in the Christian upbringing of this child, and of all other children in our care, by proving nurture in the faith and fellowship in the Gospel?” To which they will reply “we do”.

Prayer

Following the promises the church may wish to pray for the child, the family and Godparents.

Baptism

Then, taking the child from their parents for a short moment, the Minister will baptise the child by sprinkling a small amount of water on their head, as a symbol of the cleansing from sin which Christ offers to all those who have faith in him.

The child will then be returned to the parents, a certificate of baptism will be presented to them, and the service will continue with a short encouraging message, further prayers and songs of thanksgiving.

Frequently Asked Questions about Infant Baptism:

(For more information on any questions you may have, please feel free to contact the Minister)

Do the Parents have to be members of the church to have their children baptised?

The nature of Baptism and the promises which are being made do require that the parents or guardians be Christian believers and part of a local church family. After all, Baptism is a sign of obedience to God and a sign of welcome into the church, and such signs would make little sense if the adults are not themselves believers or part of a church family.

What about Godparents?

There is no requirement for a child to have Godparents but if you choose to have them then their primary role will be to provide assistance and encouragement to the child and family in their spiritual journey. Godparents, therefore, must be Christian believers, although they do not necessarily have to have been baptised themselves, nor must they be members of the Presbyterian Church of Wales. They will, however, need to be present with the family at the baptism service and ready to swear a confession their faith in Christ and a promise to spiritually guide the child and the parents in the years to come.

Can we take photographs/video recordings during the service?

Of course! We want you to feel free to record this special occasion through taking photos, although in order to respect the sacredness of the moment we may request that all photos be taken during a specified time either before or after the service. Please also note that due to licencing laws video recordings during the service itself can only be taken by licensed photographers/videographers.

Can someone be baptised more than once?

Ephesians 4:4-6 says that just as there is one Lord, one Faith and one Church, so there is also only one Baptism. However, in the Presbyterian Church of Wales people often choose to reaffirm and celebrate the promises made in baptism when they are of an age to accept them personally. This is done through a Confirmation Service or through celebrating First Communion.

How much will it cost?

Baptism of a child is a joyful celebration for the church as well as the family, and therefore we do not charge for the service. But if the family wish to make a contribution to the work of the church, or have a free-will offering taken during the service, then the church would be happy to accept.

How can we arrange for our child to be baptised?

Simply feel free to contact the Minister on 07784 869020 or at leedutfield@gmail.com. It is a requirement that any parents wishing to have their child baptised will meet with the Minister or an Elder at least once before any agreement is made, to ensure that they fully understand the significance of baptism and the promises being made.