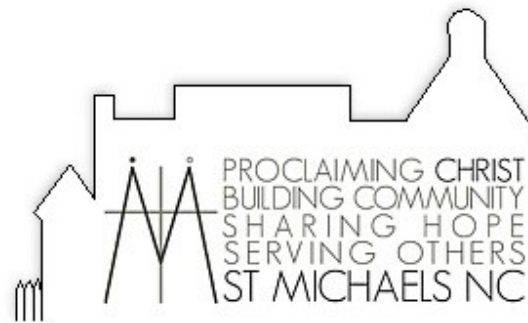


Baptism...

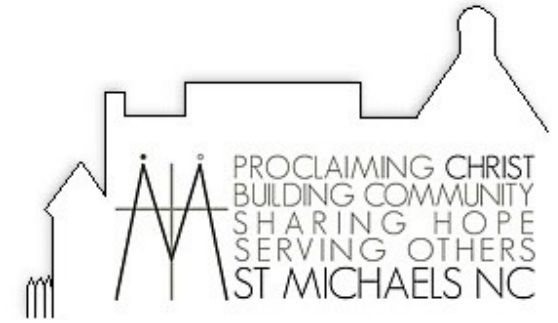
- ...A sign of God's love for us
- ...Initiation into the life of the church
- ...Being made one with Jesus Christ
- ...Responding with a new way of life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said,
I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

John's Gospel



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Baptisms

at St Michael's

St Michael's Anglican Church
North Carlton

Thinking About Baptism

St Michael's holds family life in great esteem. We believe it is important to give every child the opportunity to experience the love of God. A key question is how best to help your child from an early age.

The Anglican Church has two services for introducing newborns and young children into the Christian Church:

1. The Service of Thanksgiving & Blessing

This service is suitable for any family that wants to give thanks to God for their child and includes a naming ceremony and prayers of blessing for the child.

2. The Service of Baptism for Infants

This service is for families who regularly attend a church and where at least one parent professes the Christian faith according to the creeds of the church. This service presumes that that child will be brought up in a regular fellowship in a local church, and will be brought before the Bishop at an appropriate age to profess their faith in the service of Confirmation.

To help families decide the best course of action the minister will make a time to visit and discuss these different approaches and what may be best for your family. Some further sessions may be required where further information about the Christian faith can be explored.

Why Baptism?

Forgiveness

According to the teaching of the New Testament, baptism is a symbolic washing with water that signifies a spiritual cleansing by God. None of us is perfect and we all need God's forgiveness. Even at the beginning of life we are in need of God to bridge the gap between human sinfulness and holy love. The Bible tells us:

...When the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saves us through the washing of rebirth (baptism) and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7

The waters of baptism point to the cleansing of our hearts by God.

New Birth

John's Gospel, chapter 3, records Jesus' words: *You must be born again.* Through Jesus' death for us on the cross, God provided a new start for all who were baptised and have faith. The usual practice of baptism is full immersion in water symbolising a new start.

There is need to die to self and rise to new, eternal life. This comes about by the work of God's Spirit in our lives. At St Michael's water from a font is used to symbolise new life that is poured into us by faith. Godparents are appointed to help nurture the new spiritual growth.

What Is Required of Parents?

- × At least one parent must be a professing Christian who attends church regularly
- × Parents and Godparents should seek to introduce the child to the Christian faith through regular church attendance, relevant children's books etc., praying with and for the child and encouraging involvement in church as they grow
- × To involve the child in instruction for Confirmation when they are of an appropriate age to make their own profession of repentance and faith and Jesus Christ.

What's Next?

The minister will talk with you about further sessions to discuss the meaning of baptism and whether a service of Thanksgiving and Blessing or a service of Baptism should be your next step. Baptism can always be sought at a later date.