

# *All Saints' Anglican Church, Woollahra*

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## **BAPTISM – INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

Thank you for your enquiry about having your child baptized at All Saints'

The baptism (or christening) of a child is a very significant step for parents to take. Your enquiry indicates a concern for the spiritual welfare of your child whether or not you are currently a regular churchgoer.

To bring a child to be baptized is to express a desire for him or her to grow up to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ, and an active member of the church. During the baptism service important undertakings are made by the parents and godparents before the baptism itself can take place. At the beginning of the service they undertake that by every means in their power, they will give guidance, encouragement, teaching and help, together with a good example so that the child may learn to live as a follower of Jesus in the life and faith of the Christian community. This is no small responsibility!

It is vital, therefore, if baptism is to be a meaningful service and not just an empty ceremony, for parents and godparents to consider the nature of their responsibilities, and be serious about following them through. As you consider possible godparents for your child, you should keep in mind the thought that the most appropriate godparents will generally be relations or friends who are committed members of a Christian church.

### **BAPTISMS AT ALL SAINTS'**

Because baptism is an expression of membership of the church, the Christian community, baptisms at All Saints' will take place during our regular Sunday services whenever this is practical. They are often included in our service on the first or third Sunday of the month at 10.00a.m. The service is designed to be interesting and helpful for visitors as well as regular members of the congregation. The service aims to be easy to follow and definitely personal! It lasts about an hour, and you are invited to remain afterwards for morning tea at the back of the church.

A comfortable Family Room/Crèche is also available within the church for unsettled babies and toddlers, should you wish to make use of it, located opposite the main entrance.

### **BEFORE THE BAPTISM**

It will be necessary for you to join us for at least six services before any discussion of possible dates takes place. Following this, to enable you to think through the issues associated with this significant service, it will be necessary for parents, and where practical with godparents, to meet with Rev. David West. This process affords the opportunity to get to know each other and to explore the meaning of baptism and the responsibilities involved. At this meeting, we can make a decision about the date of the baptism, if you wish to proceed with it. Before the day, we also go through the details of the service, so that you are aware of what to expect and can get the most from the service.

All baptisms are performed absolutely free of charge, however if you wish to make a donation to the church you are welcome to do so, we recommend \$250 or less if this amount is prohibitive.

### **IS ALL SAINTS' THE BEST PLACE?**

Normally the best place to arrange for your child's baptism is at your local Anglican church. Sometimes people like to continue a tradition of having family baptisms in a church such as All Saints'. While this can be a meaningful thing to do, it is worthwhile thinking about the future as well as the past: after all, baptism itself is a service which looks to the future!

Normally it is best to enquire about baptism at the Anglican church nearest to your home, where your children can become linked up with the Sunday School or other young people's activities, and you yourself can make your own spiritual "home".

Sometimes, however there may be special reasons why it is most appropriate for the baptism to be at All Saints', even though it is away from your local area. It is the normal custom when this happens for you to contact the local minister, and ask him to prepare you for the baptism locally – if you cannot attend All Saints' for the required six weeks leading up to the event.

**THIS IS BIGGER THAN I EXPECTED!**

This may seem surprisingly complicated. You will find that most churches nowadays are anxious to help parents to understand the meaning and significance of their children's baptism. Neither parents nor ministers want to be accused of hypocrisy, and perhaps in the days when baptism was simply seen as an automatic thing there were quite a few thoughtless promises made, which were never likely to be followed through.

Often the baptism of a child raises spiritual issues which haven't been thought about for quite a while. I am always delighted to discuss questions about the Christian faith and other spiritual or personal issues, while aiming to avoid unhelpful pressure on people. If either of you have not been baptized or confirmed, I would be pleased to talk with you about preparing for these significant services yourselves. Thinking about your child's baptism can open up great spiritual opportunities for you too!

Thank you for your enquiry. Thinking about your child's baptism raises some important questions and gives a wonderful opportunity to think through these issues.

I look forward to hearing from you and getting to know you and your family. You will always be welcome at All Saints'.

**Rev. David West**  
**Minister**

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