

# ST MICHAEL'S UNITING CHURCH

## The Sacrament of *Baptism*

*After his death, friends and followers of Jesus shared his message of unconditional love, baptising people into the family of God.*

*"Whoever made a place for this message in their hearts received baptism, and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to sharing community together, and to the breaking of bread and prayers."*

*Acts 2:42*



## INTRODUCTION

St Michael's is a vibrant, progressive, inclusive Christian church with a long tradition of nurturing the spiritual well-being of the human person and working for the common good in society. We are recognised as an Open and Affirming congregation, celebrating the gifts of LGBTIQ+ people in all aspects of our life. We believe in the full equality of women and men. We are proud supporters of constitutional recognition of Australia's First Peoples and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament.

## BAPTISM IN THE UNITING CHURCH

In the Uniting Church, baptism takes place during a Sunday service. In baptism we are reminded that God has given us all the gift of life, and that through the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth we know God's intent for human living. We remember Jesus, the Human One, in whom Christians believe that God was especially present.

Baptism is also the church's way of celebrating and naming the grace of Divine Presence in every one of God's children. We are assured that everyone is held in the eternal love of God.

In the symbolic act of baptism, your child is welcomed as a member of the church. In baptism, we welcome new members into the life of the universal Christian faith and into the community of St Michael's. At the baptism, parents promise to ensure that their child is brought up with knowledge and experience of Christian faith.

## A COMMITMENT MADE BY PARENTS

Baptism of a child involves a solemn commitment on the part of a parent or parents to raise their child within the Christian faith. Parents promise to teach their child about the values and traditions of Christian faith, and to provide experiences of Christian worship and community as their child grows.

Baptism is not a requirement for God's blessing of a child or adult. We believe that God loves and accepts every person, and that nothing can separate us from that sacred love. If making the commitment to bring your child up within the Christian faith is not something with which you are comfortable, we can discuss thanksgiving and blessing as an alternative.

In baptism, parents will be asked to promise to share the Christian faith with their child.

*Will you tell your child the stories of Jesus, teach the values of the Christian life, and give them opportunities to experience Christian community and worship?*

***I will.***

*Will you help your child discover all that God may be in their life?*

***I will.***

*Will you commit yourselves to raising your child in a way that inspires compassion, justice-seeking and spiritual growth?*

***I will.***

## CHOOSING A DATE

Baptisms are usually celebrated on the second Sunday of the month (subject to change), during the 10.00am service.

On occasion, there may be another child being baptised.

## BAPTISM ENQUIRY FORM

Please complete the Enquiry Form which may be downloaded from our website or emailed to you.

## MEETING WITH THE MINISTER

After a baptism enquiry has been received, a meeting with our minister, Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, will be arranged. This will be a conversation about why you have chosen to have your child baptised at St Michael's and your commitments as a parent to fulfill the promises you will make. This meeting can either be in person at St Michael's offices or via video call.

Meeting with the minister is required before the baptism can be confirmed.

## BAPTISM CONFIRMATION FORM

Once the baptism is confirmed by the minister, you will be sent a confirmation form. Please provide names of any godparents and other information requested.

St Michael's provides a small, white baptism candle which is lit during the service and given to you afterwards. However, you are welcome to bring an individualised baptism candle. Let us know which you prefer.

Return the form to the office as soon as possible after meeting with the minister (at least two weeks before the service).

## GODPARENTS

You are welcome to choose *one or two godparents* for your child, but this is optional. The godparents will stand with you during the baptism. In recognition of the commitment they are making, they will be asked to respond to two questions after you have made your promises.

Please check that the godparents you have chosen are willing to make these promises.

*Will you commit yourself to being a guide and support to your godchild on their spiritual journey, wherever that may take them?*

***I will.***

*Will you be available to your godchild as they grows, sharing in their nurture and encouraging them in life?*

***I will.***

## THE WEEK BEFORE THE SERVICE

The week prior to the Sunday of the baptism, the St Michael's Baptism Assistant will contact you to confirm arrangements.

If you have not heard from someone by the Wednesday before the baptism, please contact the church office.

## ON THE DAY OF THE BAPTISM

The Baptism Assistant will meet you at the St Michael's Walk entrance to the church. Please arrive at no later than 9.40 am.

The minister will welcome you in the church and give you information about the service. If Dr Mayman is on leave, a guest minister will celebrate the baptism.

We appreciate the challenges of getting family and friends together, however 9:40am is a firm deadline. Arriving early will help your child feel comfortable in the church. Due to the restricted access to our hall building, there is no designated baby changing space. The vestry may be used, but only until 9:50am.

## THE CHURCH SERVICE

The church service has several stages. Baptism occurs in the first section of the service, following the welcome, a hymn, and prayers. Our tradition is that people stay for the whole service (usually a little over an hour).

When the time for the baptism comes, the minister explains the Church's understanding of baptism and the congregation affirms the Christian faith into which the child will be baptised.

The minister will invite parents and children (siblings are welcome) to come to the font, along with godparents (optional).

The minister baptises the child and a blessing is sung.

Following the baptism, parents make promises to raise their child in the Christian faith.

You will receive an ecumenical baptism certificate along with a Bible story book to share with your child.

Family members return to their seats and the service continues with readings, sermon, musical reflections, prayers and hymns.

After the final hymn and blessing, the organist will play a postlude. Most people remain seated to listen to the music. If you wish to leave after the blessing, please do so quietly so others can enjoy the music.

Tea and coffee are served in the church after the service. You are welcome to stay for this, however, we understand if your family has other plans after the service.

## FAMILY AND FRIENDS

There will be reserved seats for family and friends at the front of the church. We appreciate that some of your family and friends may come from different religious traditions or have little knowledge about Christian baptism. Please let them know that everyone is very welcome at St Michael's.

Please ask family and friends to be present for the whole service.

If children become distressed and need to be taken out during the service, parents are welcome to use the child-friendly space in the narthex (the corridor on the Collins Street side of the church).

A small number of toys and books are available. The St Michael's Baptism Assistant, who will sit near you during the service, can accompany anyone who needs to use this space.

## COVID SAFE

Masks are not required but are encouraged whilst singing hymns. Please let your family and friends know about this.

## VIDEO RECORDING

Our Sunday services are video recorded. After the service, the recording is edited before being uploaded to our website. Currently the baptism section of the service is not included in the video that is made public on our website.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

You are welcome to take photographs in the church before and after the service and at the time of the baptism, but please refrain from photography during other parts of the service.

## DONATIONS

There is no fee for baptism which is a sacrament of the Church. We encourage families to make a donation to the church to celebrate the baptism, but it is voluntary. Family and friends are also able to make donations which can be placed in one of the offering boxes near the church doors. There are Pay Point machines in the church. Information about electronic donations can be found on our website or by contacting the church office.

## PARKING

Please plan to arrive early to arrange car parking and remind family and friends that parking may take time. Street parking is limited but there are several commercial parking garages nearby. The closest parking buildings to St Michael's are:

- The Grand Hyatt Car Park  
128 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000  
(There is also an entrance from Exhibition Street)  
<https://grandhotelgroup.com.au/car-park-information/>
- Wilson Parking T&G Building  
161 Collins Street  
[www.wilsonparking.com.au](http://www.wilsonparking.com.au)

## ONGOING CONNECTION

We hope that you will value the contact you have made with St Michael's on this occasion and that you continue to offer opportunities for your child to participate in a church community.

St Michael's does not currently have a children's program, but children are always welcome at worship. We also offer a range of programs and activities and encourage you to join them.

## CONTACT

Telephone: 03 9654 5120

Email: [office@stmichaels.org.au](mailto:office@stmichaels.org.au)

St Michael's is located at 120 Collins Street, Melbourne.

The most accessible door to the church is via St Michael's Walk on the eastern side of the church. There are also entrances via the steps on Collins Street and Russell Street.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. The Church office phone is staffed Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.