

# Baptism at St. Mark's



There is one hope in God's call to us.

The Anglican Church of Canada baptizes both infants and adults to receive them into the family of God.

## **What is baptism?**

Baptism is the sign of new life in Christ and unites Christ with his people. When we become baptized we make a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. We let go of our old ways of seeing others and ourselves. We learn to see one another through the eyes of Christ. We make a conscious decision to respect others and ourselves, to grow in our ability to live in harmony with others, and to forgive. We have a responsibility to resist evil in our own lives and to work to transform our society into a caring family centred on Christ's passionate love for the world. At the time of baptism, the person is formally received as a member of the church, and may receive Holy Communion (or Eucharist).

Baptism in any Christian church or denomination in the name of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, is accepted by the Anglican Church of Canada. Anglicans do not re-baptize. In the Anglican Church we baptize as Christians, not to any particular denomination. Any baptized person may become a member of our parish by regularly attending and contributing to its life and ministry. Individuals new to the Anglican Church may wish to acknowledge Anglican membership publicly by participating in the services of confirmation or reception.

## **What is infant baptism?**

In the Anglican Church, children may be baptized, with parents and sponsors making these commitments for them. The parents and sponsors and the parish community also commit on their own to bring these children up in the church to understand God's purpose for the world.

If parents are not ready to make baptismal promises or wish to defer baptism for awhile, the church offers a service of thanksgiving for the gift of a child. In this service the family gives thanks for the birth and prays for God's help in the child's care and nurture.

### **Who may be baptized?**

Any adult who believes God is calling her or him into the Christian way of life is invited to be baptized. Any baptized adult may present a child for baptism. Usually the person bringing the child forward is a baptized parent. Baptized or not, it is customary that both parents of the child consent to the baptism of the child. A single parent may bring a child to be baptized on her or his own.

### **Who are sponsors?**

Sponsors are baptized adult members of a Christian community. They are witnesses to the baptism and accept responsibility for supporting the person's spiritual development – his or her growth in Christ. Both children and adults have sponsors.

Traditionally, children have had three sponsors (often called godparents) – two relatives or family friends of the child's own gender, and one of the opposite gender. Today, however, parents can be the sponsors of their children. When a child cannot answer for herself or himself, the sponsors make the promises on his or her behalf.

### **When does baptism take place?**

In baptism a person becomes part of the church community, and the community should be present to witness and welcome. At St. Mark's baptism is usually reserved for our 10:30 a.m. worship on Sunday, but arrangements can be made for baptism at our 5:00 p.m. Saturday worship. Please contact the office to make arrangements.

### **How do we prepare for baptism?**

Candidates for baptism, their parents and sponsors, receive instruction in the meaning of baptism and of the vows which they will make. This includes a home visit from a priest soon after an inquiry from the candidate or candidate's family. There is also a class and rehearsal where candidates, parents, sponsors and companions should be present. Other family members are welcome to attend as well.

### **Is there a fee for Baptism?**

There is no fee. Once a person becomes a part of our parish community, that person supports a parish with time, talent and financial resources.

### **What is the service of baptism in the Anglican Church of Canada?**

The service includes the reading of scripture and preaching of a sermon, the presentation of the candidates, and the affirmation of beliefs by the candidates, or in the case of children, their parents and sponsors. The priest or deacon says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". The sign of the cross is then traced with water on the candidate's forehead to show that baptism brings the gift of the Holy Spirit. The candidate is given a candle to represent the light of Christ and is received into the church community. Normally the service continues with the celebration of Holy Communion (the Eucharist).

Baptism dates are typically connected with significant feast days in the church – Epiphany, The Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Easter Vigil, Pentecost, All Saints Day and Reign of Christ, etc.

