

Information for families

Baptism



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
DUKE ST, GRAFTON



Welcome

We are delighted that you are thinking about having your child baptised at Christ Church Cathedral in Grafton.

We welcome families and their children who are seeking Baptism.

Jesus encouraged parents to bring their children to him, and as disciples of Jesus we do the same.

We are committed to helping parents build strong families, and Baptism is one of the key milestones in that process.

The information in this Baptism guide will assist you with the preparations and also allow the Cathedral to collect the information we need for the service and also to stay in touch with you afterwards.

Once you have read through this guide, please contact the Cathedral Parish office on (02) 6642 2844 to begin the process of preparing for your Baptism at the Cathedral.

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Your Cathedral Faith Community

We are glad to recognise you and your family as members of our Grafton Cathedral faith community, and we look forward to sharing the adventure of intentional Christian living with you in the coming years.

OUR VISION

We seek to be a generous faith community centered around the person and teachings of Jesus, open to new insights from the natural and social sciences, and engaged with the wider community in compassionate action for the common good.

OUR COMMUNITY

As the 'mother church' for the Diocese of Grafton, the Cathedral Parish serves the broader Anglican community on the North Coast of New South Wales. As a Cathedral, it serves the civic community of Grafton and the Clarence Valley Regional Council. As a local Parish, it seeks to form and sustain an inclusive Christian community.

WHAT WE DO

We engage in the five marks of mission identified by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1984:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Choosing to have your child baptised

Baptism celebrates a new beginning as a member of the Christian Church. Baptism immerses us in the new life given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter.

When we come for Baptism we are saying “yes” to God’s love and claiming our place within the community of God’s people.

Baptism can also be a time to acknowledge the mystery of a new life coming to birth among us and the immense privilege—as well as the awesome responsibilities—we have as parents.

When we baptise our children we are also promising to be role models for them: examples of faith, but also examples of hope, and love, and compassion.

When you are ready to start planning for your child's Baptism, please contact the Cathedral office so we can work with you to make the necessary arrangements.



The Baptism Service



[In the place where we celebrate the sacramental power of water to enliven and cleanse, this impressive painting by Frances Belle Parker (2011) evokes the life-giving capacities of the Clarence River and reminds us that we stand on country that has long been sacred to the indigenous peoples of this ancient land.]

The usual arrangement is for us to celebrate Baptism during the 9.00am service on the third Sunday of the month or else on a holy day with a special link to Baptism.

- *The candidate for baptism* is usually an infant or young child, but we also baptise older children, teenagers, and adults. Every candidate has a number of sponsors, and in the case of children not old enough to speak for themselves these include the parents and godparents.
- *Parents* bear the main responsibility for a child's well-being. In the Baptism service you will be asked whether you are willing to accept the responsibilities of Christian parenthood. You will be asked to make a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ.
- *Godparents* have an important role as they assist and support the parents in the spiritual nurture of the child after the service.
- *The Church* is the community of faith to which all baptised people belong. This community helps parents and godparents with the responsibilities of raising their children as active members of the church and it nurtures all candidates by prayer and fellowship as they grow in their faith.

There are many ways that we can personalise your child's Baptism service, and we will discuss these with you when we met to plan the service. Some ideas to consider, depending on the age of your child, include:

- Family heirlooms, including special Christening gowns and shawls.
- A new outfit purchased for the occasion (for older children)
- Make and/or decorate your own Baptism candle
- Write a prayer to be used in the service, expressing your hopes for your child as they grow up
- Write a letter to your child explaining why you are choosing to have them baptised. As they become a little older you can read that letter to them, perhaps on the anniversary of their Baptism or maybe at their birthday. When they are older again, they may ask you questions about what is in the letter, or whether you think that your hopes and prayers for them are coming true.
- If one or both of the parents have not been baptised, we can arrange for that to happen at the same time as your child



Choosing godparents for your child

Asking someone to be a godparent for your child is a special moment. They will appreciate your trust in them as key figures in the life of your child.

Godparents have an important role as they assist and support you in the spiritual nurture of the child.

Godparents do not need to be Anglicans, but they must be baptised themselves, and they should be people who take their own Christian practice very seriously.

It is best not to choose someone as a godparent just because they can be at the service. It is much better to have someone else stand in as a proxy for an absent godparent, if the absent person will be better in the longer term as a special mentor in the life of your child.

Traditionally a child has three godparents: including two godfathers for a boy, and two godmothers for a girl.

The number of people is not all that important, but the quality of the godparent is a key consideration. Will each of these people be positive and healthy influences on your child as they grow?



As a family you will have endless opportunities help your child grow into the confident Christian person that we pray for them to become at the time of their Baptism. Every special moment that you treasure with them is a step in your child's development, and every time you share your own faith and your own personal values with your child you take another step in this lifelong journey of faithful living as people of Christ.

Godparents will have an important role as your child grows, and perhaps especially when the children reach adolescence. By then the trusted adults you chose to be the godparents to your child will have cultivated a place in the child's life so they can serve as a personal mentor when your children most need their guidance. In the meantime help the process along by making a habit of referring to these people as "your godmother" or "your godfather" even if they are also uncles, aunts or cousins. Plant a seed and watch it grow when the time comes.

The church is here to help you and your godparents in the nurture of your children:

- We will be in touch from time to time to offer suggestions, share ideas and maybe invite you to a seminar that may help you as Christian parents.
- When you are in town make a point of pointing out the Cathedral to your children and occasionally bring them into the Cathedral to see where they were baptised, to light a candle and to say a little prayer together.

The sacraments of the Church are special rituals in which we claim God's blessing for ourselves or—in the case of Baptism—for our children.

There are seven traditional sacraments and at least four of them are especially relevant to families:

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Eucharist
- Marriage
- Confession
- Holy Unction (anointing with holy oil for healing)
- Ordination (Deacons, Priests and Bishops)

The Christian spiritual tradition includes many other sacred rituals including Bible reading, meditation, prayer, icons, candles, incense, fasting, and 'body prayers' such as walking the labyrinth (see picture below).



On the Cathedral website we offer information about intentional engagement with our personal spiritual journeys, and the Building Strong Families section has a special focus on those sacraments which are especially relevant to families and children.



Clarence Valley Anglican School offers scholarships to both current and prospective students. Scholarships are available in several categories:

- Academic Scholarships
- General Excellence Scholarships
- Community Based Scholarships
- Cathedral Scholarships

The aim of the Cathedral Scholarships is to encourage student and family engagement with both the Anglican Church and CVAS.

These Cathedral Scholarships are available for students entering any year at any time with an emphasis on entry level years of Kindergarten and Year 7 and will primarily comprise of children whose families demonstrate an active connection with the Cathedral and Diocese.

For the purposes of these scholarships, a 'Cathedral family' is a family where the children or their parents or their grandparents are actively involved in the life of the Cathedral, whether as worshippers, choristers, musicians, servers or as volunteers in some aspect of the mission of the Cathedral (e.g., cleaning roster, or Cathedral OpShop). The Dean will confirm with the School whether a particular child is eligible for consideration of a Cathedral Scholarship.

Cathedral families are encouraged to contact the School at any time afterwards to discuss the benefits for their children of enrolling with Clarence Valley Anglican School and the financial assistance that may be available to them under the Cathedral Scholarships program.

Students nominated will be required to formally accept the nomination and make an application. Applications will include completion of the CVAS Scholarship Application form, an introductory letter (age cognisant) in the applicant's own handwriting, stating why they would like to attend CVAS and why they make a worthy candidate for a Cathedral Scholarship.

Cathedral Scholarships will offer a fee discount to a maximum of 50% dependent upon the individual student's family circumstances and level of involvement as recommended by the Dean of the Cathedral.

Cathedral Contact Details

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