

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
DIOCESE OF TASMANIA
POLICY

SUBJECT	BAPTISM and CONFIRMATION
AUTHORISED BY	BISHOP
AUDIENCE and DISTRIBUTION	All Clergy – This policy is intended to give guidance to matters regarding the practice of Baptism and Confirmation
VERSION	04

1. Christian Initiation

The sacrament of Baptism is the biblical rite of Christian initiation for disciples of Jesus, and from it is derived the rite of Confirmation. We expect that this sacrament and this rite will be practiced often as we become *a Church for Tasmania, Making Disciples of Jesus*.

[The Canon Concerning Baptism 1992](#) governs our baptismal practice, and the [Canon Concerning Confirmation 1992](#) governs our practice of confirmation.

2. Baptism

- a. Baptism shall take place by immersing the candidate in water or by pouring water over the candidate and saying “I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”.¹
- b. Baptism is normally administered by the Priest of the Parish in which the candidate lives. On occasion it may be administered by the Bishop, but even when he is present it is appropriate for the Parish Priest to conduct the baptism. Baptism may be conducted by a Deacon, if the Priest is absent and other arrangements cannot be made, or if it is an emergency (e.g. in a hospital).
- c. *The Book of Common Prayer* provides for private baptism outside a church in what the Canon calls 'extreme circumstances' such as anticipated death. The baptism in these situations may be conducted by any Christian person, but does not include reception into the church. A person baptised in extreme circumstances must be brought to the church to be received, the priest first having ascertained that the baptism was regular i.e. as described by 2a above.
- d. Baptism is normally administered at a service of public worship.² Baptism outside of public worship services (e.g. on a Sunday afternoon with the family only in attendance) are discouraged. Public gatherings of the regular congregation at a separate time and location (e.g. at a river or the sea) are considered to be a “service of public worship”.
- e. Baptism is appropriate for believers who are able to answer for themselves, or for children of believers who answer on their behalf.

¹ Canon Concerning Baptism 1992. s.3

² Canon Concerning Baptism 1992. s 2

- f. The minister must be satisfied that a person able to answer for themselves has been instructed and prepared in the Christian faith.³
- g. In the case of an infant being baptised the minister must be satisfied that at least one of the parents or guardians is an active Christian and has been instructed in the Christian faith and understands the responsibilities of being a godparent, and are themselves a baptised person.⁴ Pre-baptism instruction in the Christian faith is assumed to be the normal practice.
- h. The baptism of infants whose parents are either in a defacto relationship or a same-sex marriage requires particular pastoral wisdom. Baptism requires repentance of known sin, and so any possible baptism must be conducted in light of the parents' own journey towards faith.
- i. At least one of the parents, carers or godparents ought to be a regularly worshipping Christian person.
- j. Re-baptism, or a second baptism is discouraged, as it undermines baptism's essential character as a rite of entry to the Christian faith.

3. Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child

- a. The APBA service of thanksgiving for the birth of a child may be pastorally appropriate for:
 - i. Christian parents who have trouble accepting infant baptism
 - ii. parents who cannot accept the responsibilities of baptism
 - iii. same-sex or defacto couples wanting a service of blessing for their child
- b. Careful thought should be given to the service so that it is not seen as less important than baptism, nor confused with it.
- c. A Service of Thanksgiving for the birth of a child can be conducted outside of a church building, and outside of a public worship service.

4. Confirmation

- a. Confirmation assumes that a person of age is now publicly declaring that they profess the baptismal promises made on their behalf as a child.⁵
- b. The presence of the Bishop for this service acknowledges the profession of faith in the wider community of the church beyond the particular parish.
- c. The person is "confirming" the promises of baptism, and is therefore asked the same questions as in the baptism service.
- d. The candidate for confirmation would normally have a period of instruction in the basic tenets of the Christian faith, and may include some familiarity with the Catechism.⁶
- e. Given that baptism is the biblical sacrament of Christian initiation, and the service of confirmation is a confirmation of promises by others on behalf of the candidate, a person who was baptised as an adult may choose not to be confirmed. It is to be noted however that both BCP and AAPB, provide for a person being baptised as an adult to proceed to confirmation at the earliest

³ Canon Concerning Baptism 1992. s 5

⁴ Canon Concerning Baptism 1992

⁵ From the Notes of the Confirmation Service in AAPB. p 94

⁶ Canon Concerning Confirmation 1992. s. 4

opportunity.⁷ Care should be taken in the preparation and the service not to diminish the significance of the sacrament of baptism, or elevate the rite of confirmation.

- f. Where baptisms take place in the same service as confirmation, the questions of examination and the creed should only occur once, (before the baptism).

5. Reception into Communicant Membership

- a. The Service of Reception, often coupled with confirmation, allows a person validly baptised in another denomination to be received and welcomed into the Anglican Church by the Bishop.
- b. The Service of Reception would be appropriate for a person validly baptised in another denomination who was now seeking Ordination as an Anglican, and may be appropriate to take up a role as Church Warden, Parish Council or Synod representative.
- c. Reception is also appropriate for other pastoral reasons for people wanting to declare their allegiance to the Anglican Church.
- d. APBA also provides for a “reaffirmation of faith” in the context of baptism.⁸
- e. A Service is Reception is not required for a person to be a “member” of the Anglican Church. A member is defined in the Constitution as “a baptised person who attends the public worship of this Church and who declares that he [sic] is a member of this Church and of no church which is not in communion with this Church”.⁹

6. Other Matters

a. Resources

The following resources for thinking about baptism are recommended:

- Grove Worship Series numbers 3, 20, 24, 61, 90, 98 and 124;
- *A pastoral handbook for Anglicans: Guidelines and resources for pastoral ministry*. Bradley Billings (Editor), Broughton Publishing, 2018
- *Baptism: Its Purpose, Practice and Power*, Michael Green, Hodder and Stoughton, 1987
- [The Lima Document](#)

Clearly our approach must be marked by sensitivity and care. Change always requires a period of adjustment and education.

b. An Ideal

Some flexibility in the application of the policy is allowed in multi-centre parishes and parishes where there is a large number of baptisms. For example, when a baptism, for compelling reasons, cannot be held within a normal Sunday service it is usually possible to ask members of the congregation to be present at a

⁷ cf AAPB Note 2 p 511 and BCP Note at end of *Baptism of persons of riper years*. The subsequent confirmation of person baptised as adults has been questioned – see *Anglican Confirmation*, Colin Buchanan Grove 1986 p 46

⁸ See APBA p 55 s. 15

⁹ The Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia, s. 74 (1)

baptism at another time in order to represent the body of Christ, and show the loving care and welcome of the whole people of God. Baptisms outside public worship are the exception rather than the norm.

c. Schools

When baptism or confirmation is administered to candidates at Anglican Schools, it is pastorally important for the Chaplain to make contact with the Incumbents of the parishes from which the candidates come.

d. Single Parents

Where a single parent seeks the baptism of a child, pastoral sensitivity and care need to be exercised. The provision and support of godparents who are fully committed to the life of the Church is most necessary. It may be helpful on occasions, with the consent of the parent(s), for an additional godparent to be provided from among the regular members of the congregation.

Revision History

VERSION	DATE	REVISION
1.	23/1/2019	Original by Bishop
2.	14/2/2019	Refinement by the DMST
3.	3/8/2019	Revision by Bishop for exposure to Senior Rectors
4.	7/10/2019	Revision for Ministry Conference 2019