



A Church Service for your child

Congratulations!

The birth of some children is carefully planned; others come as a surprise. But it is always a wonderful privilege - and a great responsibility - to care for a young child. So it's very natural to want to give thanks to God for one of the greatest gifts he has ever given you, and to ask for his blessing on your child and your family.

We will be delighted to discuss the possibilities of a service for your child.



Two Options:

Things have changed a little in the Church since we were children ourselves. Parents now have two options.

You can choose a **Thanksgiving Service** for your child. Or you can choose a **Baptism Service**.


Coming to Church

We strongly encourage you to come as a family to Southlakes Anglican as often as you can over the next few weeks.

Thanksgivings and Baptisms take place during Sunday services, so you will probably see one and understand it more fully. In addition, many families start coming to church after the birth of a child because they know they will need God's help in caring for their new member.

Coming to Southlakes Anglican will help you decide whether you want to make the knowledge of Christ's love part of your family life.

The main service is at 9:00am. Babies are very welcome; we like their noise! There is a corner at the back for older children to play and keep them busy. We have also launched an evening service at 5pm. This service is a lot less formal.







The Thanksgiving Service

Thanksgivings take place within a normal Sunday service. They are very happy occasions and quite brief. The whole service will last about 1¼ hours; the Thanksgiving will be about 10 minutes of that time.

What happens? There are three main parts in a Thanksgiving Service:


- Thanking God. As the name suggests, the whole purpose of the service is to say a heartfelt thank you to God for his wonderful gift to you of your child. The minister will say these prayers on your behalf.
 - Praying for your family. We will pray for your child, for any other children you may already have and especially for you as parents, in your responsibility of bringing up this child.
 - Receiving a book. You may be given an illustrated book, about the life of Christ. This is:
 - as a permanent reminder of the Thanksgiving Service
 - for you yourselves to read as soon as possible, to understand Christ and his teaching more fully
 - for you to read to your child in a few year's time, when (s)he is old enough to understand
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Who comes? We encourage you to invite as many people as you like to the Thanksgiving Service: Godparents, grandparents, family members, neighbours and friends. Often people have a big party afterwards.

Other details: The child can come dressed entirely as you wish. Some parents bring their child in a Christening robe; others bring them in their ordinary clothes. There is no fee for a Thanksgiving Service.

Why thanksgiving? There are 3 main reasons why an increasing number of families choose a Thanksgiving Service:

- They simply want to give thanks to God for their child. This is their main wish and they have no desire to do anything more.
 - They are making no promises. In the Baptism Service parents make some very serious promises and commitments (see below); but there are no promises made when parents opt for a Thanksgiving.
 - They would prefer their child to experience baptism when (s)he is older. Parents may still pray with their children, read them Bible stories and tell them about Jesus. Delaying baptism until after your child is old enough to make his or her own choice to follow Christ means they will experience baptism, and later be able to remember it. All sorts of people are now choosing this option.
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Option 2: The Baptism Service

Baptisms also take place within a normal Sunday service which commence at 9:00am. The whole service will last about 1¼ hours; the Baptism will be about 10 minutes of that time.


What happens?

There are three main parts in a Baptism Ceremony:

- Parents and Godparents make promises. At three points in the Baptism Service, parents and godparents together make promises to God about their own Christian faith and about bringing up their children to know Christ and to come regularly to church.
- Water is poured over the child. The minister will take your child into his or her arms and pour water three times over the child's head, baptising 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'.
- The child is welcomed into the church family. Baptism is a commitment to bring up your child as a member of the church community. So the whole congregation welcomes its newest member.

The Promises:

Quite rightly, people want to know what promises they will be making to God, so that they can decide whether Baptism will be right for their family. The words you speak standing before the congregation during the service are reproduced below.





Essentially you will be making three promises:

- To pray regularly for your child.
- To teach your child about Jesus: his life, teaching, death and rising again to new life.
- To come to church regularly as a family. You will be given a certificate to show that your child has been baptized and that you have made these promises. There is no fee for the service or the certificate.

Preparation: There is a lot to consider in deciding to have a Baptism for your child. A minister, or a couple from the church with children of their own, usually arrange to hold two relaxed preparation sessions at your home. The church also holds free Christianity discovery courses called Alpha from time to time and some parents find that it's good to be able to think things through and ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere. Several parents only decide at this time whether to ask for a Baptism for their child or opt for a Thanksgiving Service instead.

Why Baptism? Note that the word "Christening" is not used because it can be misleading. Some people think that this ceremony is what makes someone a Christian but only a decision to turn away from sin and believe in Jesus can do that. There are two main reasons why families choose the option of Baptism:

- They want to make a commitment to God. Many couples feel they made promises before God at their wedding, and this has helped them to be better husbands and wives. Now they want to make promises to God after the birth of their child, because they feel this will help them be better parents.
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- They want to become part of Southlakes Anglican. Baptism is a way of identifying you and your family with your local church. Many couples want to do this after their child has been born, even if they have not been regular churchgoers in the past.

Godparents: It is normal to have Godparents, whichever option you choose: Thanksgiving or Baptism.

How many? You may have as many Godparents as you want. Traditionally, a boy has two Godfathers and one Godmother; a girl has two Godmothers and one Godfather.

You may have chosen Guardians for your child, people who would bring up your child if something happened to you. It is not necessary for the Guardian to be the child's Godparent; they have quite different roles.

What do they do? All Godparents (Thanksgiving or Baptism) promise to help your family in two ways:

- To care for your child, taking a special interest in their Godchild.
 - To pray for your child, asking God to bless your family. If you choose to have Baptism, the Godparents also promise:
 - To encourage your child to learn about Christ and to take your place in the local church. For Baptism the Godparents must themselves be baptized. We can send them a letter explaining their responsibilities.
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Southlakes Anglican welcomes you on this journey together.

The church office is attended from
Monday to Friday 9am to 1 pm.
at 33 Newcastle Street, Morisset.
Telephone: (02) 4973 1204

Reverend Melinda McMahon may be contacted on
0439 529 045 or at priest@southlakes.org.au

Our Sunday Services are at 9 am or 5 pm
There is also a Wednesday Reflection Service at 10 am.