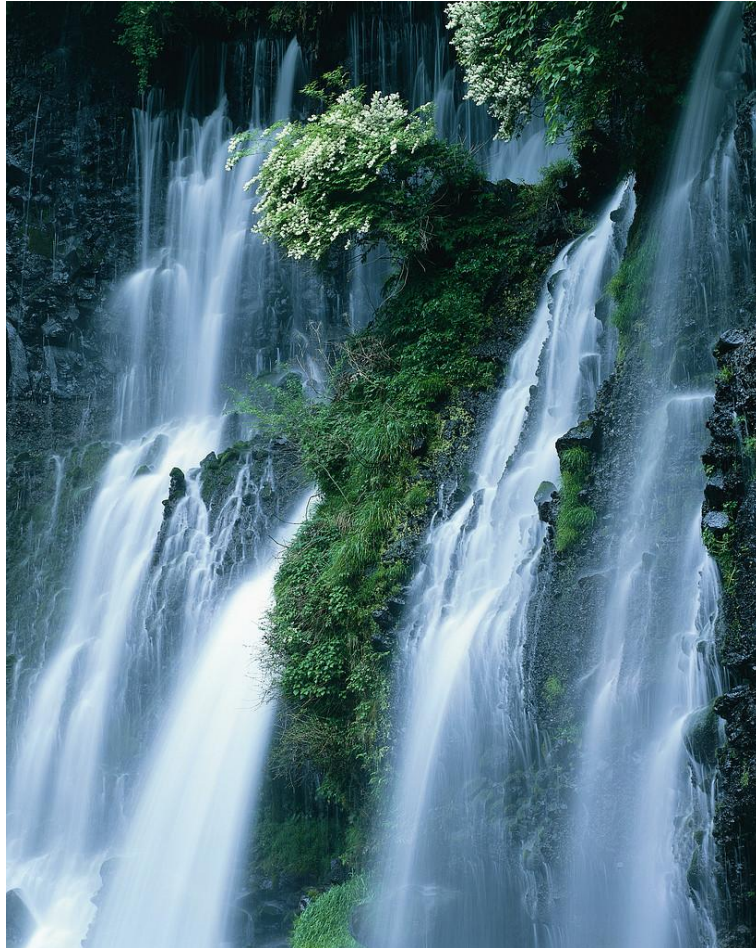


# *Baptism*

*Part of the Sacred Journey*



Anglican Parish of Warracknabeal



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## *The Gift of a Child*

The gift of a child is a time of great happiness and the beginning of new responsibilities as parents. Parents share with their wider family and friends the responsibility for the formation and growth of the unique person that your child both is and will become – as you and your child face life’s joys and demands.

Through Baptism we – as a Church family - begin to share your spiritual and sacred responsibility for your child. The Christian faith gives purpose and hope in an often confusing and difficult world.

Children, like adults, need values and guidance in growing into healthy human beings as we develop healthy relationships with others and ourselves.

In the Baptism service, you will publically affirm that a relationship with God is also important for your child and family.

As a Church family we affirm that a relationship with God can be one of Trust (Faith) – which can transform despair and darkness into Hope and Light; that a relationship with God helps to confront the reality of evil and death with courage and love through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.



Baptism is an ancient way of the Church to offer thanksgiving to God, and therefore we encourage you to join with us in the following prayer as we make our preparations for this special event.

**Loving God,  
maker of all that is living,  
we praise you for the wonder and joy of creation.  
We thank you from our hearts  
for the life of our child  
for her / his safe delivery, and  
for the privilege of parenthood.  
Accept our thanks,  
in Jesus name we pray. Amen.**

## *What does Baptism mean?*

Baptism is a gift from God.

Through trust and faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God’s forgiveness and love is promised to all who believe. In Baptism we say, “YES!” to God, signalling our desire to know God more, and to start afresh in relationship with God for ourselves and our child.

Jesus tells this story;

*After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to speak with Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you.” Jesus replied, “I assure you, unless you are born again, you can*

*never see the Kingdom of God.” “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus replied, “The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven.”* (The Gospel of John 3:1-6)



Jesus says that through our natural birth we are given life for this present world and we become members of our natural families and citizens of our country.

But each person needs more – a spiritual birth – to become a companion of Jesus; a member of His family, a citizen of His Kingdom and a person who belongs to His Church Family.

In this ‘spiritual birth’ of Baptism, we take another step toward God’s Kingdom and making sense of the world in which we live. As we grow – as people and in faith – we begin to make choices about our lives: who we spend time with, how we make our lives meaningful, where we seek support and the ways to cope with all that life has to offer – the good, bad, ugly and beautiful!

### *What does Baptism involve?*

#### 1. Following Jesus – God who came to earth

Baptism means that on behalf of your child, parents and Godparents affirm your allegiance to Jesus Christ and your willingness to be his follower. By doing this, your child begins a journey of ‘Christ-ening’ - becoming Christ-like and we affirm that God promises never to leave us (whether we believe in God or not).

This is a big step in your spiritual and sacred journey. Essentially, as a people who follow God, we claim that LIGHT will always overcome darkness, that LIFE will always overcome death, and that LOVE will overcome hatred and brokenness.

In the Baptism service you will be asked five big questions:

*‘Do you turn to Christ?’*

You will reply, **“I turn to Christ.”**

*Do you repent of your sins?*

**“I repent of my sins.”**

*‘Do you reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust?’*

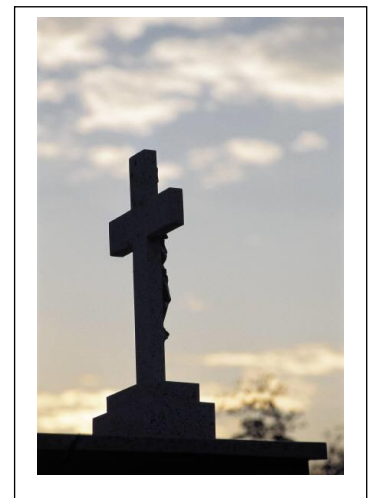
**“I reject them all.”**

*‘Do you renounce Satan and all evil?’*

**“I renounce all that is evil.”**

*‘Will you by God’s Grace strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life’s end?’*

**“I will, with God’s help.”**



These are important questions, but they are also steeped in church tradition and can seem quite distant from our present reality and belief in God. Sometimes it takes a lifetime to truly understand the implications of these questions. Fundamentally, these questions could be re-interpreted as:

**‘Do you seek to open your heart to Jesus, who is God who came to earth?’**

**‘Do you ‘turn around’ (repent) and re-connect with God who forgives and loves us?’**

**‘Do you focus on the needs of others before yourself; do you promote honesty in all relationships; and do you live in a way that is fair and with integrity?’**

**‘Do you renounce all that leads to death and destruction - such as drugs, violence, and abuse?’**

**‘Will you follow God? Will you love fully? Will you become the best person you can be – not just a ‘good person’?’**

The great thing about the last question is that we get to do it with God’s help!

We are not left alone to try and do it in our own strength!

We invite you and your child’s Godparents to answer these questions with as much integrity as you can muster, understanding the responsibility that you have chosen to accept on behalf of the person you are sponsoring.

## 2. Affirming Faith in God

You will also be asked to stand and make an ancient statement of what the Church believes. This ‘Creed’ – meaning “We believe” – tells of the true nature of God.

In God the Creator –

who created the Universe and everything in it;

who made – women and men in God’s image and sustains us all.

In Jesus – God’s Son –

who lived, died and rose again for us so that we can have a relationship with God.

In the Holy Spirit – God’s Presence always –

who gives life, and strength in our faith and helps us to make meaning of our lives.

## 3. Water – poured on the head of your child

In the Baptism service, we use ordinary water. Through your participation in the service, this water is transformed into something special for your child, and we make it ‘holy’ or ‘sacred’ because you have invited family and friends to be present and participate in this sacred ritual. It has very rich symbolism in our Church life.



## Cleansing

We use water every day to cleanse our outer bodies, wash away the sweat and toil of the day's work and feel fresh and clean. In the baptism service, your child has a 'ritual bath'. We wash away all that leads to disconnection (sin) with God.

We only have to do this ONCE, because Jesus took away this 'disconnection' through his death on the cross (at Easter) on our behalf. This is God's best GIFT!

## Quenching Thirst

We use water every day to quench our thirst. In the baptism service, your child has a 'ritual drink', which fills the heart, mind and soul of our human being.

As we journey through life, we may struggle with some of life's challenges, diseases and tragedies. We ask: "WHY?" and rightly so. There are no easy answers.

We believe as a church community that, in relationship with God, we can make sense of some of these events from a different perspective, that we can return to healing and wholeness, and that death is not God's last word, but rather LIFE.



Deep peace is not an idea, but one of God's promises, another GIFT.

## Growth



We use water to make things grow. When we plant a seed in the ground we water it, to encourage it to develop as it should and become a plant of beauty. In the baptism service, we all promise to help your child become a person of beauty and grow to become the best person they can be: a person of value, a person who makes a contribution to the world, and a person who can really make a difference to your family and others in our community.

In the church, we believe we can do this most effectively if we join with others with similar goals. Just as a coal from a fire cannot exist very long on the hearth by itself - separated from the heat of the fire, so do we as humans need to be connected to others: to share the burdens and joys of our contributions and responsibilities in creating safe communities and meaningful lives.

### 4. Anointing with Oil

Your child will be signed on the forehead with the sign of the cross. Your child becomes part of the Easter Mystery - Jesus' death and resurrection - where God transforms all that leads to death into life, and we are welcomed into God's Kingdom.

Oil has been an ancient symbol of blessing, and in the baptism service your child is anointed as though they are a queen or a king in God's Kingdom.

5. Light – represented by a candle

A lighted candle is then given to the Godparents to hold for your child. You belong to Jesus Christ, who is light for everyone in the world. Those who are baptised are privileged to be able to reflect that light of Christ to others. Keep this candle and light it again on the anniversary of their baptism or on their birthday.



6. Welcome – to the Church Family

Your child will then be ‘welcomed’ into the Christian Family of God on earth. Your child has been “Christened.”

CONGRATULATIONS and Praise God!

### *How Can the Church Help?*

Like all good families that take caring for each other seriously, it is a matter of both give and take. As you are taking your responsibility for the spiritual growth of your child, we in the Church family also commit to your family spiritual growth.

First, we will do all we can to help make the baptism service an enjoyable experience for all who gather to celebrate this occasion.

Secondly, there are many different ways you can stay connected to the church family. The most obvious way is to join us on a Sunday at one of our regular worship opportunities throughout the parish. A quick summary are listed below.

Christ Church – crn Lyle & Anderson St, Warracknabeal

9.30am Holy Communion

(10.30am – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Month) Holy Communion

St Mark’s - Areegra

11.30am 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month - Holy Communion

Finally, you may like to join us for Easter or Christmas celebrations. There are usually a variety of opportunities to join the Church family that would be suitable for your family on these festive occasions.

There are often other occasions for you to join us for fellowship throughout the year.

We hope that you have found this information helpful.

We would encourage you to contact Rev James if you have any further questions or would like to know more about what it means to follow Jesus in a faithful way.

## Other Questions

*Is there a fee for Baptism?*

Yes - \$1500. Your gateway to the Straight and Narrow Road to the 'Celestial City'.

No, not really! Baptism is a sacrament of the Church. There is no fee for becoming part of God's Kingdom! We do encourage people to make a donation to our church, which goes to making ministry possible throughout our parish (the priest does not directly get this money). Every donation is gratefully received.

*Is there a Baptism Certificate?*

Yes. It will be given to you on the day of the baptism with details you have provided on your Application form. There will be certificates for the Godparents too.

*Can I take photos in the church?*

Yes! Please remember that while this is a special occasion, this is also a time of prayer and worship. You are welcome to stay after the service to take any other photos you may require.

*How can I know more about becoming a follower of Jesus or understanding my relationship with God?*

You are invited to contact one of our clergy team. There are many ways to journey deeper in relationship with God, and create opportunities for learning and fellowship with fellow 'pilgrims' of faith. There are no 'stupid' questions, and we are happy to explore other pastoral services with you and your family.

*What prayer can I pray, when I want to talk with God?*

When the disciples asked Jesus this question, his reply was;

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Another way to talk with God;

**Thank you God for...  
Sorry God for...  
Please help...  
In Jesus name we pray. Amen.**

