

## Do I Have To Have Godparents?

No. Godparents (sometimes called Sponsors) are optional. If you do decide to have godparents, thought should be given to who would best be able to live up to the responsibilities involved.

Traditionally boys have had two godfathers and one godmother, while girls have had two godmothers and one godfather. However, there are no minimum or maximum numbers of godparents permitted.

## How Often Are Baptism Services Offered?

Baptism services usually take place on one Sunday a month at the 9.30am service at St Luke's. The Vicar will be able to offer more details and discuss options if you would like a baptism service at St Stephen's, Elsthorpe.

## What If I Live Outside the Parish?

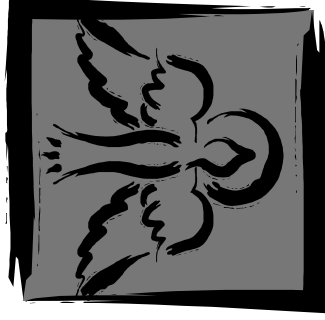
Before we can proceed we will need a signed declaration from the vicar of the parish in which you live. This declaration states that the Vicar has met you and is willing to both support the baptism of your child and offer ongoing support in the future.

A copy of the required declaration is available from the parish office.

## What Next?

The Vicar is happy to discuss any questions you might have concerning baptism. If you are still unsure whether baptism is what you are really looking for, you might like to ask the Vicar to give you some more information.

Once you have decided that you definitely want your child baptised it is important that you contact the Vicar as soon as possible to make the appropriate arrangements.



## Contacting us

### Parish Office:

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Havelock North

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Fax: (06) 877 7388

Email: [office@stlukeshn.org.nz](mailto:office@stlukeshn.org.nz)

**The Anglican Parish of  
Havelock North**

**St Luke's, Havelock North &  
St Stephen's, Elsthorpe**

# The Sacrament of Baptism



**The Diocese of Waiapu**



## First Things First

As a Church we are glad you have taken an interest in or have asked for baptism. This leaflet outlines most of what you need to know when considering baptism for your child.

## What is Baptism?

Baptism is one of the seven 'sacraments' recognised by the Anglican Church.

Through baptism we are made children of God, members of Christ's body the Church, and full participants in the ministry of God throughout the world.

Baptism is the only rite required for full membership of the Church, including entry to the Eucharist (Holy Communion).

Baptism is not:

- A 'heavenly insurance policy'.
- A private thanksgiving to God for a child.

Baptism is:

- Becoming a member of the Church.
- Committing one's child to God.
- Becoming a child of God and follower of Christ.

Because becoming a member of the Church is such an important part of baptism, it must take place in a public service of worship (usually the normal Sunday service).

## What Does The Service Involve?

The baptism will normally take place within a wider worship service involving prayers, readings from the Bible, singing and (usually) a sermon and Communion.

During the baptism itself you will be asked to present your child, answer some questions and make some promises. Your child will have water poured over her / his head and be 'sealed' with the sign of the cross using Holy Oil.

An important part of the baptism is the welcoming of your child into the family of God and the commitments made by all present to support her / him in the faith.

Copies of the baptism service can be obtained from the parish office.

## What Promises Do I Make?

When your child is baptised you will explicitly promise to:

- Turn to Christ.
- Believe and trust in God.
- Love your child and share your faith with her / him.

As well as those promises, it is the responsibility of parents and godparents to teach the child baptised:

- The Lord's Prayer and how to pray.
- The Creeds and the Faith of the Church.
- The Commandments and how to obey the teaching of Christ.

- How to read the Scriptures to discover the Word of God.

You are also expected to encourage the child to become actively involved in the Church and affirm their baptismal promises and make a commitment to Christian service at Confirmation.

Naturally you will not be expected to do any of these things alone. As a Church we also agree to support your child and share our faith with them.

## Do I Have To Come To Church?

It would be hard to live up to the commitments you make when your child is baptised without being part of the Church. However, how you choose to fulfil the promises you make is up to you.

All we ask is that you give careful consideration to whether you are really prepared to carry through with the commitments you enter into.

## What If I Decide Baptism Is Not What I Am Looking For?

The Church does offer other options if you are simply looking for a naming ceremony or a way to thank God for your child. In particular the Prayer Book includes 'A Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child' which can take place anywhere at any time.

The Vicar will be happy to discuss any alternative options with you.