

# ST JOHN'S UNITING CHURCH



## Baptism of a Child at St John's Essendon



**ST JOHN'S UNITING CHURCH, ESSENDON**  
A SAFE PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE TO WORSHIP  
REGARDLESS OF  
AGE, RACE, CREED, GENDER, CULTURAL BACKGROUND  
OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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## Further Enquiries

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## After the Baptism

When a child is baptised it is a beginning rather than an end. We look forward to the day when, through love and nurture given by the church and the family, this child will acknowledge the Christian faith as his or her own (Confirmation). Those who are baptised and those who make promises are encouraged to take part regularly in worship, learning, serving, giving and experiencing pastoral care with other members of the congregation.

Our regular Sunday services are at 8.30am when Holy Communion is celebrated every week and as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of month	10am	English & Samoan Service (including Holy Communion) and KUCA
	12.30pm	Korean Service
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month	10am	English & Korean Service & KUCA
	12 noon	Samoan Service
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of month	10am	English & Samoan Service & KUCA
	12.30pm	Korean Service
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of month	10am	English Service & KUCA
	12 noon	Samoan Service
	12.30pm	Korean Service (in Sunday School Hall/Meeting Room)
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of month	10am	English & Korean & Samoan Service & KUCA

KUCA (our children's ministry for primary school aged children) occurs during our 10am service on most Sundays during school term.

## What is Baptism?

Since its inception, the church has understood baptism as a way of celebrating and naming the grace of God living in every one of God's children. It has also become the way the church initiates new members into the church universal.

When children are baptized, it is the visible act which declares that God loves them and accepts them as sons or daughters in his family. Through this act, Jesus Christ affirms their place within his church.

Baptism also marks a person's entry point into a life-long pilgrimage of following the Way of Jesus - a way of living and being which involves dying to an old identity and being born into a new identity which is centred in the Spirit - in Christ - in God.

Many people seek baptism for their children for reasons which are very different from the understanding of the church. At times, this is sought under pressure from family and friends, or with a feeling that this is somehow the right thing to do. Sadly, some parents believe that if their children are not baptised they will be in some spiritual danger should they die. This is not true.

Baptism is about growing relationships with Jesus Christ, the people of the world and the church. It is a very joyful occasion for the church and the one baptised, and is a serious decision for parents.

When parents make promises on behalf of their children, we want to support them as strongly as possible by being very clear what those promises say.

The responsibility for raising children in the faith is a mutual one: the Church makes its commitment in the light of a founded hope that the child will be part of a Christian home, and that he/she will be encouraged to experience the life of a congregation, to learn what it is to worship, to have faith, and to live by that faith as a member of the Christian community.

## Preparation for Baptism

We take time to prepare for baptism. In that time, we encourage people seeking baptism to come to worship, to have morning tea with the congregation, and join in other parts of the congregation's life. In that way you are already exploring where baptism leads.

We arrange a conversation(s) with the Minister (together with an Elder or Pastoral Carer if possible) to explore the meaning of baptism, looking together at the gift and responsibilities of baptism. On some occasions more than one family may prepare together. This is another way in which new relationships can begin to grow.

We remind you that baptism is an important and solemn step. It is also a joyful celebration of God's gift of grace in Jesus Christ. And we also warn you it is a dangerous thing to do, because in baptism Jesus Christ makes disciples, calling us to take up our own cross, following him.

If, following these conversations, parents decide that they would like to proceed with baptism of their child, then approval of Church Council is requested using the "Request for Baptism" form.

At St John's, baptisms take place within the regular Sunday morning services throughout the year. Baptisms are normally celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month and generally take place in the 10am service, before the children go out to their KUCA (children's) activities. All children, including those who are visiting for the baptisms, are welcome to share in these enjoyable learning opportunities while the worship service continues for adults.

## What Next?

If you are clear and comfortable to take on the appropriate promises and commitments, please complete and return to the church office, the "Request" form. This can then be considered by our Church Council and a date confirmed for both the preparation conversation and the baptism service.

## Other Questions

### Godparents

Within the Uniting Church it is not necessary to have godparents, however, you are welcome to appoint such people, so please discuss this with the Minister or Elder. The godparents promise to pray for the child and his/her family and to support the parents as they are able, fostering a special relationship of love and care with the child. The godparents receive a card reminding them of the promises they have made.



## Other Options

Sometimes when parents have considered the meaning of baptism and the responsibilities involved, they may choose not to proceed immediately to baptism.

If this is your choice, there are other alternatives. One is the celebration, "Thanksgiving for and Blessing of a Child". The Minister would be happy to explore this with you.

Even if baptism or the thanksgiving service are not for you at this time, we invite you to share in the life of St John's, Essendon and assure you that a warm welcome awaits you.



### Is there a Fee?

Baptism like the grace of God is free: there is no fee or charge. However, many people take the opportunity to be generous in supporting the ongoing work of the church through making a special offering during the service, or by electronic funds transfer.

Our Bank BSB & Account number for direct pay in is  
CSB Account Name: 'St John's Uniting Church Essendon'  
BSB: 063 129 a/c: 1011 1941.



## The Baptism

The Uniting Church order of service for baptism will be used.

Water is used to baptise the child in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The sign of the cross after baptism symbolises the 'sealing' of God's promises.

The parents then respond to God's graciousness to their child by promising:

- ◆ to provide a Christian home of love and trust
- ◆ to set before the child the example of a Christian life so that he/she will learn the way of Christ
- ◆ to encourage the child to grow within the fellowship of the church so that he/she may come to faith in Christ and reach out to others in love and compassion.

The congregation promises to maintain the life of worship and service, that the newly baptised child and all children in the congregation may grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the knowledge and love of God.

Following the baptism the family is presented with a baptism candle, certificate, children's bible and banner.

- ◆ The candle is lit from the Christ Candle. It symbolises the coming of the light of Christ into the life of the newly baptised child. We encourage parents to light this candle for a short time at each subsequent birthday and to take such opportunities to retell the story of the child's baptism. It may also be helpful for

parents to light the candle as a focus for prayer if the child is ill or in danger at any time.

- ◆ The baptismal certificate is recognised by all the major Christian churches and is seen as an official record of the celebration of this sacrament.
- ◆ A children's bible and banner are given as encouragement to share God's word and to provide a reminder of what has been celebrated.



- ◆ At the conclusion of the Sunday service with baptism/s celebrated, the congregation extends hospitality for all guests and visitors to join in refreshments in the church hall. Many baptism families take the opportunity to provide a special cake/s for this occasion.
- ◆ An entry is made in St John's Baptismal Register.