



# **BAPTISM & THANKSGIVING SERVICES**

**at Anglican Churches Springwood**

# Congratulations

Congratulations on the arrival of your child—a wonderful blessing from God! We would love to help you mark this special event with a ceremony that is right for your family.

There is a confusing array of options out there—both religious and non-religious, including baptisms, christenings, naming ceremonies, thanksgivings, blessings and dedications.

We offer two options for those who want to make a real connection with our church and have a meaningful service for their child: a Baptism or Thanksgiving service.

## Baptism

Baptism is a long-standing Christian custom, endorsed by Jesus and his apostles in the Bible to strengthen the faith of God's people. It is an outward sign and seal that someone has begun to follow Christ and received God's promise of new life in Him. Baptism does not confer God's grace, nor is it needed to receive God's grace, nor does it make someone a Christian. Just as there are genuine Christians who have not been baptised, there many baptised people who do not have true faith in Jesus Christ.

Baptism should be accompanied by a genuine turning away from independence and towards Christ for forgiveness and leading through the Holy Spirit. The water of baptism symbolises that such a person is washed clean from their sins.

In the case of infants, parents and godparents publicly declare that they are committed followers of Jesus Christ and claim God's promises on the child's behalf. This is only appropriate when the child has been born into a believing family in which he/she will be taught to follow Jesus.

Baptisms are a welcome for the child into their church family. They therefore take place as part of the Sunday church service that the child's parents regularly attend.

## Thanksgiving Service

Thanksgiving services are designed for those who want to thank God for their child, dedicate him/her to God's care and have a meaningful ceremony in the church, but who may not yet be ready for the public commitment signified in having their child baptised. The parents may still be investigating Christianity and deciding whether or not to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Thanksgivings contain prayers for the child, a reading and message from God's Word, promises from parents and godparents to raise the child responsibly under God, and the public naming of the child. These services can take place outside the times of our regular church services at a time convenient for the family.

## Cost

There is no cost for either Baptism or Thanksgiving services. If the family would like to make a donation, it goes to the church and not the minister. This is entirely optional and will not be expected or mentioned by anyone from the church.

## Restrictions?

Some people think that if they have been divorced, were not married in the church, or conceived their child outside of marriage, they will not be able to have a Baptism or Thanksgiving for their child in our church. This is not necessarily true.

What is important for Baptism is where a person stands with Christ now and the genuine desire to look to God on their child's behalf at this significant time.

Parents should talk the issues through with a minister from our church so that the service will be most meaningful for all involved.

## Preparation

To help parents with the spiritual nurture of their children and for their own spiritual development, they are encouraged to meet with a minister and discuss the Christian faith. Parents have found these very helpful opportunities to ask questions and think about spiritual issues important to them, in a relaxed and non-threatening environment.

## Next Steps

Contact the church office to arrange an initial meeting with one of the ministry staff. It's preferable that this takes place with both parents at a mutually convenient time.

It is our expectation that parents seeking a Baptism will attend church regularly with us and become a real part of one of our congregations. Commitment to church is part of commitment to following Jesus and is one of the promises required of parents in the Baptism service.

# Church Services

## **THE FACTORY**

*28 Lawson Road, Springwood*

Sundays 10am, 6pm

## **CHRIST CHURCH**

*345 Great Western Highway, Springwood (parking via Charles Street)*

Sundays 8.30am, 4.30pm

Thursdays 11am

## **WINMALEE**

*349 Hawkesbury Road, Winmalee (parking via Reid Road)*

Sundays 8.15am, 10am

# Contact

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**SPRINGWOOD**