

Introduction

Baptism is a sacrament of the church and is a sign of our unity in Christ. Baptism (with water, and using the Trinitarian formula) is accorded mutual recognition across almost all of the Christian traditions, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox.

Baptism is not a private ceremony. It takes place within the context of congregational worship in the church attended by the candidate, ideally within a service of Holy Communion. If, in exceptional circumstances, baptism occurs elsewhere, the presbyter should ensure that representatives of the congregation are present if at all possible.

The resident presbyter shall normally preside and the district superintendent (representing the wider church) shall be invited to participate in the laying on of hands.

It is the responsibility of the presbyter administering the sacrament of baptism to ensure that the candidate has been carefully prepared beforehand and is aware of both the personal and corporate implications of baptism and that baptism is both God's gift and God's call to discipleship.

Candidates for baptism must be approved by the leaders' meeting or parish council.

It is suggested that sponsors, endorsed by the leaders' meeting or parish council, be available during the preparation time, during the baptismal service and for ongoing support of the candidate. As part of the preparation it would be appropriate for the candidates and sponsors to gather for prayer immediately prior to the service.

It is fitting that leadership of the service be shared by a presbyter and a layperson (Leader in the liturgy).

In keeping with the practice of the early church in its celebrations of the gift of new life, it is suggested that Easter or Pentecost are particularly fitting times for baptism.

Adult baptism incorporates a public affirmation of faith by the candidate and confers membership of the catholic (universal) church. Those who are baptised as adults within our denomination are admitted into responsible membership of Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa/ The Methodist Church of New Zealand. By the laying on of hands they are ordained to the ministry of the whole people of God, so there is no need for confirmation.

A person who has been baptised (with water, and using the Trinitarian formula) should not be baptised again, but may be confirmed.

Baptism is administered by liberally pouring water on the head of the candidate or by full immersion. If pouring is employed, the font should be large enough to hold a substantial quantity of water.

The font or baptistry should occupy a prominent place within the church. Thought should be given (especially if using a temporary baptistry) as to where candidates go immediately after emerging from full immersion; baptism should be a dignified as well as a joyous occasion.

Entry may be made in the baptismal register either during or after the baptismal service.

It is recommended that presentation of baptismal candles and certificates be made at the end of the service (after Holy Communion) and that the newly baptised lead the way out of church with their sponsors and families. If this service is used within a co-operative venture, the above needs to be read alongside any local ecumenical agreement.

If the *Lectionary* readings for the day are not being used, some of the following passages may be chosen.

First reading	Isaiah 11:1-3a	Ezekiel 36:25-28
	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Joel 2:26-29
Second reading	Acts 1:3-8	1 Cor 12:4-13
	Acts 8:14-17	Galatians 3:27-28
	Romans 5:1-5	Ephesians 4:1-6
	Romans 6:3-4	Titus 3:4-5
	Romans 8:12-17	

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12

John 14:15-21

Matthew 16:24-28

John 15:1-11

Matthew 28:18-20

John 15:16-17

John 3:5

John 16:5-15

Given the vast quantity of liturgical resources now available, it is possible that the Faith and Order Committee has used some material without realising its source. The Committee asks for understanding if any recognise some part of this service as springing from their own.

Order of service for adult baptism

Baptismal hymns and songs may be sung at appropriate points in the service. During the welcome to worship particular mention is made of the candidates and their families and friends.

Preparation

Leader: Kia noho a Ihowa *The Lord be with you:*
ki a koutou.

People: **Ki a koe ano hoki.** *and with you also.*

A psalm or hymn may be said or sung.

Leader: We have come together to hear God's word,
to baptise..... in the faith,
and to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion.
Let us therefore examine our lives,
seeking God's grace
that we may come in repentance and faith.

Confession and declaration of forgiveness:

Leader: Hear these words of Jesus Christ -
The first commandment is: Love the Lord your God
with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind
and with all your strength.

silence

The leader initiates the responses:

All: **Lord, we have not loved you**
with all our heart and soul and mind and strength.

Leader: The second commandment is:
Love your neighbour as yourself.

silence

All: **Lord, we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.**

Leader: Jesus also said:
I give you a new commandment: Love one another;
as I have loved you, so you are to love one another.

silence

All: Lord, we have not loved one another
as you have loved us.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.
People: Christ, have mercy.
Leader: Lord, have mercy.

silence

Presbyter: Hear the word of grace:
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Therefore I declare to you, your/our sins are forgiven.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer may be said in any language.

All: 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 forever. Amen.

**E to matou Matua i te rangi,
Kia tapu tou Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tou rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tau e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite ano ki to te rangi.
Homai ki a matou aiane
he taro ma matou mo tenei ra.
Murua o matou hara,
me matou hoki e muru nei
i o te hunga e hara ana ki a matou.
Aua hoki matou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia matou i te kino:
Nou hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te kororia,
Ake ake ake. Amine.**

or

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name
echo through the universe!**

**The way of your justice and peace
be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.**

(Jim Cotter)

Sacrament of baptism

Leader: From the very beginning of the Christian community, people have been received into the church through baptism.
On the day when the apostles first preached the good news of the risen Christ, Peter urged the believers:
"Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."
(Acts 2: 38, 42)

Presbyter: In baptism, it is God who takes the initiative: long before we can understand or respond God knows and loves each one of us and wants to be known and loved by us. Baptism marks and celebrates the gracious, transforming work of God within us, not just in the moment of baptism itself but throughout the whole of life. Baptism is the sign of new life in Christ Jesus. By water and the Holy Spirit we are brought into union with Christ in his death and resurrection. In baptism we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, made members of the body of Christ and called to ministry in the world.

Ministry of the Word

The Bible is read.

The sermon is preached.

Presentation of Candidates

Candidates for baptism come forward accompanied by their sponsors or the parish stewards.

**Sponsors/
Stewards:** We present to you.....
who have been prepared for baptism.

Presbyter: We rejoice that you have come to be baptised today.

Sponsors/parish stewards return to their seats.

Candidates' Vows

Presbyter: The church baptises
those who come in response to Christ's call.
Through baptism
we enter the covenant which God has established.
Through baptism
we follow the way of Christ.

Presbyter: In the light of the gospel that the church proclaims
we ask you:
Do you turn away
from all that is evil and life destroying?

Candidate: With God's help I do.

Presbyter: Do you turn to God
seeking to become part of the new creation
in Jesus Christ?

Candidate: By the grace of God, I do.

Presbyter: You are called to a life
of worship and freedom,
truth and beauty,
compassion and courage.
May your heart and mind and soul
remain open to the Spirit of God.

Candidates' personal testimonies/statements of faith

A creed or affirmation from the service of Holy Communion (pages 9 and 11) or one of the following may be used.

Affirmation of faith

STAND

Leader: Let us affirm our faith.

All: You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.
You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.

You are our God. We worship you.
(*A New Zealand Prayerbook*)

or

Leader: Let us affirm our faith.

All:

**We believe
in God the creator,
who gives birth to all that is
with labour and sighing
and looks into the world with joy and love.**

**We believe
in Christ the reconciler,
who is earthed in our life
and enfleshed in its patterns of dying and rising,
who gives honour to our reality
and grace to our way.**

**We believe
in God the free Spirit,
who weeps with our grievings
in the depths of our darkness
and dances among us high on life's mountains-
the Spirit who finds us with newness and hope.
We believe in the community of faith,
which is born of our humanness,
is nurtured in sharing
and grows whole in our struggling
and celebration
as one people of God.
(Dorothy McRae McMahan)**

SIT

Thanksgiving for the waters of Baptism

Leader: Flowing water is the central symbol of baptism.
It is a sign of life and growth,
of refreshment and delight,
of cleansing and new beginnings,
of God's Holy Spirit poured out
on those who belong to Christ.

*Water is poured into the font by a member of the congregation
or the presbyter enters the baptistry.*

Presbyter:

Let us pray:
Eternal God,
we thank you for the gift of water.

When nothing existed but chaos
you swept across the waters of creation
and brought forth life.
When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt
you led them to freedom through the sea;
across the river Jordan you led Israel
to the land you promised.

In the fullness of time you sent Jesus,
nurtured in the waters of a womb.
In the Jordan he was baptised by John
and anointed by your Spirit.
At the well in Samaria
he offered the gift of living water.
He called his followers to share the baptism
of his death and resurrection
and to make disciples of all nations.

By the power of the Holy Spirit
bless this water
and the one who is baptised in it,
that s/he may be born of water and the Spirit,
be raised to new life in Christ
and strengthened to serve you in the world.

All:

**To you be all honour and glory
now and forever. Amen.**

The Baptism

The presbyter pours water from the font onto the head of each candidate or fully immerses each candidate once, saying:

Presbyter:I baptise you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

The presbyter may make the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead and say:

Presbyter:from this day forward
the sign of the cross is upon you.

The presbyter presents the baptised to the congregation, saying:

Presbyter:is now received
into the holy catholic church.
When anyone is in Christ there is a new creation:
the old has gone, the new has come.
It is all God's work!

Hymns/songs

During the singing, candidates who have been fully immersed change and return.

Commissioning for ministry in the world

Presbyter:,
you now share with all the baptised
responsibility for ministry in the world.
May God's Spirit
guide you to be Christ's disciple
in this land of Aotearoa/New Zealand and beyond.

We ask you to pledge yourself
to Christian ministry.

The newly baptised respond to these questions together.

Presbyter: How will you follow Christ in your daily life?

Newly baptised: With God's help
I will seek to love and obey Christ
and be open to the Spirit of God
through prayer and the study of the Bible.

Presbyter: Will you be a faithful member
of the Christian community?

Newly baptised: With God's help
I will share regularly in worship
and support the work of the church
with my time, talents and money.

Presbyter: Will you actively participate
in the mission of the church?

Newly baptised: With God's help
I will care for creation,
I will work for justice and reconciliation,
I will witness to Christ in word and deed.

Laying on of hands and prayer

*The candidates kneel and those appointed to lay on hands come forward.
The presbyter calls everyone to silent prayer, after which one or more may
offer prayer.*

Presbyter: Let us pray:
By the power of your Spirit,
strengthen your disciple
and set her/his heart alight with love for you.
May your gifts of grace grow within her/him:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of goodness and gentleness,
the spirit of wonder in your presence,
the spirit of joy and delight in your service.

All: Amen.

The presbyter and others appointed lay hands upon the head or shoulders of each candidate in turn, saying:

Presbyter:, by the power of the Holy Spirit
be a faithful witness to Christ
all the days of your life.

*When all have received the laying on of hands, the newly baptised stand.
This blessing may be said or sung:*

May the Creator
bless you and keep you;
may the beloved companion
look into your eyes
and have mercy upon you;
may the eternal Spirit's countenance
be turned to you and give you peace;
may the Three in One bless you.
(*A New Zealand Prayerbook*)

Names of the newly baptised may be entered in the baptismal register (or at the end of the service).

Charge to the Congregation

Presbyter: People of this congregation,
love, encourage and support
these brothers and sisters in Christ,
that they may continue to grow in grace
and the knowledge and love of God.

All: **With God's help
we will live out our baptism
as a loving community in Christ:
nurturing one another in faith,
upholding one another in prayer
and encouraging one another in service.**

Intercessory Prayers

The following may be included in the intercessions.

Leader: Gracious God, you call us to be
a community of prayer
in which our lives are offered
daily to you in trust and joy.

silence

Help us to recognise all who are baptised
as sisters and brothers in Christ.

silence

Leader: Through our openness to constant conversion
may your Spirit assist our growth in faith.

silence

Leader: Enable us to see the form that holiness
might take in our discipleship.

silence

Leader: Assist us to know ourselves, find ourselves
and give of ourselves in the spirit of Christ.

silence

All: **We praise you for those who nurtured our faith;
may we too find ways to share Good News in our day.
Amen.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

(1992 Methodist Order for Holy Communion pages 19 - 27.)

Peace

Offertory

Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) Prayer

Holy Communion

Presentation of baptismal (and membership) certificates and baptismal candles

The newly baptised and their sponsors may gather at the front of the church.

Certificates are presented.

The sponsor of each person baptised may take a candle, light it from the Easter candle standing near the font, or from a candle on the communion table, saying:

Sponsor: , you belong to Christ,
the light of the world.

or , walk in the way of Christ;
shine with the light of Christ.

When all the newly baptised have received lighted candles:

Presbyter: Let your light so shine
that all may see your good works
and give glory to God.

Sending forth and benediction (blessing)

Presbyter: Go in peace to love and serve God.

All: **God the Creator grant us grace and strength.**
God the Redeemer grant us new life.
God the Spirit empower and encourage us.
The Three-in-one be with us, every one.
Amen.

or

Presbyter: The grace of Christ attend you;
the love of God surround you;
the Holy Spirit keep you
this day and forever. Amen

or

Presbyter: Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast to what is good;
render no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour all people;
love and serve God
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

and/or

All: **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all.
Amen.**

**Kia tau ki a tatou katoa,
te atawhai o to tatou Ariki o Ihu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhinga tahitanga ki te Wairua Tapu.
Amine.**

*The grace in Fijian, Tongan and Samoan can be found on page 31 of the
Order for Holy Communion.*

The following may be sung unaccompanied:

Ma te marie a te Atua	The peace of God
Tatou katoa e tiaki;	keep us all.
Mana ano e whakau	He will confirm
O Tatou ngakau ki te pai.	our hearts in goodness.

Ma te Atua Tamaiti ra,	May the Son of God
Ma te Wairua Tapu hoki,	and the Holy Spirit too,
Ratou, Atua kotahi nei.	One God,
Tatou katoa e whakapai.	bless us all.
Amine.	Amen.

The newly baptised, their sponsors and families lead the way out of the church.

Names of newly baptised are entered in baptismal register (if not previously).

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