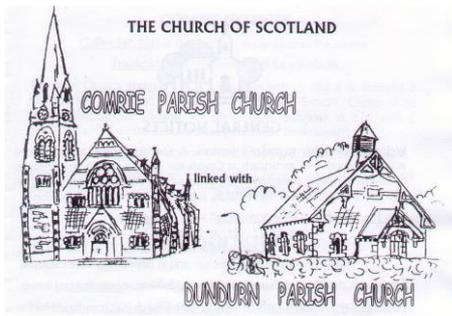


If you are seeking baptism for your child, we want to encourage you.



## *Baptism at the Parish Churches of Comrie and Dundurn*

### **What does baptism mean?**

Baptism is a sign of God's forgiveness of humankind in which we share together. The sprinkled water in baptism carries with it the meaning of cleansing and it directs that promise of cleansing to the child who is baptised, in whom God's Spirit is planted.

Baptism is a sign of fellowship with Jesus. By baptism we are linked so closely with Jesus Christ that His life is at work in us. We pray that, in God's time, God will work in your child's life by His Holy Spirit so that your child will come to have a living faith in Jesus as her or his Saviour.

Baptism is a sign that, because we are united with Christ, we are part of the Christian community. At this point, through the power of God, your child is made a part of the "extended family" of faith and a member of His Son's Church, and is invited to share in its life and its worship.

### **Why baptise/Christen children?**

Some churches confine baptism to adults; that is, to those who can understand for themselves what they are doing. The early church probably did not. The promise of Peter is "to you and your children". We read of the whole family being baptised. We know that Jesus welcomed little children and we cannot believe that He does not make a place for them through this sacrament to share fully in the life of his church. We believe that you and your children need this assurance and were meant to have it.

At the same time, however, we recognise that there are Christian believers who, in good faith, do not wish their children to be baptised until those children have come to faith themselves, and have declared that they trust in Jesus and want to follow Him. We recognise that this is a perfectly valid option for Christian believers, and there is no question of children having to be baptised before they can be involved in the life and worship of the church family. At the same time, the promises of God are there to be accepted in baptism, at whatever age.

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## **Which children?**

Since the gifts of baptism mean that the person baptised will grow in grace and knowing God's loving forgiveness for all people who believe, the church baptises children when at least one parent is a member or adherent of the church, or where the child is under Christian guardianship. The church believes that those it baptises should have the promise of a Christian upbringing so that they can be expected in due course to take for themselves the promises made on their behalf and to profess the faith in which they were baptised.

Baptism marks the beginning of a process. It is not finished the day your child is baptised but continues until your child (at whatever age) comes to faith and takes Jesus Christ as her or his own Lord and Saviour. This means that having your child baptised lays important obligations upon the parents and upon the church. We trust, too, that God also takes His part.

If you are not as yet a member of the church and wish your child to be baptised, we are in no way saying that your child cannot be baptised. We think you are doing the best you can for your child by thinking about baptism. But what about yourself? Do you think a personal faith in Jesus Christ might be right for you?

The Minister is happy to discuss with you anything to do with trusting Jesus and following Him closely in life. In fact, if you would even like to hear the basic claims of Jesus Christ (and Christianity) for yourself, this can easily be arranged. Then you can make up your own mind.

## **The Parents' responsibility**

It is because of this continued learning by your child about God's goodness and loving forgiveness we ask you to profess your faith again as your child is brought for baptism. At baptism you offer to God the new life of the child He has given you, and you promise to bring your family up in the Christian faith. You are to be the channel of God's grace to your child, your love and correction a small picture of God's own love and correction. It is through your faith that his or her faith will grow; as you pray with him, that prayer will have meaning for him; as you worship with her, that she will worship too; as you speak of Christianity, that he will begin to understand it. At baptism the promise of God's help for you is renewed and you are assured again that Jesus is with you by His Spirit to help you in all your responsibilities.

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## **The Congregation's responsibilities**

The congregation too has its responsibility. As a sign of this, baptism normally takes place during public worship in front of the congregation. As a sign of these responsibilities, the members stand with you during your child's baptism, for they have professed the same faith. Within the church family, in Sunday Club or by other means, the congregation will help to provide for your child's Christian growth. We hope that you will take these opportunities, and that since you are members not just of one congregation, but of Christ's church, you will make full use of them wherever you may settle in years to come.

## **God's work**

Baptism is not a guarantee the child will thrive, nor is it a charm to shield the child from danger. It is not essential to salvation, as if a child who were not baptised were condemned by God. But it is the way God has chosen to strengthen us in Christian living, to encourage parents and children in faith. It is Christ's sacrament. The church administers it in His name. This is what gives it such value for us. It says to us that God loves this child, that Jesus' love enfolds this child. This child belongs within the Christian family. It declares God's intention, and ours, that our children should grow to be adult Christian believers, knowing God's way to live and receiving help for their whole lives. Baptism carries the promise that Jesus' blessing is upon our children as it was upon the children of Jerusalem in the gospel story.

## **The baptismal service**

The baptism takes place during public worship. This will normally be near the beginning of a Sunday morning service, after the gospel has been read; but it may be possible for alternative arrangements to be made. Normally the family arrive about 15 minutes before the service, and get themselves settled, before worship begins. The child is then baptised by the minister, who shows the church family its new member!

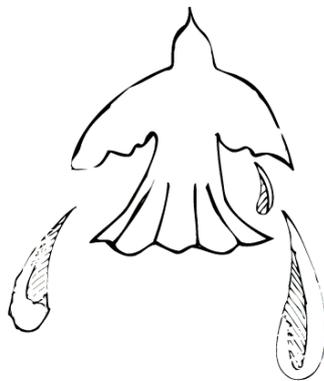
Since baptism is a church celebration, we pray that you will join with the congregation at the end of the service so that everyone can give you their best wishes, and get to know you. Please speak to the minister about this, and we can then discuss what you feel would be best for you.

## **The vows**

As parent(s), you are required to declare your faith and make certain promises before God and the congregation. The "vows" you make are these:

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- Do you present your child, earnestly desiring that, in God's own time, He will work by His Holy Spirit in your children's lives to accomplish everything that is meant by Christian baptism?
  - Do you profess your faith in God the Father who has created you, Jesus Christ who has redeemed you, and the Holy Spirit who makes you holy?
  - Do you promise, depending upon God's promised help, by your prayers, teaching and example, to teach your child the truths and duties of the Christian faith (that is, what it means to be a follower of Jesus) and to bring them up in the life and worship of the church?
- Your answer to each of them is "I do".



*The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make his face to shine upon you  
and be gracious unto you;  
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
And give you peace.*

**Aaron's Blessing, sung at baptisms**