



# The Anglican Parish of Burnside-Harewood

St Timothy's Burnside and St James' Harewood

## Thanksgiving and Baptism Services for Children

The Anglican Church welcomes children of all ages and values their faith and spiritual development. The two services which we explain on this sheet express this in different ways. As a parent you can decide which is most appropriate for you and your child.

### 1. Thanksgiving Service

A thanksgiving is a simple service of thanks to God for the wonderful gift of a child. It can take place during a regular Sunday service at church, but more often it is a special service just for your family and friends, either at church, at your home or in hospital.

There are two reasons why you may want to choose a thanksgiving service.

- If you cannot arrange a baptism date for some time, and want to have a short service of thanks at home or in church as soon as possible.
- You want to thank God, and to ask for his help as parents, but know you are not yet ready to make the promises to bring up the child as a practising Christian which the baptism service involves.

### 2. Baptism

Christian baptism is the sacrament (or sign) of membership of the Church, with the water used being a symbol of being washed clean for a fresh start. As a parent, having your child baptized is a commitment to bringing them up in the Christian faith. Over the page you can see the promises that a parent makes during the baptism service. You need to be ready to take these promises seriously, and to lead by example by being regular in Christian prayer and worship. We will do all we can to support you in this and offer a variety of programmes for children including a crèche and Sunday school at our 10.15am service.

Baptism takes place during one of the regular Sunday services at church (8.45am at St James or 10.15am at St Timothy's), which normally also include Holy Communion. Before booking in a date for baptism, we ask that you attend one of these services a number of times, so that you feel part of what is going on.

Children of all ages are welcome to come for baptism. Once baptized, children are welcome to receive the bread at Holy Communion when they are able to do so. We hope and pray that as they grow up they will own the promises made on their behalf. As an older teenager or as an adult, they will have an opportunity to do this publicly at a Confirmation service.

### Godparents

During the baptism service godparents make a commitment to support the parents in bringing up the child as a Christian. Passing on the Christian faith to children is an exciting but sometimes challenging task and so we ask that you think carefully about

who you ask be a godparent. They should be people who will take seriously the commitment to pray for the child and pass on the Christian faith. You only need choose one godparent, but you may want to ask more. Often one or two well-chosen godparents are better than a larger number.

### **Promises made by parents and godparents during the baptism service**

Do you renounce all evil influences and powers that rebel against God?

I renounce all evil.

Do you trust in Christ's victory which brings forgiveness freedom and life?

In faith I turn to Christ, my way, my truth, my life as I care for this child.

What is your faith?

I believe and trust

in God the Father maker and sustainer of all things;

and in God the Son, my Saviour Jesus Christ;

and in God the Holy Spirit, giver of life and truth.

This is my faith.

### **What next?**

If after reading this leaflet, you are interested in holding a thanksgiving or baptism service for your child, then the next step is to arrange for our vicar to visit and discuss your plans with you. Please phone the parish office 358 8174 or email [vicar@burnside.org.nz](mailto:vicar@burnside.org.nz) to arrange a time.

Whilst you're thinking about what would be most appropriate for your child, you may want to take time to think about what the church can offer to you as a parent. Here are some ideas which may be of interest:-

**Baptism and confirmation for yourself.** We can only pass on to our children what we have ourselves. If you are not baptised (and there is no age limit for it!), or were baptised as a child but have not been confirmed, we will be very happy to talk through with you what is involved in this.

**Christian marriage.** The best foundation for a child's upbringing is Christian marriage. If you are on your own, you are very welcome, and we will do all we can to support you. If you are together but not yet married, or have had a civil wedding but would like to renew your vows in the sight of God, we would be delighted to discuss a church wedding or a blessing on your marriage. Weddings need not be expensive, and for church members there is often no charge at all.

**Alpha Course.** Alpha is a course for anyone who is searching for answers about the Christian faith. No question is too big or too small to be taken seriously. The course explores the basic message of what it means to be a Christian, and is particularly appropriate for those who have little experience of church, or are returning after some time away.

### **Will it cost anything?**

There is no charge for baptism or a thanksgiving service. God gives freely, and as the church we want to express that too!