

St Stephen's Anglican Church policy on Baptism

The guiding principle in all of this is a Christian understanding of Baptism: -

“Baptism is a service of initiation through which a child/adult becomes a member of God's church, until they are able to make their own commitment to follow Christ, sometimes at Confirmation. As such it follows the principle of belonging before believing”

The Legal Position

1. The Rector does not legally have to baptise anyone who is not resident in the Parish
2. Baptisms should not be performed without the parties undertaking adequate baptism preparation as directed by the Rector.

POLICY.

1. Initial enquiries that are dealt with when people reside in the parish. The family will be encouraged to come to church on the next available Sunday and collect a baptism form during morning tea with the rector; that is then duly completed and returned to the Rector. For enquiries outside the parish, details will be taken and a form will be sent to the family to be completed and returned. If a baptism is taking place with people outside of the parish – ***the family concerned must contact the minister at the local Anglican Church where they live to ask permission for the baptism to take place in Dorrigo.***
2. The date of the baptism is to be negotiated between the family and the Minister – bearing in mind that the church will sometimes have other commitments on certain Sundays. ***As much as possible baptisms will normally take place on the first Sunday of the month which coincides with our non-Eucharistic family service.***
3. Private Baptisms (outside of normal worshipping hours) are to be discouraged and would only take place in exceptional circumstances for overriding pastoral reasons, and only with the express permission of the minister. This is because baptism is a public service as part of the church community.

4. About a week before the baptism, the family will meet with the minister to take part in a one hour preparation class which involves watching the **CPAS DVD "First steps"** and a run through the service to explain the role and responsibilities of Parents and Godparents. Both will be encouraged to attend but it is not compulsory for Godparents to attend.
5. At the service the minister will complete the registers and certificates and a children's bible story book will be presented to the families and candidates towards the end of the service.
6. Follow up will include invitations to family service, Messy church, parish outreach events etc. as far as this is possible depending on the location of the family.

Rev Mike Ridge

Rector

Approved by Dorrigo Parish Council 16/10/17