



St Columba's Parish Church of Scotland, Glenrothes

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An Introduction to Baptism

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www.st-columbas.com and we are on Facebook

Baptism at St Columba's Church

Baptism is a sign of God's love and welcome to your child. It also marks your child's place in the church family.

Baptism and Christening

'Baptism' and 'Christening' are effectively the same service. Baptism in the Church of Scotland is recognised in other churches, including Roman Catholic, Scottish Episcopal and Church of England churches.

What is baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament, that is, a sign from God. It is a sign which shows us how God loves us and saves us from all the mistakes we make in life.

In the dry climate of Israel/Palestine, where Jesus lived, rain was a sign of God's blessings. We sprinkle water on your child's head to show that we want God's blessings to be on your child.

Who can bring their child to be baptised?

We believe that God loves every child, whether baptised or not. However, when you bring your child to be baptised, you indicate that you want your child to be brought up knowing God's love.

If no parent or close member of the family is a church member then the Church of Scotland has guidelines asking that a parent or close family member agrees to see that the child grows up as part of the church family, being reminded of God's love for them.

Godparents

We are very happy for you to choose Godparents or supporters, who will be asked to make vows with you.

What happens in the service of baptism?

In the Church of Scotland, baptism is part of public worship, so baptisms normally take place on Sunday mornings at 11am. The baptism is usually near the start of the service. Sometimes, children from more than one family will be baptised on the same day.

Our services are quite relaxed. It's not necessary to dress up and be on your 'best behaviour'. There are often young children in the church and we are quite happy if they want to move around or if they make some noise. We usually stand to sing hymns and remain seated for prayers. There is an Order of Service to guide people.

If you are willing, Alan will introduce you and your child/children to the church family and may ask a few questions about you. Alan will then explain a bit about baptism, you will be asked to make a vow and the congregation will join in a statement of faith (see next page).

After this has been said, the baptism will be carried out and Alan will sprinkle water on the child's head, as a sign of God's love and of their sins being washed away.

For a baby, it is traditional that the father hands the baby to Alan. After the baptism, Alan will usually show the baby to the congregation and then hand him/her back to the mother, but it doesn't have to be done this way.

After the baptism has taken place, we ask that you and your family or friends who have come with you stay for the rest of the service, which usually finishes at about 12. Any children are welcome to go to the hall after the baptism for the Junior Church or crèche.

Questions

We want you to feel comfortable and relaxed, but we realise that baptism can seem strange. Please ask if you have any questions. Alan's contact details are on the front and we have a Facebook page.

Statement of Faith

In the service of baptism, Alan says:

In presenting this child for baptism, desiring that she/he may be grafted into Christ as a member of his body, the Church, do you receive the teaching of the Christian faith which we confess in the Apostles' Creed?

You are invited to reply, "***I do.***"

Alan then invites the whole congregation to say the Apostle's Creed. This is a statement of belief that has been used by many different church denominations for well over 1000 years.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,¹
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.*

Some of the language here may sound quite old fashioned and it is quite formal. However, the words reflect the traditional faith of the church. Alan will talk about this with you and will try to answer any questions you may have.

¹ catholic (with a small 'c') means universal. The 'catholic church' refers to the whole church around the world, not just the Roman Catholic (with a big 'c') church.