

# Getting Baptised at DPC

Before he ascended to heaven, the risen Lord Jesus shared these words with his disciples:

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:18-20*

Baptism has been a key part of the church and of Christian discipleship ever since. Receiving the waters of baptism is a way of submitting to the lordship of Christ and of depicting the inner cleansing and renewal that comes by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-6). Baptism by water does not save but it is a gracious gift for God's people to strengthen their faith and point them to Jesus the Saviour.

At Darebin Presbyterian Church we encourage believers to be baptised as an expression of their commitment to Jesus. Through faith in Jesus, Christians are united to him and so baptism is the sacrament<sup>1</sup> that expresses union with Christ. This logically leads to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper which expresses communion with Christ. Jesus commands Christians to be baptised and to partake of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26) so that we can be built up in our faith.

At DPC we also encourage believing parents to baptise their children as an expression of their trust in God's promises and an acknowledgement that their children should be brought up as members of God's people rather than outsiders. Infant baptism is not compulsory and we recognise that DPC members have differing views on this topic. Whether a child is baptised or not, we maintain that the waters of baptism do not cause salvation and that a child who is truly born again will give evidence of their faith as they grow, ideally culminating in them publicly professing their faith.

We see a connection between baptism and church membership since being united to Christ leads to union with Christ's people and this is best expressed through commitment to a particular, local church. Therefore, baptism typically involves someone also becoming a member of DPC but this is not always the case. We ordinarily conduct baptisms as part of a church service so that we are reminded that the promises held out in baptism are primarily God's promises to the recipient of the water and that when the church witnesses this, they are also built up in their faith. People generally already have an idea of how they want to be baptised but we are open to different modes (sprinkling, pouring, full immersion). We recognise baptisms from other Christian churches but we understand that those baptised as infants may want to explore how to view that and whether a baptism as an adult is necessary or permissible.

Before getting baptised (or bringing your child to be baptised) it is important to be clear on the meaning of baptism. We typically do this through running a course for you to attend. If you intend to become a member, then there may be an additional course. This may seem like a lot but it's important that there is proper preparation lest it become a stumbling block that obscures the gospel.<sup>2</sup> One of the DPC elders will meet with you to get a sense of your understanding and to hear your spiritual journey. He will then provide a recommendation to the other elders who will then make a decision.

Baptism is an amazing gift from God that every Christian should embrace!

*“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.” – Acts 22:16*



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<sup>1</sup> While churches vary on how they understand the word “sacrament”, at DPC we take it to mean a sacred thing given by God to his people to seal his promises upon them and show his grace. They are ordained by Jesus hence some prefer the term “ordinance”. Sacraments do not automatically save people or convey grace apart from faith.

<sup>2</sup> Many people have false hope of salvation based on receiving baptism without actually receiving Christ by faith.