



Greetings and congratulations.

Thank you for contacting us about how you might best celebrate the birth of your child.

When most people ask for a “christening”, they usually mean that they want a ceremony where their child can be blessed, publicly and “officially” named, welcomed into the family and the community, and introduced to their circle of friends. Sometimes, people are also able to say that they want their child introduced to the church.

Most active Church members, on the other hand, understand “christening” to mean the sacrament of Baptism, wherein a person/child is made a “member of Christ, a Child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven”. While family may be present and may participate in the service, we understand that solemn and serious promises about Church and Faith are made, and there is an expectation that the families of those baptised will continue as active and interested members of the parish. We believe that Baptism involves serious and solemn promises about the Christian faith and about continued church membership.



Many parents really want a family service in which their child can be named and blessed. A way through this predicament is to offer parents the choice of just such a family service. The service can be adjusted to meet their needs. The ceremony can take place any day of the week, anytime of the day, and anywhere, church, home garden or other suitable venue. It is a family ceremony, and should be held at the convenience of the family. It is usual to make a donation of around \$150 for this event.



Baptism, on the other hand, is about being part of the church. Baptisms should be held at special times in the church’s year. We Baptise twice a year; on Easter Day and the Sunday closest to All Saints’ Day. It will be celebrated in Christ Church, and will be a celebration of, for and by the whole congregation. There is no set charge for Baptism but a donation is most welcome.

Participation in Baptism requires some preparations. Preparation occurs over the six weeks prior to the service.

Baptism should be held in your local Parish Church where a demonstrated commitment has been shown.

In this way, we can, at one and the same time, provide ceremonies and celebrations for families that meet their needs and desires, and maintain the sanctity and solemnity of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Sometimes a good way forward is to have the family celebration first, at your convenience, and then if you feel you are being drawn to be more committed in your faith and involved in the Christian community, then make some further enquiries about Baptism.

I do hope these suggestions are helpful and please do not hesitate to give us a call to book a Thanksgiving Service or to inquire further about Baptism.

With every good wish.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rod Bower". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Fr Rod Bower**  
**RECTOR OF GOSFORD**

## In Summary:

The Anglican Parish of Gosford offers two types of services to celebrate the birth of a child:

### **1. A Thanksgiving Service**

- This is an informal service which can be held at any venue the family chooses (e.g. in a home, park or church).
- A donation of \$150 is generally offered to the priest on the day of the service.
- Certificates are issued to the child and the godparents to acknowledge this event.
- Please note that this service does not in any way replace the Sacraments of Baptism.

### **2. A Baptismal Service**

- This is a formal service, which can only be held in the church, on set dates throughout the year.
- The parents are required to attend a preparation period prior to the Baptism and make a commitment to the church.
- Baptism requires serious and solemn promises about the Christian faith and about continued church membership by the family after the event.
- A donation (at the families discretion) is usually offered to the priest on the day of the service.
- Baptism certificates are issued to the child and the godparents, acknowledging the sacraments of this service have been taken.

Please take the time to decide which of the two services offered by the Anglican Parish of Gosford would most suit your personal needs. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the information provided in this brochure or have made a decision on which service you would like for your child, please contact the Parish Office on 4323 2312 between the hours of 9am – 3pm Monday to Thursday.

Thank you for your enquiry.

To help you to make the choice which service would be the better option for you please read the statements below and tick which would be true for you.

<b>Thanksgiving Service</b>	<b>Baptism Service</b>
I believe in God and need the assurance that God knows my child	I believe in God and need the assurance that God knows my child
I feel the need to celebrate the birth of and to name my child.	I feel the need to celebrate the birth of and to name my child.
I believe you don't have to go to church to be a Christian.	I believe that Jesus' actions invite a faith response from me.
Being a good person is enough for a blessed journey.	I am a disciple of Jesus Christ and want to teach my child to follow him.
Attending Christian Worship is important to me at special times	A deep and regular commitment to the Faith Community is important to me.

Now .....please add up the ticks – the column with the most ticks will point you in the right direction.



## Thanksgiving Order Of Service

### Gathering

We gather in the name of God who brings us to birth, walks with us in Jesus our brother and gives us life in the Spirit.

(All say)

*“People were bringing little children to Jesus,  
and he took them up in his arms and blessed them.”*

We come together to give thanks to our loving and life-giving God for the birth of **Sara**. We will anoint her with holy oil, a symbol of healing and strengthening. We will speak **Sara’s** name in the presence of God and of this gathering.

This name will be a sign of her very essence both in the physical and spiritual places.

Finally we will bless her, listening for the voice of the Divine, whispering softly God’s joy at her being,

(All Say)

*“This is my child, my beloved, in whom I delight”.*

We pray that this ceremony will be one small step for **Sara** on the way into the full realisation of the environment of God and the participation in Jesus Christ that is experienced in Holy Baptism.

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### Scripture reading and address

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### Anointing of Parents

The calling by God to be a parent is the most sacred of all vocations. When Divinity chose to share our human journey in the person of Jesus the Christ, God entrusted that fragile form to the care of Mary and Joseph.

God now comes among us in **Sara** relying on the gentle love of **John and Sue**.

We recognise their calling and the sacred trust given to them.

**John and Sue** I anoint you and confirm you in your calling as **Sara’s** parents. May God equip you with all you need to love and nurture her in her life’s journey.

(All say)

**We your family and friends pledge our support to you in this sacred trust.**

### Acknowledgement of Godparents

*John and Sue* entrust their precious daughter to the guidance, love and support of those they have chosen as *Sara's* Godparents: ***David Smith and Emily Jones***

### Anointing and naming of the child

*A Grandparent, Godparent or Sponsor holds the child while the parents assist in the anointing.*

***Sara*** we anoint your mind that you may have wisdom.

***Sara*** we anoint your ears that you may hear what is right.

***Sara*** we anoint your lips that you may speak only truth.

***Sara*** we anoint your eyes that you may see the beauty in all creation.

***Sara*** we anoint your hands that you may do what is good.

***Sara*** we anoint your heart that you may love deeply and fully.

***Sara*** we anoint your feet that you may walk in the way of the Lord.

***Sara*** may God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and the Holy One be gracious to you. May God lift up the light of Divine countenance upon you and grant you peace this day and forever more.

**Amen.**

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*(All say)*

***Sara***, we your family and friends, promise (as best we are able) to walk with you, to laugh and cry with you, to share with you what we have learnt on our journey and to share your journey, where ever that may lead.

### Family Presentations

*Family or friends, Godparents or Sponsors may offer a poem or other words of commitment to sharing the child's life journey. Gifts may be offered in silence or with these or similar words.*

***Sara*** we offer you this gift as a symbol of our commitment to you and of our promise to walk with you always.

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## **The Blessing**

While the Christian church brings great truth within its traditions from other places and cultures, we also seek to connect our spirituality to the Spirit of this land. In this desire we have much to learn from aboriginal people.

For indigenous people the smoke of the eucalypt carries cleansing, blessing and protecting properties. Ochre is a sign of purity and restoration.

We honour this tradition, this place, the Spirit of this land and its custodians and pray that Sara may grow and be nurtured by all that is good around her.

**Sara** may this land surround you in her blessing, nurture you in your growing, sustain you in your living and receive you at the end of your journey. (*Sara is passed through the eucalypt smoke*)

**Sara** may the Spirit of God dance with your spirit into the ages of ages. (*Sara is anointed with ochre*)

**Amen.**

## **Final Blessing**

Go in peace and  
May God, both Mother and Father  
nurture you and hold you safe;  
God in Christ walk by your side  
And God the Holy Spirit  
send you out with joy.

**Amen.**

