

ORDER FOR THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

The service proceeds according to the Order of Service with Holy Communion, which may be shortened. After the sermon the minister goes to stand at the Holy Table.

Note: If someone other than the minister has instructed, or shared in instructing, the candidates, he/she may substitute wherever the Session Clerk is mentioned below.

Prologue

Brothers and sisters, by shedding his blood our Lord Jesus Christ sealed the new covenant between God and God's people.

The (young) men and women about to stand before us come to be baptized into that covenant as believers. To that end they will profess their faith before us and so witness to the work of God's grace in their lives. For by their baptism Christ unites to himself in his death and resurrection all those who have faith in him; by their baptism, through their faith, he cleanses them from their sins, baptizes them with his Holy Spirit, makes them members of his Body, the Church, and raises them to eternal life with himself.

We on our part will pray for the Spirit to fill them, so that they will serve the Lord faithfully.

As the Session Clerk reads each name, let that person stand and come forward ...

Those who are named present themselves before the Holy Table.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you that your Son Jesus Christ our Lord has brought us a new and living hope, and that your Holy Spirit confirms this hope within us. Help all those who stand here to witness humbly and sincerely before us and before you to the faith your Holy Spirit has wakened within them. Give them peace and joy as they profess faith in you, love for you and commitment to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Vows

The minister addresses the congregation:

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

I now address the members of Church. Do you each renew your own resolve to follow Jesus Christ? If so, please signify that by standing now. *(Pause)* All others present may now stand.

The minister addresses all the candidates for baptism. They respond individually, after the first vow as the minister or Session Clerk names each in turn.

As you stand before God I now ask you:

Do you turn away from sin and put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, seeking his righteousness in your life and his justice and compassion in the world?

I do.

Do you confess your faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the words of the Apostles' Creed?

I do.

Do you promise to be a faithful member of the family of God, being diligent in public worship, in private prayer and in the study of the Scriptures, and in every way you can witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord?

I do.

Alternatively the minister says:

Now confess your faith and declare your vows.

Having learned the words beforehand, the candidates then say together, audibly and at a deliberate pace:

I turn away from sin and put my trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, seeking his righteousness in my life and his justice and compassion in the world.
(Pause)

I confess my faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

(Pause)

I promise to be a faithful member of the family of God, being diligent in public worship, in private prayer and in the study of the Scriptures, and in every way I can witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord.

May gratitude for all the Lord's grace towards you help you keep the solemn promises you have made today.

Testimony

One or more of those who have taken their vows may bear personal testimony to the work of God's grace in their lives. If this happens, the congregation is first seated.

Prayer

*The congregation stands.
All the candidates kneel.*

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you that you died and rose from the grave for us. We thank you also for giving us this sacrament. Now by their baptism, through their faith in you, unite to yourself in your death and resurrection those who are baptized; cleanse them from their sins, baptize them with your Spirit, make them members of your Body, the Church, and raise them to eternal life with you. Amen.

Baptism

The minister dips or pours water on (or sprinkles) each person three times, saying:

As a minister of God's Word and Sacraments, I baptize you [*Christian names*], in the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

In each case the minister may immediately lay hands on the person and may say

Be baptized with water and the Holy Spirit
or

Through faith be born anew from water and the Spirit.

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

Blessing

The congregation sings the Aaronic blessing.

Alternatively the minister says:

The LORD bless you and guard you;
The LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
The LORD look kindly on you and give you peace.

*The congregation sits.
All who have been baptized stand.*

Robing

Those who have been baptized may now be robed in white.

The minister in any case says:

Through your faith baptism clothes you with Christ. God has stripped off your old self and its practices and given you a new self, a self renewed in his image. And he has made you one with all his people among them there is no Jew or Gentile, no White or Black, no servant or master, no male or female; for Christ is all and in all.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we thank you for all these our brothers and sisters who have today witnessed to their faith in you and been baptized. We rejoice with them and pray for them. Fill them with your Holy Spirit; root them in the fellowship of your Church; and give them life abundant.

We know your gifts are many: make known to each of them the particular service you call him or her to, and equip them for that service. Kindle their love and make them faithful to you all their lives, both in private and in public. Help them never to be ashamed to speak of Christ or to tell his gospel to others. Inspire them to seek his reign, his justice and his peace, in this nation of ours. May they serve you as faithful disciples always, until at last they take their places in your eternal Kingdom.

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

To the rest of us who today renewed our resolve to follow you, O Lord, grant that we too may be faithful in all these things. So may we all together live in the power, love and joy of your Holy spirit, to your honour and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Right Hand of Fellowship

The minister addresses the congregation:

Do you, the members of this congregation, promise to love these your brothers and sisters in Christ and encourage them with your fellowship? If so, please signify this by standing now.

(Pause)

All others present may now stand.

The minister addresses those who have been baptized:

By your baptism God ordains you each to take your part in his Church's mission to the world. So we, the members of this congregation, recognize you as active partners with us in witnessing to his grace and working for him in the world and promise you our friendship. In token of this (the Elders and) I in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ give you the right hand of fellowship, which the congregation will also do after the service.

The minister (and Elders) extend the right hand of fellowship to each person.

Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities

The minister addresses those who have been baptized:

From now on your names will be inscribed on the roll of members. Enter fully, then, into the life and worship of this congregation, and exercise all your privileges and responsibilities in it. (After you have each signed your name, the Session Clerk will hand you a certificate of baptism.¹)

The minister announces a hymn. During this they may all sign the Roll. They then take their seats in the front row(s) of the church.

¹

The minister must see to it that every baptized person receives a certificate of baptism at this point or after the service. Other mementoes, like inscribed copies of a good modern translation of the Bible, may also be presented.

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

Holy Communion

BAPTISM OF ADULTS

The Service proceeds with Holy Communion, the minister serving the elements to those who have been baptized in the front row(s).

After the service they proceed with the minister to the front door. There the members of the congregation give them each the right hand of fellowship.