

COMMON PRAYER

*Resources for
gospel-shaped
gatherings*

Final Draft for Synod 2012

Common Prayer 2012
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gospel-shaped
gatherings*

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So at last we have arrived at the heart of Anglican Theology. Divine gracious love, constantly communicated by the Holy Spirit in the regular repetition of Scripture's promises through Word and Sacrament, is to inspire human love, drawing believers towards God and their fellow human beings in the pursuit of lifelong godliness.

Ashley Null,
writing on the work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556),
the principal author of *The Book of Common Prayer*

SERVICES FOR BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Baptism is a symbolic washing by water with prayer. It involves calling on the name of the Lord for salvation (Acts 22:16) or, as Peter writes, it is 'an appeal to God for a good conscience' (1 Peter 3:21).

The Anglican Articles of Religion describe baptism as 'a sign of regeneration or new birth', in which the promises of the forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the children of God 'are visibly signed and sealed by virtue of prayer unto God' (Article 27).

Two contemporary forms of service are provided here, one for the baptism of infants and children and one for those able to answer for themselves.

When we bring a child for baptism we are asking that God in his time will enable the child to turn and trust in Christ, in response to his call and promise in the gospel. This prayer is accompanied by the declaration of sponsors, as they respond to God's call on behalf of the child. According to the Canon Concerning Baptism 1992 of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia,

Every child to be baptised shall have at least one, but usually three godparents or sponsors of whom at least two shall be of the same sex as the child and of whom at least one shall be of the opposite sex. Either or both of the parents of a child may act as godparents or sponsors. Godparents or sponsors shall be baptised persons and should be persons who will faithfully fulfil their responsibilities both by their spiritual nurture and instruction of the children committed to their charge and by the example of their own godly living.
(Clause 8)

Sponsors who bring children to baptism take on the responsibility to bring them up to live the Christian life and come to mature Christian belief. When children are old enough to answer for themselves the service of Confirmation enables them publicly to reaffirm the promises made on their behalf at their baptism and be prayed for to receive strength from the Holy Spirit to persevere and grow in Christ.

Confirmation is a service of laying on of hands and prayer for God's blessing and for the strengthening of the Holy Spirit in baptised believers as they look ahead to a life of faithful discipleship. It is intended for those who have reached an age where they acknowledge their responsibility and desire to live for Christ, to resist temptation, and to serve God throughout their lives. Laying on of hands is a custom which since biblical times has been associated with commissioning and with prayer for particular blessing.

Confirmation is also an opportunity for those who have been established and instructed as Christians to reaffirm before the congregation the faith expressed in the promises made at their baptism, regardless of the age at which this took place.

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer requires that those presented to the bishop for confirmation first be thoroughly instructed in the significance of their baptismal promises and in the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

A SERVICE OF BAPTISM FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN

1. *The minister welcomes those who have come for baptism and their sponsors and addresses the congregation. The passages of Scripture may be read in the indicated places.*

God is the source of everything that is good. Children are his gift and he entrusts parents with the privilege and responsibility of nurturing them in his way. God wants our children to experience a loving home, to gain wisdom, to live generously for the good of all, to grow in faith, and to come at last to share in his eternal kingdom.

[Jesus said: 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.']

Without Christ, we humans are far gone from God and mired in sin. Through the gospel, God addresses each one of us and calls us back to himself, resulting in a profound change. The act of baptism is about that change.

[We follow the direction of Jesus, who said, '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.']

Ordinary water is used to point to the extraordinary work of God in cleansing us from sin and giving us a new heart to trust and serve him, through the death and resurrection of his Son. Baptism provides a public opportunity to turn to Christ and express a personal trust in him and what he has done for us, and to ask for the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

[Jesus taught that none can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 'Flesh gives birth to flesh,' he said, 'but the Spirit gives birth to spirit'.]

So let us pray to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ that he will grant to these children what they cannot have by nature, that they may be born again by the Holy Spirit and be made living members of Christ's Church.

2. *The congregation and sponsors join the minister in praying*

**Heavenly Father,
we thank you that in your great love
you have called us to know you
and to trust you.
Increase this knowledge and strengthen our faith.
Grant that *these children*
may be born again by the Holy Spirit,
cleansed from all sin,
and inherit your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

3. *If the baptism does not take place within the context of another service, suitable passages from Scripture should be read and a sermon given at this point.*

4. *The minister invites the sponsors to stand with those who are to be baptised and says to them*

God promises forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who turn to him in Christ. This promise also embraces the children of God's people, whom we bring to him in faith. Children must themselves express faith in Christ when they are able to do so. They must turn away from sin and put their trust in him. In due course, they should come to reaffirm these promises and receive prayer for strengthening in confirmation.

Those of you who already trust in Christ, and are willing to teach and encourage *them* in the same faith, are invited to make the baptismal promises on *their* behalf. Therefore, I ask you,

Are you yourself a follower of Jesus Christ, trusting the gracious promises of God?

I am.

Are you willing to sponsor *these children*, answering for *them* now and accepting responsibility for *their* Christian upbringing in the life of the Church?

I am willing.

5. *The minister continues*

I now ask to answer on behalf of *these children*

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust?

I reject them all.

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

I renounce all that is evil.

Almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, and lead you in the light of Christ to his everlasting kingdom. **Amen.**

6. *The minister continues*

These children have been brought here for baptism. Let us all affirm the faith into which *they* are to be baptised.

**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 of 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 from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

7. *The minister says to the sponsors*

I ask you to answer on behalf of *these children*

Do you affirm this faith as yours?

I do.

Will you follow Jesus faithfully, and obey his commands throughout your life?

With God's help, I intend to do so.

Do you ask for baptism in the faith you have affirmed ?

I do.

8. *Standing at the font with the candidates and their sponsors, the minister says*

Let us pray.

Merciful God, for Jesus Christ's sake, grant that *these children* whom we baptise in this water, may be saved through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. May *they* die to sin and rise again to righteousness. May your Spirit live and work in *them*, that *they* may be yours forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord who died and rose again for us. **Amen.**

9. *The minister says to the sponsors of each child*

Name this child.

10. *Then the minister dips each child in the water or pours water on each one, saying*

N, I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

11. *After all the children have been baptised the minister and congregation address them*

God has called you into his church.

**We therefore receive and welcome you
as a fellow member of the body of Christ,
as a child of the same heavenly Father,
and as an inheritor with us of the kingdom of God.**

12. *The minister makes a sign of the cross on each child's forehead and says*

I sign you with the sign of the cross
to show that you are to be true to Christ crucified
and that you are not to be ashamed
to confess your faith in him.

**Fight bravely under his banner
against sin, the world and the devil,
and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant
to your life's end.**

13. *The minister continues*

God has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light
Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father

14. *The minister continues with these prayers.*

Gracious God, we thank you that through the death and resurrection of your Son, you have brought us from death to life. Enable us by your

Spirit to resist the power of sin and give ourselves to you as a living sacrifice. May we not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind, so that we serve and please you in every way. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father, we pray for the parents and godparents of *these children*. Give them the spirit of wisdom and love, that they may teach *these children* by word and example to fulfil the promises made in their name. In our homes, give us the joy that comes from being faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

15. *If it is not used elsewhere in the service, the Lord's Prayer may be said together here.*

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

16. *The service may conclude with these words.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

A SERVICE OF BAPTISM FOR THOSE ABLE TO ANSWER FOR THEMSELVES

1. *The minister welcomes those who have come for baptism and addresses the congregation. The passages of Scripture may be read in the indicated places.*

Without Christ, we humans are far gone from God and mired in sin. But through the gospel, God addresses each one of us and calls us back to himself, resulting in a profound change. The act of baptism is about that change.

[We follow the direction of Jesus, who said, '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.']

Ordinary water is used to point to the extraordinary work of God in cleansing us from sin and giving us a new heart to trust and serve him, through the death and resurrection of his Son. Baptism provides a public opportunity to turn to Christ and express a personal trust in him and what he has done for us and ask for the renewing work of the Holy Spirit.

[As the apostle Peter said, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.']

So let us thank God for drawing *these people* to himself, hear *their* profession of repentance, faith and commitment to Christ, and pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in *their* lives.

2. *The congregation joins the minister in praying*

**Heavenly Father,
we thank you that in your great love
you have called us to know you
and to trust you.
Increase this knowledge and strengthen our faith.
Grant *these people* what *they* cannot have by nature
that being born again by the Holy Spirit,
they may be cleansed from all sin,
and inherit your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

3. *If the baptism does not take place within the context of another service, suitable passages from Scripture should be read and a sermon given at this point.*

4. *The minister invites those who are to be baptised to stand and says to them*

Those who are to be baptised must declare their allegiance to Christ and their rejection of all that is evil: the devil and all his works, the empty display and false values of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh. Therefore I ask you,

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust?

I reject them all.

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

I renounce all that is evil.

Almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, and lead you in the light of Christ to his everlasting kingdom. **Amen.**

5. *The candidates may be given an opportunity to testify to the way they have come to faith in Christ. The minister then says*

You have come here to be baptised. I ask you now to affirm the Christian faith as yours.

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in God the Son?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived of 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 from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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

The minister says to the congregation

This is the faith of the Church.

The congregation responds

This is our faith: we believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

6. *The minister says to the candidates for baptism*

Will you follow Jesus faithfully, and obey his commands throughout your life?

With God's help, I intend to do so.

Do you ask for baptism in the faith you have professed?

I do.

7. *Standing at the font with the candidates and their sponsors, the minister says*

Let us pray.

Merciful God, for Jesus Christ's sake, grant that N, whom we baptise in this water, may be saved through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. May *he/she* die to sin and rise again to righteousness. May your Spirit live and work in *him/her*, that *he/she* may be yours forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord who died and rose again for us **Amen.**

8. *The minister asks each person to come to the font and baptises them by dipping them in the water or pouring water on them, saying*

N, I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

9. *After all the candidates have been baptised the minister and congregation address them*

God has called you into his church.

**We therefore receive and welcome you
as a fellow member of the body of Christ,
as a child of the same heavenly Father,
and as an inheritor with us of the kingdom of God.**

10. *The minister makes a sign of the cross on each candidate's forehead and says*

I sign you with the sign of the cross
to show that you are to be true to Christ crucified
and that you are not to be ashamed
to confess your faith in him.

**Fight bravely under his banner
against sin, the world and the devil,
and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant
to your life's end.**

11. *The minister continues*

God has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light

Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father

12. *The minister continues with this prayer*

Gracious God, through the death and resurrection of your Son, you have brought us from death to life. Enable us by your Spirit to resist the power of sin and give ourselves to you as a living sacrifice. May we not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind, so that we serve and please you in every way. **Amen.**

13. *If it is not used elsewhere in the service, the Lord's Prayer may be said together here.*

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

14. *The service may conclude with these words*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. **Amen**

A SERVICE FOR CONFIRMATION

The service takes place within a Service of the Word and Prayer or the Lord's Supper.

1. *The candidates are presented to the bishop.*

2. *The bishop says*

Let us pray

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, by your Holy Spirit you have called these your servants and made them your children by adoption and grace; mercifully grant that, being strengthened by the same Spirit, they may continue your servants and receive your promises; through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE COMMITMENT

3. *The bishop says to the candidates*

Those who are to be confirmed are first invited to reaffirm the promises made at their baptism.

You must therefore declare again your allegiance to Christ and your rejection of all that is evil: the devil and all his works, the empty display and false values of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh.

The bishop may address each candidate individually

Therefore I ask you

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust?

I reject them all.

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

I renounce all that is evil.

The bishop says to the candidates as a group

Will you each, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

I will, with God's help.

4. *The bishop says to the congregation*

You have heard these our brothers and sisters respond to God's call to love and serve him throughout their lives.

Will you support them in this high calling?

We will do so.

5. *The bishop says to the candidates*

You who are to be confirmed must now yourselves affirm before God and his church the Christian faith into which you were baptised.

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Do you believe in God the Son?

**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 from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The bishop says to the congregation

This is the faith of the Church.

The congregation responds

This is our faith: We believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE CONFIRMATION

6. *The bishop says*

We come now to confirm those who have been baptised and instructed in the Christian faith, laying hands on them and praying that God's indwelling Spirit will strengthen and guide them throughout their lives.

Let us pray that God who has begun a good work in these our *brothers and sisters* will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ. .

Almighty and everliving God, you have been pleased to grant to your servants new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and have given them forgiveness of their sins; strengthen them, we pray, with the Holy Spirit; grant that they may grow in grace; and give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of discernment and inner strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill them, Father, with wonder and awe in your presence, now and for ever. **Amen.**

7. *The bishop lays his hand on each of the candidates individually.*

Defend, O Lord, this your servant *N* with your heavenly grace, that *he/she* may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until *he/she* comes to your everlasting kingdom. **Amen.**

or

Strengthen Lord your servant *N* with your Holy Spirit. Empower and sustain *him/her* for your service. **Amen**

8. *The bishop prays.*

Let us pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Almighty and everliving God, we pray for these your servants upon whom we have now laid our hands, following the apostles' example, to assure them of your love for them. May your fatherly hand ever protect them. Let your Holy Spirit ever be with them to uphold them in the love of Christ and to lead them in obedience to your word. Strengthen them with your heavenly grace and keep them in eternal life; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

9. *Other prayers follow*

10. *The bishop concludes the service with these words*

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted;
give honour to all;
love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

PUBLIC NAMING WITH THANKSGIVING TO GOD

This service provides a public opportunity to thank God for the birth of a child, to name the child, and to seek God's blessing on the family. Unlike the Service of Baptism for Infants and Children, the parents are not asked to make a profession of faith in Christ.

Friends or family members may be invited to stand with parents to encourage them in their role.

This form may be used in conjunction with a Service of the Word and Prayer, or it may be used on its own.

In certain pastoral situations, the service may be used at locations other than a church. For example, parents of a frail or sick child may ask for the service to be conducted in a hospital or private home.

It is recommended that a certificate recording the naming and a Bible in contemporary English be given to the parents.

A SERVICE FOR PUBLIC NAMING WITH THANKSGIVING TO GOD

1. *The minister welcomes family and friends and addresses the congregation in these or similar words.*

God is the source of everything that is good. Children are his gift and he entrusts parents with the privilege and responsibility of nurturing them in his way. God wants our children to experience a loving home, to gain wisdom, to live generously for the good of all, to grow in faith, and to come at last to share in his eternal kingdom.

Let us thank him for his goodness to us, as we say together,

**Gracious God,
giver of life,
we praise you for the wonder of creation,
for the privilege of parenthood,
and for the gift of children.
Thank you for every expression
of your goodness and love to us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

2. *The minister or another member of the congregation may read Deuteronomy 6:4–7, Psalm 127, Ephesians 6:1–4, or other suitable scriptures.*
3. *A sermon may be preached.*

4. *The minister addresses the parents*

What name do you give to this child?

We name *him/her* ...

Do you seek God's blessing as you bring *him/her* up as a person in God's image?

We do.

5. *The minister addresses family and friends*

Will you support *N's* parents as they seek to fulfil their God-given responsibilities?

We shall.

6. *The minister takes the child in his/her arms and prays*

Heavenly Father,
we thank you for the safe birth of *N*,
and for the loving care of *his/her* family and friends.
Enable *him/her* to grow in wisdom and stature,
and in favour with all people and with you.
Be *his/her* protector and guide
and by your Holy Spirit lead *him/her* to know your Son Jesus Christ and gain eternal life.

7. *The minister pronounces the following blessing.*

N, may God bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you.
May God look upon you with favour
and grant you his peace.
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

8. *A copy of the Bible is presented to the parents with these words*

Receive this Bible.
It is the good news of God's love for us
in his Son Jesus Christ.
Take it and read it to your family.

9. *The minister offers prayer for the parents and others, for the work of hospitals, schools and the local community, using these and other prayers.*

For the parents

God our Father,
we thank you for blessing *N* and *N*
with the gift of a *son/daughter*.
Give them wisdom, love and patience
in their relationship with each other
and with their children.
Guide them with your word
in the fellowship of your church,
and fill them with your Holy Spirit,

that they may know and trust your Son,
the Lord Jesus Christ,
and give you praise and honour.
as they serve him. **Amen**

For the grandparents and other relatives

Thank you, Father, for setting us in families,
with relatives and friends of all ages.
[Especially today we thank you for ...]
Help us to respect and learn from one another.
We ask that, in this family,
N may see and enjoy many loving relationships,
and experience your love for us in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

For families in general

Almighty God our heavenly Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ shared at Nazareth
the life of an earthly home,
bless our homes we pray.
Help parents to impart the knowledge of you and your love,
and children to respond with love and obedience.
May our homes be blessed with peace and joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

10. *The service may conclude with the Lord's Prayer and the Grace, which may be said by all.*

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
 now and forever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. Amen.