

Sacramental and Pastoral Services

The sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are 'effectual signs of grace ... ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel' (Article XXV) and are 'generally necessary to salvation' (BCP Catechism). The other 'five commonly called sacraments' of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and Unction also have their place within the sacramental life and pastoral ministry of the Church.

Holy Baptism

- a) Holy Baptism is the sacrament in which we are 'joined to Christ and made members of his body, the Church universal' (APBA) through cleansing from sin and rebirth in the Spirit.
- b) All enquiries about Baptism should be warmly welcomed and viewed as a disciple-making opportunity. The Archbishop must be notified if a request for Baptism is to be refused.
- c) When an infant or person unable to answer for themselves is presented for Baptism, at least one of their parents/guardians must be a baptised Christian. Every child to be baptised will ordinarily have three sponsors (previously called 'godparents') of whom at least two shall be of the same gender as the child; when this is not possible, one sponsor will suffice. Sponsors must be baptised Christians, committed to the candidate's growth in faith and discipleship.
- d) Those to be baptised (or their parents and sponsors, if they are infants or unable to answer for themselves) are to be instructed on the significance, promises and duties of Baptism as outlined in the baptismal service (APBA pp55-60).
- e) When adults are baptised, their Confirmation and first communion must be administered by a bishop in the same service. If the baptism is to take place in a setting such as the sea or a pool, the parish priest must first consult with the bishop before proceeding.
- f) Baptism should be administered within the principal service of the worshipping community to which the candidate belongs. The ordinary minister of Baptism is a bishop or priest. A deacon may baptise in the absence of a priest with the Archbishop's permission.
- g) The oil of catechumens, which signifies deliverance from the influence of sin and evil, may be used to anoint those to be baptised at the words, '*Almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, and lead you in the light of Christ to his everlasting kingdom*' (APBA p56).
- h) Baptism must be administered with a generous amount of water and with the formula: '*N. I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*'. Any alternative words will render the baptism invalid.
- i) The oil of chrism, which signifies the Spirit's empowering, may be used to anoint the newly baptised at the words, '*I sign you with the sign of the cross to show that you are marked as Christ's own for ever*' (APBA p60) It also may be used at Confirmation and priestly Ordination.
- j) A baptismal candle kindled from the paschal candle may be presented to the newly baptised at the words, '*God has brought you out of darkness into his marvellous light*' (APBA p60).

- k) Guidelines pertaining to emergency baptisms are outlined in APBA p71.
- l) Parishes are responsible for recording all baptisms in the parish register and issuing baptismal certificates.

Holy Communion

- a) Holy Communion – also called the Lord’s Supper, the Eucharist, or the Mass – is the sacrament in which we offer ‘the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ’ and are ‘strengthened and inwardly refreshed by the body and blood of Christ’ (BCP Catechism).
- b) The Eucharist is the principal act of Christian worship, especially on Sundays and Holy Days. The rites of Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, Ordination, and Commissioning of new clergy ordinarily take place within a service of Holy Communion, as do weddings and funerals if pastorally appropriate.
- c) The following sections of the Eucharist (APBA pp119-144) are presidential in nature and reserved for the presiding bishop or priest alone:
 - The Greeting #3
 - The Absolution #7
 - The Collect of the Day #11
 - The Greeting of Peace #24
 - The Great Thanksgiving and Lord’s Prayer #26-27
 - The Breaking of the Bread #28-29
 - The Prayer after Communion #30
 - The Blessing #33
- d) It is the practice of this Diocese that the Gospel #16 is proclaimed by the deacon or the priest. In the absence of a deacon, a lay pastoral minister may proclaim the Gospel.
- e) Only clergy or lay pastoral ministers licensed by the Archbishop to preach may deliver the Sermon #17.
- f) Only baptised and communicant members of Christians churches may be invited to receive communion.
- g) Children may partake of communion if they are able to ask for it and understand its significance. The rite of [Welcome to Holy Communion](#) may be used when pastorally appropriate.
- h) The sacrament may not be withheld from a communicant member of the church without grave reason and prior direction from the Archbishop.
- i) Communion vessels should be made of non-porous material such as silver, gold, or stainless steel. Individual communion cups are not to be used.
- j) Vessels are to be thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and dried after each use. Communion linens are ordinarily first rinsed in water, which is then poured onto the earth, before being washed in the usual manner.

- k) Communion bread or wafers must be made from wheat, and communion wine must be fortified and derived from grapes. Low-gluten wafers (containing less than 3 ppm of gluten) are suitable for those with gluten intolerance, as they meet the Australian food standard for products labelled 'gluten-free'. Unless approved by the Archbishop in exceptional pastoral circumstances, non-alcoholic wine must not be used.
- l) Un-consecrated bread or wine must not be administered to communicants. Intinction is discouraged unless approved by the Archbishop in specific pastoral circumstances. Where permitted, care must be taken to ensure the consecrated wine does not drip or remain on the hands of communicants. In the event of an infectious outbreak, communion is administered in one kind only.
- m) Care should be taken to consecrate an appropriate amount of bread and wine. Any remaining consecrated elements, not reserved for communion by extension, must be reverently consumed.

Communion by Extension

- a) The sacrament may be reserved and shared with those who are unable to attend the Eucharist due to illness or confinement. This practice of 'communion by extension' may be offered by clergy or lay pastoral ministers according to the [authorised rite of administration](#).
- b) The reserved sacrament is to be kept in a ciborium or pyx and stored in an aumbry/tabernacle. If wine is reserved, it should be consecrated in a befitting and leakproof vessel and remain untouched until administered. The reserved sacrament should be replenished regularly to prevent spoilage.
- c) Ongoing permission from the Archbishop must be sought by the parish priest or chaplain where communion by extension is regularly administered within a service at an aged care facility, hospital, or prison.
- d) Communion by extension is not to be administered within a regular Sunday or weekday parish service, even when a priest is unavailable to celebrate the Eucharist. In such circumstances, the congregation should instead gather for Morning Prayer or *A Service of Praise, Prayer and Proclamation* (APBA p35).

Confirmation

- a) In Confirmation, the baptised affirm their Christian commitment and receive 'the strengthening of the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of the bishop's hand' (APBA).
- b) Those who are able to ask for Confirmation and understand its meaning and obligations may be confirmed.
- c) Every candidate for Confirmation is to undergo a course of instruction in the Christian faith. Candidates in Anglican schools should ideally be prepared in collaboration with their parish priest.

- d) The parish priest/school chaplain should make arrangements for the confirming bishop to meet with the candidates and sponsors/parents prior to the service.
- e) The following details are to be arranged with the confirming bishop, no later than two weeks before the service:
 - Date and time for the bishop to meet with the candidate
 - Date, time and location of the Confirmation service
 - Order of service and scripture readings to be used
 - Logistics of presenting and confirming the candidate
- f) A Diocesan [form](#) must be completed and returned to the Episcopal Office whenever a Confirmation takes place.
- g) Parishes are responsible for the provision of confirmation cards/certificate.

Reception into Communicant Membership and Reaffirmation

- a) Individuals who have been baptised and fully initiated in another church, yet desire to become communicant members of the Anglican Church, are to be received according to the form provided in APBA pp96-97.
- b) What constitutes 'full initiation' will vary across Christian traditions. In churches that practise infant baptism, it typically refers to Baptism followed by Confirmation (also called 'Chrismation'); where the latter has not yet occurred, the individual is received into the Anglican Church through Confirmation. By contrast, churches that practise 'believer's baptism' regard those who have been baptised as fully initiated; such individuals are therefore received into the Anglican Church through the rite of Reception.
- c) Baptised and confirmed members of the Old Catholic Church, the Mar Thoma Church, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, or the Lutheran churches of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden are already in full communion with the Anglican Church and do not need to be received.
- d) Former Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Oneness Pentecostals are to receive valid Baptism and Confirmation. Those from non-denominational churches that baptise 'In the name of the Lord Jesus', instead of the Trinitarian formula, also need to be validly baptised and confirmed. Questions regarding specific cases should be directed to the Archbishop's Office.
- h) A Diocesan [form](#) must be completed and returned to the Episcopal Office whenever a Reception takes place. The Reception certificate will be provided by the Episcopal Office.
- e) Reaffirmation (APBA p62 #30) is appropriate for Anglicans who are already baptised and confirmed, yet seek to renew their Christian commitment within the context of public worship.

Marriage

- a) Christian marriage is 'a gift from God our creator', a symbol of 'the union between Christ and his Church' and a 'lifelong partnership uniting a woman and a man in heart, mind and body'. Through marriage, a new family is also formed 'where children may be born and grown in secure and loving care' (APBA).
- b) Only bishops and priests who hold the Archbishop's licence and are registered as marriage celebrants may solemnise marriages in this Diocese. [Registration](#) is organised through the Episcopal Office.
- c) At least one of the parties to be married must be a baptised Christian. Persons to be married are not to be within a [prohibited relationship](#).
- d) A [Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage](#) and [Notice of Intended Marriage](#) must be received and signed by the officiating priest at least one calendar month and one day before the date of the wedding. The officiating priest will need to sight each applicant's birth certificate and passport, and a divorce or death certificate to prove the end of any previous marriage. If a birth certificate is not available, a passport (Australian or overseas) will suffice as evidence of the person's date and place of birth. All other forms can be accessed and processed online via the Government's [Marriage Celebrant's Online Portal](#).
- e) The officiating priest is to ensure that those to be married are adequately informed about the Christian understanding of marriage. A recognised course of marriage preparation such as [Prepare Enrich](#) should be recommended. Both the bride and groom must also be given a copy of [Happily Ever... Before and After](#) which offers essential and practical information from the Australian Government.
- f) The Marriage Act requires the priest to meet separately and in person with the bride and groom to ascertain that each freely enters the marriage without coercion.
- g) The 1961 Marriage Act states that 'ministers of religion are only authorised to solemnise marriages according to the rites recognised by the religious body or organisation of which they are ministers' – this means that Anglican clergy must use the marriage rites of APBA, AAPB and the BCP only. Altering the authorised pattern and words of these rites may leave the celebrant open to de-registration and may result in the marriage being declared legally null and void.
- h) Clergy from outside the parish who are licensed by the Archbishop and are properly registered may be invited to perform the ceremony if given permission by the parish priest. A minister from another Christian denomination may be invited to participate in the ceremony by reading a lesson or offering a prayer, but they are not permitted to officiate or preach.
- i) Weddings are to be celebrated in buildings licensed for Anglican worship. An [application](#) can be made to request the Archbishop's approval for a ceremony to take place outside a church building. In such a case, the marriage register of the parish in which the wedding takes place is to be used by the officiating priest.
- j) Since soundness of mind is a legal requirement for contracting a valid marriage, a wedding service is to be postponed if one or both of those to be married are intoxicated. This should be made clear to the couple at the rehearsal.

- k) Weddings are discouraged during Lent and are prohibited on Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter Sunday and Christmas Day without serious reason and written permission from the Archbishop.
- l) A civil marriage may be blessed using the [authorised rite](#). The couple must produce a certificate of their existing marriage. No additional certificates are to be issued and the details of the civil marriage are not to be entered into the parish's marriage register.
- m) While the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman, the 2018 National Bishops' Meeting affirmed 'the responsibility of ministers to pray with and care for same-sex couples in informal settings' when requested.

Divorce and Remarriage

- a) The remarriage of divorced persons is permissible in this Diocese. The officiating priest must submit an [application](#) and receive permission from the Archbishop before a wedding can take place.
- b) While clergy are not compelled to solemnise the marriage of a divorced person, pastoral sensitivity should be exercised and the couple may be referred to another priest.

Reconciliation of a Penitent

- a) The Anglican tradition has always held that Christ 'hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins' (BCP). This can take place both corporately and individually.
- b) When confession takes place on an individual basis, the service of *Reconciliation of a Penitent* (APBA pp775-777) or *A Form of Confession Sins and Absolution* (AAPB pp576-577) is to be used. Confessions within these contexts are strictly confidential and must never be revealed, except when required by [mandatory reporting](#).
- c) Before hearing a confession, the confessor is encouraged to make a declaration using these or similar words: *'My brother/sister in Christ, though I am bound to keep secret anything you confess, the canons of this Church and the law of the land require me to report any incident of child sexual abuse even if disclosed in confession. With this in mind, do you wish to continue?'*
- d) If a penitent confesses the sexual abuse of a child, the confessor must withhold absolution until the crime is reported to the police. The penitent may need the confessor's pastoral support and accompaniment in this process.

Ministry with the Sick and the Dying

- a) The healing and saving work of Jesus continues in the Church's ministry with the sick and the dying. 'Pastoral care, as a ministry of the gospel of Christ, occurs whenever the love of God sustains and renews people experiencing particular needs and stresses' (APBA).

- b) All priests should be ready and willing to offer Ministry with the Sick according to the form set forth in APBA pp679-688 which includes anointing with oil, laying on of hands, and communion.
- c) All priests should be ready and willing to offer Ministry with the Dying (commonly called the 'last rites') according to the form set forth in APBA pp696-705 which includes confession and absolution, anointing with oil, and communion if requested.
- d) It is the practice of this Diocese that anointing is administered by a priest only. When direct anointing with the hand is not possible or advisable, a single-use cotton ball may be used to apply the oil.
- e) Appropriate pastoral care is to be extended to individuals who pursue Voluntary Assisted Dying. Questions about sacramental ministry or Christian burial are to be directed to the Archbishop's Office.
- f) Clergy are to comply with the health advice and regulations of the hospital, ward or aged-care facility they visit. Sick clergy should refrain from making pastoral visits.

Funerals

- a) 'A Christian funeral proclaims the Christian hope in the face of death' (APBA) – it is also an opportunity to honour the departed, to entrust them to God's mercy and to find comfort amid grief.
- b) Clergy are to always exercise pastoral sensitivity towards the bereaved and courtesy towards the funeral director. It is imperative that expectations are made clear and arrangements are agreed upon by all parties before the funeral.
- c) The funeral service should be held in a church or other suitable place of worship and officiated by clergy or a licensed lay minister. A minister from another Christian denomination may be invited to offer a prayer or reading.
- d) The essential prayers and rituals of the funeral liturgy are to be observed. Eulogies, readings, music, videos, tributes and displays are to be consistent with the Christian faith and the religious character of the service. Masonic rites and symbols have no place within the liturgy.
- e) It is best to keep the funeral service within an appropriate timeframe and to reserve longer speeches and tributes for the wake/reception.
- f) Ongoing pastoral care should be extended to the bereaved after the funeral. This ministry begun by the parish priest may be carried on by competent lay ministers or pastoral carers. All Souls Day and the Year's Mind are opportunities to connect with the bereaved and invite them to church.

Resources

[Purslowe & Chipper Funerals](#)
[Bowra & O'Dea Funeral Directors](#)
[Bereavement Assistance Program](#)
[Griefline](#)

Burials and Interment

- a) Burials should be officiated by clergy or a licensed lay minister according to the rite in APBA pp730-734. When this is not possible, the prayer of Committal (APBA p723) must be said at the funeral service.
- b) Ashes are to be removed from their container and directly interred into the soil of a memorial garden according to the rite in APBA pp735-737. Ashes are not to be scattered, repurposed or retained.
- c) [Memorial gardens](#) are to be well maintained and reverently used as consecrated places; and parish church must keep an accurate record of all interments.

Exorcism and Spiritual Deliverance

- a) Exorcism is a ministry of the Church through which a person is freed from demonic influence and restored to Christ. Requests for exorcism must be referred to the Archbishop, and no clergy may act in this matter without prior authorisation.
- b) Any priest may bless a place or pray with a person experiencing spiritual oppression using approved resources for [Spiritual Deliverance](#). Clergy who undertake this ministry should not do so alone and are encouraged to seek the prayerful support of a spiritual director.