

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a dark brown color, framing the central text.

Baptism of Adults

RCNZ

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Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is always a joy for the church to receive new believers into its fellowship. At our last session meeting _____ *name* declared _____ *his/her* faith in Christ and expressed _____ *his/her* desire to receive the sacrament of baptism. Today we rejoice that _____ *he/she* will confess _____ *his/her* faith before us all and be baptised.

Instruction

What the Lord has revealed to us in his Word about holy baptism can be summarised as follows.

First: Baptism teaches that we are sinful from the time of conception and birth. This means that we are all under the judgment of God and for that reason cannot be members of his kingdom unless we are born again. Baptism, whether by immersion or sprinkling, teaches that sin has made us so impure that we must undergo a cleansing which only God can accomplish. Therefore, we ought to be displeased with ourselves, humble ourselves and turn to God, who alone can save us from our sin.

Second: Baptism is a sign and seal that our sins are washed away through Jesus Christ. After rising from the dead, Jesus commanded his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism into the name of the Father assures us that he makes an everlasting covenant of grace with us and adopts us as his children and heirs. Therefore, he surrounds us with his goodness and protects us from evil or turns it to our profit.

Baptism into the name of the Son assures us that we have been washed in his blood from all our sins. Christ joins us to himself so that

we share in his death and resurrection. Through this union with Christ we are liberated from our sins and regarded as righteous before God.

Baptism into the name of the Holy Spirit assures us that the Spirit of God will dwell in our hearts. While living within us, the Spirit will continually work to strengthen and deepen our union with Christ. He will make real in our lives Christ's work of washing away our sins. He will also help us each day to live the new life we have in Christ. As a result of his work within us, we shall one day be presented, without the stain of sin, among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.

Third: Because all covenants have two sides, we who are baptised must trust this one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we reject him, we break the covenant God made with us, and our baptism will testify against us. We must therefore abandon the sinful way of life and love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. If we fall into sin, we must not despair of God's grace, nor use our weakness as an excuse to keep on sinning. "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."¹

Our Lord Jesus Christ commissioned his apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.² In obedience to this command, we now proceed to the baptism of _____*name*.

Vows

_____ *name*, will you please stand, and in the presence of God and his people respond to the following questions:

1. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God, the supreme authority for doctrine and life, and that its teaching is faithfully summarised in the creeds and confessions of this church?
2. Do you humble yourself before God and repent of your sins, and do you joyfully trust in and love Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as your Lord and Saviour?

3. Do you wish to be baptised in the name of the triune God, and will you receive your baptism as a sign and seal that God accepts you in Christ, forgives all your sins and incorporates you into his church?
4. Do you resolve to forsake the world, put to death your old nature, and lead a godly life?
5. Do you promise to honour the office bearers of the church and, if you should become unfaithful in doctrine or life, submit to their admonition and discipline?
6. Do you desire to use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given you to build up the body of Christ?

The confessor responds: I do, God helping me.

The minister addresses the congregation:

I charge you, people of God, receive _____ *name* into this fellowship as a communicant member of the body of Christ. Encourage _____ *him/her* in the faith and help _____ *him/her* in doing the work of the Lord.

In administering the sacrament the minister shall say:

_____ *name*, I baptise you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Reception

Minister: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I now welcome you to all the privileges of full communion. I welcome you to full participation in the life of the church. I welcome you to its responsibilities, its joys and its sufferings. "May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."³

Baptismal prayer

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for Jesus Christ, for the new life given in him, and for the one faith, one hope and one baptism which your people have shared through the ages. We rejoice that _____ *name* now belongs to your church and that we have received _____ *him/her* as a member of this congregation. Guide _____ *him/her* in the way of Christ and sustain us all in the fellowship and service of our Lord. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

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

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell⁴
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

I believe a holy catholic⁵ church, the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

A triumphant hymn

¹ 1 John 1:9.

² Matthew 28:19.

³ Hebrews 13:20, 21.

⁴ That is, on the cross Jesus suffered the agony of hell which our sins deserved (cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q. 44).

⁵ That is, God's people through all times and places (cf. Heidelberg Catechism Q. 54).