

# Emergency Baptism

---

Anglicans who serve in hospitals and other treatment centres have opportunity, from time to time, to administer and advise on emergency baptism. Nurses, doctors, chaplains, parish clergy all face this issue, usually in an ecumenical and multi-faith setting. As our awareness of the implications of baptism grows, so does our need for mutual support in this sometimes difficult area of sacramental practice.

The following guidelines are offered by the Bishop's Doctrine and Worship Committee to assist in finding faithful ways of acting in such situations. Anglicans are seldom in a position to regulate the practice of emergency baptism in an institution; and in some places a responsible ecumenical policy may have been developed. Nevertheless, Anglicans may legitimately articulate the particular practice of baptism they feel bound to acknowledge as valid, and which they wish to encourage.

One of the ways these guidelines can be used, especially in a deanery or area where such institutions are located, is for the clergy to discuss the implementation of the guidelines, including in the discussion those members of the deanery or area most directly involved in the institutions; then a delegation can convey to the pastoral services departments of the institutions the concerns raised in the discussion, and offer assistance in implementing the guidelines as appropriate.

It should be noted that the first three paragraphs of the guidelines are drawn from established Anglican liturgies: *The Book of Alternative Services*, the Alternative Services Book of the Church of England and the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of the Province of South Africa. Since the theology of baptism expressed here may be at variance with some prevailing assumptions, it should be given special prominence in any discussion with those involved in emergency baptism, when explaining the Anglican position.

## A. Anglican Guidelines for Emergency Baptism

**Emergency baptism may be administered to anyone in danger of dying unbaptized, provided that: (a) in the case of an adult, there is evidence to show that the person is desirous of it; or (b) in the case of an infant or young child, the parents request it. If there is reasonable doubt whether the person may already have been baptized, conditional baptism is to be used.**

Those requesting emergency baptism should be assured that questions of ultimate salvation or of the provision of a Christian funeral do not depend on whether the person has been baptized.

The candidate and/or the family of the candidate shall be informed that if the candidate survives, recognition of the baptism at a public celebration of the sacrament is expected, in order that the baptism may be acknowledged by the Church.

The recognition of an emergency baptism at a public celebration of the sacrament shall be recorded by the officiant of that service.

At the time of the baptism, information concerning the baptism shall also be provided to the pastoral services department (or equivalent) of the institution, so that the baptism can be



recorded and the information passed on to the parish of the candidate.

A form for the administration of baptism in emergency, with an attached form of certification, is provided with these guidelines. In the exceptional circumstance that the only appropriate person to administer baptism is a member of the candidate's family, hospital staff may be glad to have this form to provide.



## A Form for Emergency Baptism

*In case of emergency, any person present may administer baptism according to the following form. Using the given name of the one to be baptized (if known), pour water on him or her, saying,*

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

*(Or if there is reasonable doubt that the person has already been baptized with water. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" the person is baptized using this form of words.*

If you are not already baptized, N, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**)

*The Lord's Prayer is then said.*

**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.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*Or* **Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed by thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive  
those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Other prayers, such as the following, may be added.*

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon this your servant the forgiveness of sin and have raised *him/her* to the new life of grace. Strengthen *him/her*, O Lord, with your presence, enfold *him/her* in the arms of your mercy, and keep *him/her* safe for ever. **Amen.**

*If the baptized person recovers, the baptism shall be recognized at a public celebration of the sacrament.*



## *Baptismal Certificate*

*This certifies that* \_\_\_\_\_ *(son/ daughter of* \_\_\_\_\_ *)*  
Name of candidate Parents of child candidate

*was baptized in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*

*on* \_\_\_\_\_ *at* \_\_\_\_\_ *by* \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Place Officiant

*Signature of Officiant:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Please inform your parish priest of this baptism so that it may be properly registered.**

