



The Stewartry of Strathearn

PASTORAL CARE OF THE BAPTISED

You have agreed to become part of a small but very important new initiative within the congregation. You will be taking greetings on the anniversary of someone's baptism.

Most of those whom you will visit will be young children but of course the baptised may be a young person or an adult.

Infants

In recent times the Churches have been seriously examining their belief about Baptism and reaffirming its importance as the point at which a person becomes a member of the community of faith. In terms of the Church ideas of "joining" & "membership" belong more naturally to Baptism than to Profession of Faith.

Our own children do not wait until they are capable of mature choice before they become members of our families. They are who they are and in later years they can choose how to respond to that.

In the same way we become members of the family of God because of what Christ has done for us. We choose God because he first chose us.

We have not been good at following up the Baptism of infants. They form the real "membership roll" of our congregation and we must treat them as little sisters and brothers, encouraging them and their families from the very first to see the Church and the life and worship of the congregation as a natural and welcoming place for them to be at home. How many people have we lost from the Christian community because they were never encouraged to see that they belonged to it?

What we ask of you is that you visit the home of a baptised child at least until age four. Of course you will be visiting the family but the fact that you have called to bring greetings to their child will make a powerful point. You will have a card on which you can fill out the name and the baptismal date.

Your list will be supplied from the Baptismal Registers kept in the office.

When the child reaches Sunday School age please inform the Children's Ministry Team.

Young persons or adults

The obvious difference here would be that you could talk to the person in a way not possible with an infant. But the purpose of the visit is the same – to bring greetings on the anniversary, the friendship of a fellow member. Since the district elder should also be in touch with this person you may wish to use your judgement as to how many anniversaries are marked. Perhaps only the first?

This note is accompanied by copies of the leaflets issued prior to Baptism and Profession of Faith and one dealing with our attitude to children in the Church. These will give some background to our belief and practice.

The Church office will give you a list of persons allocated to you. Additions to this list will be passed to you from time to time.