

### **What is Baptism?**

Baptism (or to use its other name, Christening) is a way for you to be able to thank God for the gift of life in your new child and to start your child on the journey of faith with the support of the Church and his or her Godparents.

For the child, or in some cases an adult, it's the turning from self and turning to Jesus to guide them in life. It is also becoming a member of the local church and the family of Christ throughout the world. Baptism is often referred to as a 'sacrament', which means a sign that God loves us and has come close to us.

As 'The Church' we take Baptism very seriously so in the Baptism service parents and godparents renew their own baptismal promises and also make promises to bring up their child in the Christian faith by bringing them to church regularly.

Some adults worry that in having their child baptised (Christened) as a baby or infant, they are imposing their views on them and would therefore prefer to wait until the child is older so they can make that decision for themselves. For that reason we also offer a service of Thanksgiving

### **What is Thanksgiving?**

A Thanksgiving service is slightly different. At this service the priest will set aside part of the main church service, usually near the beginning, to give thanks for the life of your child and to pray for them. During the service parents will bring the child to the front of church to be prayed for but they do not make the same promises as in Baptism service. If you choose to have a Thanksgiving as opposed to the Baptism service because you do not feel at that stage you are able to make that bigger commitment of the promises of faith, then there is always the possibility that you may have Baptism at a later date.

In the Thanksgiving service just the parents and child will be asked to come out for the blessing, (there are no Godparents in this service). We do however, encourage family and friends to come along and join with you in thanksgiving.

### **The role of Godparents**

Godparents are very important people who are chosen by the child's parents because they are someone who can be relied upon to pray for their child, tell them about God and encourage them in their Christian faith. Their task is to encourage their godchild to come, along with his or her parents, to church and take an interest in their spiritual life.

Godparents must be baptised themselves in order to take on the responsibility, particularly as making very important faith promises on behalf of the child. If you are not Baptised (Christened) you will not be able to be a Godparent. For many Godparents this is also a time when they ask questions about faith and the church is here to support them as well in their growth in to faith

We do not baptise adults in order that they can become Godparents. As an adult we see Baptism as an important statement of you witnessing to your faith and not a means to becoming a Godparent. But we do encourage adults to be baptised.

### **Some practical issues to consider**

At present the Vicar can only baptise those who live in his or her parish so you will need to check if you are within that area.

Baptisms are usually carried out during the main morning service on a Sunday because whoever is being baptised is then welcomed in to the family of The Church, In special circumstances we will occasionally conduct a service on a Sunday afternoon.

Due to the size of the parish and the demands for Baptism, you may have to be prepared to wait several months for an available date. This is due to the number of Baptisms we perform and also because we only ever baptise the children of one family at a time. We only take multiple baptisms if candidates are related to each other.

### **What happens after baptism?**

As mentioned earlier, we take Baptism very seriously and want to do all that we can as a church to encourage you and help you and your child to grow in your Christian faith.

### **Contacting us**

If you require any further information contact  
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*Baptism  
and  
Thanksgiving*

