

Congratulations!

The arrival of a new member into your family is an exciting time, and we are delighted to welcome you and your child to join our church family. The purpose of this leaflet is to introduce you to the particular Church services that you might be considering at this important stage of your lives.

Baptism

What is it all about?

Christians describe baptism as an outward and visible sign of God's love.

We believe that **God loves all people** equally and at baptism we make a point of acknowledging his love. Baptism is also a sign of membership of, **and commitment** to, the Church. When young children are baptised they are not old enough to make decisions of faith for themselves so are baptised on the understanding that their parents will bring them up to know the love of Jesus for themselves.

In the baptism service you would do several things on behalf of your child;

You would be saying that you **believe in God**
You would be saying that you have **placed your trust in Jesus**
You would be saying that you **want to make a new beginning**
You would be saying that you **want to belong to the church**

God will assure you of his unconditional love and help you to get to know Him more.

When does the baptism take place?

Baptisms can be held on any Sunday (subject to holidays etc) at 12 noon . They can also take place in our 10.00 am **main church service** as an occasion which is celebrated by all of us and where the church family can welcome your child. You can invite your friends and family to join with us as everyone (especially children) is welcome in church.

How many godparents can we have?

The usual number is THREE. Ideally there should be at least two. If you want more than FOUR godparents please speak to the vicar. Godparents must themselves be baptised. They have to make serious statements about their faith and promises to God to care for the spiritual welfare of their godchildren. Please check with the godparents that they are happy to do this. If you have close friends or relatives that you want to be involved in the baptism but who don't feel that they can make the promises to God then they can be included as sponsors.

What will happen in the service?

You and the godparents will be asked to make **promises** and declare your faith. A **sign of the cross** will be placed on your child's forehead by the minister. The minister will hold your child and **pour water gently over his/her head** as he/she is baptised. God, like water is essential to life. A member of the baptism party will be given a **lighted candle**. This is to remind us that Jesus said "I am the light of the world."

What are the promises?

You promise to bring up your child in a **Christian home**, help them take part in the life of the church and to **set a good example** by your prayers and teaching.

You will be asked several questions and by your answers you will be in effect saying that you know you are accountable to God, that you realise that in life we have to make choices between good and evil and you will try to choose what is good and that you will be inviting God to be involved in your future by putting your trust in His Son Jesus Christ.

What if these promises seem difficult?

If you cannot make these promises **God still loves you** and your child totally and recognises that you want to make some sort of commitment on behalf of your child. God's love and acceptance of your child does not depend on what you say or do.

What are the options if we cannot make these promises?

1. A **Service of Thanksgiving** for the gift of your child to which you can invite all your family and friends. This happens during a main church service and involves the naming of your baby. Instead of godparents you choose three "supporters". You do not have to make any promises at this service.
2. You can delay the baptism while you do some **more thinking**. The Vicar (The Reverend Janet Bacon) would be pleased to talk to you about issues of the Christian faith which you might want discuss.
3. You could leave your **child to decide** about baptism when he/she is older.

If we decide we want to bring our baby for baptism, what next?

Complete the enclosed form and send it back to Reverend Bacon.

Contact Reverend Bacon on 0161 485 3455 and she will make arrangements to see you to discuss the service in more detail.

Come along to our church services. This will give you an opportunity to get to know us better. The experience of parents is that it makes a big difference to how they feel on the day of the Baptism. Also being familiar with the building helps you to be more relaxed. We as a church want to help and encourage you in this important step you are taking. We welcome children to all our services and have an area set aside at the back of church where toddlers can go to play.

Pray about the decision you have made and ask God to help you. If you are not familiar with praying, don't worry, just speak to God as you would to a friend.

REQUEST FOR HELP

Keeping our church running for future generations requires resources not just in terms of finance but also practical help. Everybody leads busy lives - especially parents of young children ! Please do not feel under any obligation but if you can offer help in any of the following areas that would be greatly appreciated.

Computer skills, DIY, accountancy, music, administration, art, helping with children's activities.