

Baptism and Thanksgiving Services in the Parish of Littleover

It's great that you are considering baptism or thanksgiving for your child or yourself.

We hope that this leaflet will help to explain what is involved and the kind of commitment you will be making.



How we do baptism at Littleover

We would love to meet you, so please come and join us at church on a Sunday at 10am – and bring the baby too, you are welcome as a family. Don't worry about baby noises – they're always good to hear.

When we've seen you in church for about 4-6 weeks, then we can arrange to come and see you to talk to about baptism and thanksgiving – we'll watch a DVD together – and then we can talk dates.

We want to get to know you before we set a date.

The importance of Baptism

The Bible tells us that Jesus was baptised by his cousin John in the river Jordan, an event that started his ministry. And the Gospel writers tell us that God spoke to Jesus, saying "This is my son with whom I am well pleased".

There are people in our church congregation that can talk to you about what baptism means to them too, so please do ask them as you join us on Sundays, or at our weekday services.



What does Baptism mean?

Baptism is a ceremony in which you are welcomed as a new member of the Christian church and it marks the start of a lifetime journey of faith. A life of faith that brings forgiveness for the bad stuff in our lives, healing and restoration and an opportunity to grow in knowledge and love of God to help us live a life of peace and joy. Baptism is about starting this journey of discovery with God, and being in church with other Christians to give us support along the way.

What happens at the service?

Our baptisms take place as part of our regular Sunday worship, at the 10am service on the third Sunday of the month. Families and friends usually sit near the front so that they can see clearly. During the service we do the following things:

- Give thanks to God for the gift of life
- Make declarations, turning away from a life of sin and turning to faith in God (see box overleaf)
- Make promises to walk the journey of faith
- Commit to those being baptised, helping them to discover what it means to live a Christian life.
- Then we baptise them with water (generally just a gentle sprinkle) and make the sign of the cross on the forehead
- Ask for support from the congregation as they promise to care for you as you grow in faith
- Give a Bible, candle and certificate of baptism.

Promises – *the bits that you and the Godparents say*

Parents and Godparents, the Church receives (name) with joy. Today we are trusting God for their growth in faith. Will you pray for them, draw them by your example into the community of faith and walk with them in the way of Christ?

With the help of God, we will.

In baptism (name) begins their journey in faith. You speak for them today. Will you care for them and help them to take their place within the life and worship of Christ's Church?

With the help of God, we will.

Decision

To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour? **I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.



After the baptism, children can go out to Sunday School (aged 4 upwards) they'll just need a parent to sign them in. And if you have younger guests they can join the crèche held in the welcome area. Adults remain in church for the rest of the service.

Confirming baptism promises

When a baby is baptised the promises are made on their behalf by the parents and Godparents. The child then has the opportunity to confirm these promises when they choose to follow Jesus Christ



themselves, when they are older. This is done at a Confirmation service with the Bishop and means that they will be also be able to receive bread and wine at Holy Communion.

Just a naming ceremony?

Many people consider baptism to be just a naming ceremony, and a chance to gather family and friends together to celebrate this new life. It certainly is a time when these things happen, but it is so much more and it is important that we take the commitment to God seriously and assess our own faith journey.

Part of the worldwide church

Baptism also welcomes the person into the community of faith – part of worldwide church, so that is why the service is part of the usual Sunday service. We are always excited and pleased to welcome a new member, and offer support to young families and mature Christians through home groups, Sunday school and youth groups as well as our Sunday and weekday services.

What to think about

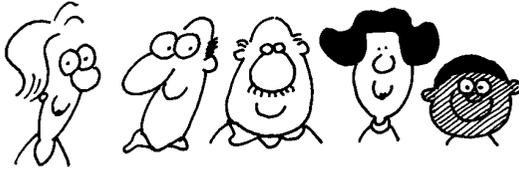
If you are bringing a child to baptism – as a parent or Godparent - you will be making promises about your own faith and making Christian promises on behalf of the child. You might want to reflect on this, talk to others, read, or find out more as you come along to church. It is entirely between you and God, you just need to be happy to make the promises with integrity. You are also committing to bringing the child up within the church family, which means coming to church regularly in the future.

Thanksgiving service

We recognise that not everyone is prepared or ready to make such statements about faith or wants to commit to coming to church. There is a service of thanksgiving and blessing during which your child is named, given a special blessing, and a gift of the Bible. It is not a lesser service – in fact, many committed Christians prefer to do this, so that their child can choose baptism for themselves later in life.

Godparents

Parents and Godparents make declarations about their faith and promises. We suggest you chose your Godparents carefully, as it makes little sense to choose nice friends or family who have no Christian faith or no intention of supporting you and your child on the journey of faith. Godparents **must be** baptised and preferably confirmed but do not have to attend your church regularly. They are usually at least 16 years old and above. Perhaps they could come with



you to church in the weeks leading up to the baptism service, to reflect on their duties and

the promises they will be making. The number of Godparents is up to you, tradition does not have to be followed!

If you opt for a Thanksgiving, then you can choose other adults to encourage you, as you would Godparents, only in this option, they are called Supporters. Similarly if you have someone who would like to be a Godparent in the baptism, but has not been baptised themselves, then they can stand up with you and the other Godparents, but not actually participate in the promises. In this instance, they too are called Supporters.

A few other things....

- It really helps us if your party of guests isn't too large – let's talk about it when we meet
- Baptism is a sacred moment, so we politely ask to save the photos until the end of the service when you can happily pose for as many pictures as you need.
- The service is free of charge, though you are welcome to give a gift to the church if you would like to.
- **Parents and Godparents need to be in church by 9.45am on the day**, as we practise a part of the service together before the main service begins.

What next?

- Please join us at church so that we can get to know you before we arrange a date to meet you
- After about 4-6 weeks of regular attendance, we'll arrange to come and see you. We'll watch a DVD and chat together about what you would like to do – choosing either baptism or thanksgiving.
- We can only book a date when we visit
- We look forward to meeting you and your family!

For further information please contact:

Revd Alicia Dring, Vicar of St Peter's Littleover
01332 767802
alicia@stpeterlittleover.org.uk