

+ Thanksgiving  
and  
Baptism



“Turn to God and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. The promise is for you, your children... whomever our God calls.”

from Acts 2.38-39 (The Bible)



**All Saints' Church**  
*Preston on Tees*

This Church Exists To Worship GOD.  
To Make Disciples. To Share The Good News.  
And To Care For Those In Need

## CONGRATULATIONS!

The birth of some children is carefully planned; others come as a surprise. But it is always a wonderful privilege to care for a young child. It's natural to want to thank God for such a great gift and to ask for his blessing on the family.

### Two options

Church has changed a bit since we were children. Parents now have a choice. You can opt for a Thanksgiving Service or a Baptism Service.

### Come to church first

We strongly encourage you to come as a family to All Saints' over the next few months. It will give you a feel for what we're all about. The main services for families are at 10:30am. They're quite informal with plenty of children present. Babies are welcome; we like their noise! There is a room for feeding in privacy.

### OPTION ONE: THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Thanksgivings take place within a normal service, usually the third Sunday of the month. They are very happy occasions. The whole service will last about 1¼ hours; the Thanksgiving will be about 5 minutes of that time.

#### What happens?

There are three main parts in a Thanksgiving Service:

- Thanking God - the purpose of the service is to say a heartfelt thank you to God for his wonderful gift of your child (the minister will say these prayers)
- Praying for your family - we will bless your child and pray for you as parents, in your responsibility of bringing him or her up
- Receiving a Bible - you will be given the gift of a children's Bible

#### Why thanksgiving?

There are 3 main reasons why more and more families choose this option:

- Their main wish is to give thanks to God for their child.
- In the Baptism Service parents have to make promises and commitments (see below); but not in a Thanksgiving Service.
- Some parents want their child to experience baptism when (s)he is older; delaying baptism until (s)he is old enough to make his or her own choice to follow Christ means they will experience baptism and remember it

Many parents now choose this option.

### OPTION TWO: THE BAPTISM SERVICE

Baptisms also take place within a normal Sunday service, usually at 10:30am on the third Sunday of the month. The service will last about 1¼ hours; the Baptism will take about 10 minutes of that time.

#### What happens?

- Parents and Godparents make promises to God about their own Christian faith and about raising their children as part of the Christian community

- Water is poured over the child; the minister will take your child into his or her arms and pour water three times over the child's head, baptising 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'
- Baptism is about belonging; the church family welcomes its newest member
- You will be given the gift of a children's Bible and a lighted candle

### **The promises**

Quite rightly, people want to know what promises they will be making to God so that they can decide whether Baptism will be right for their family.

The words you speak standing before the congregation during the service are reproduced overleaf. Essentially you will be making three promises:

- To pray regularly for your child
- To teach your child about Jesus: his life, death and rising again
- To come to church regularly as a family

### **Preparation**

There is a lot to consider in deciding to have a Baptism for your child. A minister, or a couple from the church with children of their own, usually arrange to hold a relaxed preparation session at your home.

### **Why baptism?**

Some people think that a "Christening" ceremony is what makes someone a Christian but only a decision to turn away from sin and believe in Jesus can do that. There are two main reasons why families choose Baptism:

- They want to make a commitment to God - some couples feel the promises they made before God at their wedding has helped them to be better husbands and wives and now they want to make promises to God after the birth of their child, because they feel this will help them be better parents
- They want to be part of All Saints' - baptism is a way of identifying you and your family with your local church

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Who can come to the service?**

You can invite as many people as you like (within reason!) Godparents, family members, neighbours and friends. Often people have a big party afterwards.

### **What should people wear?**

Some parents come as they are and choose everyday clothes for their child. Others dress smart and have a baptismal gown – whatever you prefer is fine.

### **What about fees?**

There is no charge for either Baptism or Thanksgiving services.

### **And what about Godparents?**

Whichever option you choose, it is normal to have Godparents. Traditionally, a boy has two Godfathers and one Godmother while a girl has two Godmothers and one Godfather. But you may have as many as you want.

## What do they have to do?

All Godparents (Thanksgiving or Baptism) promise to:

- care for your child, taking a special interest in their Godchild
- encourage your child to learn about Jesus
- pray for your family, asking God to especially bless your child

If you choose to have Baptism, the Godparents *also* promise to:

- encourage your child to take his or her place in the local church

The affirmations made in the Baptism Service by parents and Godparents (in **bold**).

*Parents and godparents: In baptism your child begins a journey in faith and we are trusting God for his/her growth in faith. You speak for him/her today. Will you pray for him/her and help him/her to take his/her place within the life of the Church?*

**With the help of God, we will.**

*Parents and Godparents: Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?*

**I reject them.**

*Do you renounce evil?* **I renounce evil.**

*Do you turn away from the sin that separates us from God?* **I turn away from sin.**

*Do you turn to Christ as your Saviour and Lord?* **I turn to Christ.**

*Brothers and sisters, [parents, Godparents and congregation together] let us profess the faith of the Church.*

**We believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life,  
in God the Son, who died for us and rose again,  
and in God the Holy Spirit, who gives us life and makes Christ known.**

*This is the faith of the Church.*

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**



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