

Thanksgiving & Christening



“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)



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CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on the birth of your son/daughter. What a wonderful blessing children are and what an incredible thing to become a parent.

The church offers two types of service, with some similarities and some differences depending what you are looking for. We would strongly encourage you, whichever you feel is most appropriate, come along to All Saints' so you can get a feel for what we are about. The main service for families is at 10.30am. It's quite informal with plenty of children present. If you're bringing a baby with you, nobody will mind if they make a noise, and there is a room for feeding in privacy. So what are the two options?

OPTION ONE: THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Thanksgivings usually take place within a normal service. They are very happy occasions. The whole service will last about 1¼ hours; the Thanksgiving will take place during the service.

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 and not baptism?

There are 3 main reasons why 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. For parents who are not sure if they would call themselves Christians, this can be a good way to say thanks to God without promising things you are not sure about.
- 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 Jesus means they will experience baptism and remember it.
- In a Thanksgiving, children are not christened with water.

OPTION TWO: THE BAPTISM SERVICE

Baptisms, (like Thanksgivings) take place within a normal Sunday service, typically at the 10:30am) The service lasts about 1¼ hours; the Baptism would take place during that service.

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.
- The minister will take your child into his or her arms and pour water onto your child's forehead three times, 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

No matter what you feel is right for your child and your family, the next step is to meet with a minister from the church to talk about it. Please use the contact details at the bottom of this booklet to make contact with them.

Why baptism and not thanksgiving?

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, and how many, can I invite to the service?

As many people as you like (Godparents, family, neighbours and friends). All are welcome. Just let us know how many you intend to bring so we can make sure there's space.

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. It is important that the Godparents have a faith so they can encourage and pray for your child. All Godparents must be baptised themselves.

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 a 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 (words said by parents and Godparents are 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: We all wander far from God and lose our way: Jesus comes to find us and welcomes us home. In baptism we respond to his call.

Therefore I ask: do you turn away from sin? **I turn from sin.**

Do you reject evil? **I reject evil.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? **I turn to Christ.**

Let us profess the faith of the Church. [parents, Godparents and congregation together]

We believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life.

We believe and trust in God the Son, who died for us and rose again.

We believe and trust 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.

For more information or to arrange a Thanksgiving or Baptism service, please contact our office on the details at the bottom of the page or contact Rev Matt Levinsohn: phone: 07816 386623 or email: revmatt.allsaints@gmail.com



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