

What is Baptism?

Christians believe that God gave us this wonderful gift of life, loves us and wants our love in return. As part of this family on earth, gathered in the Church, the baptised person seeks to live by the example of Jesus, God's Son, and Baptism is the place where we make this commitment.

Infant Baptism affirms this parental commitment as well as celebrating the gift of God's grace in your child's life, which whilst unseen is present with us all in countless different ways.

As parents and godparents we want to encourage you to make something of this day, so that as your child grows up they can experience the love of God and the life of the Church.

Form of Service

In the service both you and the godparents will be asked to make promises and a commitment on behalf of the child being baptised. These are twofold:

You will promise to bring up your child within the family of the Church and to help them by your prayers, your teaching and your example.

You will also promise to care for and nurture your child as they grow in their own journey of faith.

These promises are not to be thought of so much as you answering for your child, but rather they are you speaking of your own faith and of your commitment to help your child understand and grow into the Christian Faith.

The Outward Signs

In Baptism water is used as the outward sign for purity since it has been used to wash and cleanse people from the earliest times. Water also gives us life, so it is a symbol of the new life. As the Christian pilgrimage is about devoting our lives to God and about trying to do the right things and turning away from wrong things, water is a fitting symbol for our Baptism.

We anoint your child Holy Oil, this is olive oil blessed for the purpose. In the time of the Old Testament, this precious oil was used as a sign of the value and dignity of people. We therefore anoint children once before Baptism to signify their entry into God's family and values, and once after to signify the presence of God's Holy Spirit in their lives.

Finally we give a lighted candle, which you keep, as a sign of the light of God's love in your child's life. We light it from the Easter Candle, which reminds us of the light of God's love displayed in Jesus who by his dying and rising again demonstrated the power of God's love to change things and help us.

Steps to Baptism

A member of staff or one of the Baptism Preparation Team will arrange to visit you at home to explain the service and get to know you and to answer any initial questions you may have about Baptism.

Before a member of your family is baptised, we invite you, and wherever possible the godparents, to come and meet with us for a rehearsal and explanation of the service. This is an important opportunity to talk about Baptism and to familiarise yourself with the Church setting.

The Role of a God-parent

When you choose godparents you choose people from amongst your family and friends whom you believe will take an interest in your child's upbringing and welfare.

Godparents (normally two female and one male for a girl and two male and one female for a boy) should be people who are baptised and confirmed churchgoers, that is, who have a strong Christian commitment. Whilst this may not always be possible, it is for the most part better to choose people who will help with the spiritual welfare as well as the general well being of your child. For this reason we believe that godparents should be over 18 years of age.

Your local parish

You are entitled to be baptised, or have your child baptised if you are resident within one of our parishes. If you live in another parish, we would encourage you to go to your local church where you can establish a relationship and contact near to where you live.

However, we are prepared to conduct a Baptism Service provided that there are good pastoral reasons and you have a letter from your local Anglican Parish Priest giving permission.

WHICH SERVICE

You may choose to have a Baptism within the normal Sunday Service or outside of it and we are happy for either to be the case. The advantage of the former and the reason for our preference for it is that it gives substance to the idea of welcoming children into the Church.

Music

For baptisms outside of the main services it is possible to have hymns and an organist depending on availability. In this case there will be a fee.

Fees

There are no set fees for Baptism Services with the exception of an organist, where required, or a license for a professional video.

Photography

We are happy for you to use both stills and video photography. However, if you are going to employ a professional video photographer, we will require you to sign an agreement which governs the future use of the video in respect of Copyright. There is a fee for this. We ask people to be discreet and not to use flash.

There will always be opportunities for photographs after the service.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Please do not hesitate to call if you need help or advice:

Rev'd Charles Keay

01392 672996 / 07948600619

e-mail: fathercharles04@gmail.com

Parish Office

01392 437486

St Thomas Church, Exeter



***We are delighted that you
are considering having your
child baptised in one of our
churches.***

***This leaflet is designed to
help you and to provide
important basic information***