

## More information

If you would like more information about anything written in this booklet, please do speak to the Revd Jonathan Roberts:

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You can also look at our website:

[www.stpetersforsbrook.org.uk](http://www.stpetersforsbrook.org.uk) or [www.stmargaretsdraycott.org.uk](http://www.stmargaretsdraycott.org.uk)



There is also a really helpful Church of England website specifically about Baptisms/Christenings and Thanksgiving Services at:

[www.churchofenglandchristenings.org](http://www.churchofenglandchristenings.org)



# ***Baptism/Christening & Thanksgiving Services***

***at***



**St Margaret's  
Church, Draycott**



**St Peter's  
Church, Forsbrook**

*It's great that you are considering baptism for your child or yourself or maybe hoping to become a godparent. As a church we love welcoming new families into our community.*

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

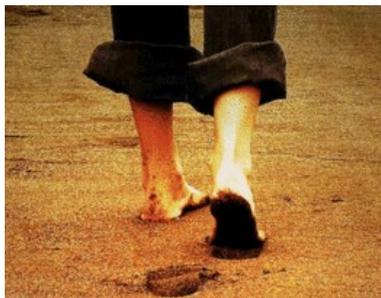
## The Importance of Baptism

The Bible explains that baptism is an important sign which shows that someone has become part of God's people—the church—and begun a life-long journey of faith in Jesus Christ. Whether you are baptised as a baby or as an adult, it is a very important and significant moment. There are many people in our churches who can share with you what baptism means to them too—so you're very welcome to join us when we meet together on Sundays or other events.



## What does baptism mean?

Some people have all sorts of ideas about baptism or 'christenings': for some it's a tradition which has been followed through the generations; for others it is a chance to gather friends and family to thank God for the birth of a baby. But at its heart, baptism is a sign which demonstrates God's offer of welcome into the Christian church family, which has been around for 2000 years and reaches right round the globe. Baptism marks the start of a life-long journey of following Jesus Christ and belonging to him and his church.



## Why is following Jesus so important?

To understand this question, it is helpful to know the Christian 'story' or the way Christians understand the world in which we live:

As Christians we believe that God, the creator of all things, loves his world and he loves human beings. From the beginning of time, however, humans have rejected God's offer of relationship and in many ways choose to live without reference to his rightful rule over us.

**Tiddlers:** A group for parents/carers and their toddlers (under 5s) which meets most weeks at St Peter's Church on Tuesday mornings from 10.00—11.30am.

**Sunday Worship:** Both churches have a menu of different services; morning worship currently begins at 10.00am at both churches.

At **St Peter's** the first Sunday of the month is called 'Worship Together' which is an informal service with contemporary music and all ages and stages of faith meet together. On other weeks we run children's groups for school-age children for part of the service.

At **St Margaret's**, there is also a group for school-age children which meets for part of the services.

We also run courses such as '**Alpha**' which are an informal and accessible way to find out more about the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ. Many parents and godparents find it really helpful to take part in this course so that they can help their children in their own journey of faith.

## What next?

We would love you to take this booklet away and take some time to think about what would be the right next step for you and your family. You might feel sure in your own mind what you think about Baptism and Thanksgiving services, and what they both mean, but do talk about it honestly with your partner so that you are of one mind.

Once you have been to a couple of services/events, to begin to get a feel for the church family you are thinking about becoming part of, please do contact the Rector—Jonathan— (see over) who will then arrange to meet with you to discuss what you would like to do next, or answer any other questions you may have.



## Thanksgiving Service

We recognise that not everyone is prepared or ready to make such statements about their faith or wants to make the commitment to coming to church. To that end, we do offer a 'Service of Thanksgiving' in which we:

- ✚ Thank God for the life of your child
- ✚ Name the child and pray for God's blessing on them
- ✚ Give a gift to the child

This is not the same as baptism but nor is it a lesser service—in fact many committed Christians prefer this option, so that their child can choose baptism for themselves later in life. If you choose to have a thanksgiving service, you can still have a baptism service at a later time.

If you choose a Thanksgiving service, you can choose other adults to encourage you and your child (as you would godparents) only with this option they are called 'supporters' not 'godparents' and like the parents, would not have to make the Christian promises.

## Coming to church?

If you are interested in having your child baptised, we would expect you to want to attend some of our services or events so you can get to know us as a church family and so that you can begin to grow in your own understanding of the Christian faith.

You are welcome to come to any services/events we hold, but you may find the following the most helpful:

**Messy Church:** Usually held once every couple of months at St Peter's Church on a Saturday morning 10.00am—12.00pm

God never overrides our ability to make our own choices and so since the beginning of creation set in motion a plan which would provide a way for us to be rescued from the punishment we deserve for rejecting him and to reconcile us to him again.

At the centre of this plan was the birth of the person Jesus Christ into our world; fully God and fully man. Jesus lived the perfect life and ended up being crucified on a cross. This was no human accident but part of God's plan to make forgiveness and reconciliation possible.

Christians are followers of Jesus Christ. We trust that his death on the cross has made us right with God again and have accepted his gift of life in all its fullness, starting now and stretching into eternity. The seal of that new life is the gift of the Holy Spirit who lives in all who believe and trust in Jesus. The Spirit helps us to live God's way and is transforming us to become more like Jesus. The Spirit also helps us to understand God's word – the Bible – so that we can understand his voice and his truth as we read it.

The Christian life is fantastic but does not remove us from the pain and difficulties we all face in life. Living God's way is fulfilling but equally demanding as God asks us to put him first, not ourselves. One of the great things about belonging to a church is that we can help and encourage one another in the life of faith, with its ups and downs, and we can share with others the love that God has offered to everyone through Jesus, his Son.

## What happens at a baptism/christening service?

Baptisms take place within one of our Sunday services—the Rector can give you more information about this depending on which church you are thinking about. During the baptism service, we do the following things:

- ✚ Thank God for the gift of life



- ✚ Make declarations about our own Christian faith
- ✚ Make promises to walk the journey of faith alongside those being baptised
- ✚ Baptise with water
- ✚ Make the sign of the cross on the forehead
- ✚ Receive support from the church family as they promise to welcome you into the church community
- ✚ Give a Bible, candle and certificate of Baptism

### Baptism Promises and Declarations

These are the promises and declarations that parents and godparents are asked to make publically during the service, for themselves and on behalf of their child:

*Minister:* God knows each of us by name and we are his. Parents and godparents, you speak for \_\_\_\_\_ today. Will you pray for them, and help them to follow Christ?

*Parents and godparents:*

**We will**

*Minister:* We all wander far from God and lose our way: Christ comes to find us and welcomes us home. In baptism, we respond to his call.

Do you turn away from sin? **I do.**

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

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

Do you trust in him as Lord? **I do.**



### What to think about:

#### 1. Your promises.

If you are bringing a child for 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 will want to reflect on this, talk to others, read or come along to church for a few weeks to find out more.

This commitment you will be making is between you and God; you just need to be happy to make these statements with integrity.

You are also committing to bringing up the child within the church family, which will mean thinking carefully about how you might belong to our church, and about how you as a family can grow on your journey of faith.



#### 2. Your choice of godparents.

Both parents and godparents make declarations about their faith and promises. We suggest you choose your godparents carefully, as it makes no sense to choose nice family or friends 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. Traditionally a child has 3 godparents (boys usually have 2 men & 1 woman; and girls 2 women & 1 man). Do make sure potential godparents understand the promises they would be making alongside you, to share in the Christian upbringing of your child.