



**Part of the
Caversham Group
Ministry**

BAPTISM

Information for enquirers

Vicar: Rev Derek Chandler
20 St. Barnabas Rd, Emmer Green
Reading, RG4 8RA
Tel: 0118 947 8239

BAPTISM - What's it all about?

Baptism & Thanksgiving - What's the difference?

The Baptism Service – When does it take place?

What do I have to do?

Making Decisions

A baptism is a very important occasion involving serious decisions. You have to say that you will help your child to walk in the way of Christ and “to take their place within the life and worship of Christ’s church”. You will have to answer questions on your child’s behalf, stating that you have decided to turn away from everything that is evil or sinful and turn instead towards Christ. The minister

will explain the words of the declarations in greater detail beforehand.

Alternatively, St. Barnabas offers a Thanksgiving Service, which recognises your thankfulness for the birth of your child and may be more suitable if you do not want, at this time, to make a commitment to the church on behalf of your child. This service acknowledges your expression of thanks to God for your child.

When did Christian Baptism start?

When Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan 2000 years ago, he became aware of God as his Father and felt the special presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This was a turning point in his life. You can find the story at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel in the New Testament. Later, after his death and resurrection, Jesus told his followers to make new disciples and baptise them too. This has been done ever since in Christian churches throughout the world.

Questions and Answers

Q. What's the difference between a baptism and a christening?

A. There is none. They are different names for the same thing.

Q. What if a teenager or adult wants to be baptised?

A. This is perfectly normal practice. Talk to the minister about baptism with confirmation. It's never too late.

Q. I'd like to be baptised again because I don't remember my baptism as a baby.

A. You can only be baptised once – but there are other ways, including special services, of renewing your commitment to Christ, publicly. Ask the minister about these.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. Baptism is free.

What will happen in the baptism service?

Your child's baptism will normally take place during the main Sunday service. It is a public celebration with the church and not a private ceremony.

The minister will ask you to come to church for a rehearsal so you know what it will be like.

During the service the minister will show you and your guests what to do and explain when to stand up or sit down.

When it is time for the baptism itself, the parents and godparents will be asked to stand and make the following six declarations:

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.

Godparents – their role and responsibilities

Godparents are people chosen by you, the parents, to pray for your child and set them a good example of Christian living. They can be relatives or friends, but they should be willing to make the declarations set out in the service. The church may give them a special card to put in a prominent place to remind them of their promises.

Q. Can anybody be a godparent?

A. Yes – so long as they have been baptised and are mature enough to act as godparent. It is advisable (but not essential) that they are also confirmed.

Q. How many can I have?

A. There should be three or more godparents, of whom two should be the same sex as the child.

Q. Does being a godparent involve being a legal guardian as well?

A. No, the roles are quite separate (although some godparents might be asked to fulfil both roles). You should decide this.

Shouldn't our children make their own decisions?

Some people worry that they are imposing views on their children, but from the moment they are born you make choices on their behalf. You don't wait until they are old enough to ask for milk before you feed them and in the same way it is right to give them spiritual nourishment and teach them about the love of God from an early age.

When they are old enough, they may choose to be confirmed and make an adult affirmation of faith.

A prayer for parents

O God, you have given us a share in the creation of new life.

When things go well, may we be thankful;

When we are in despair, comfort us;

When we have lost our hope, renew our strength;

When we are at peace, cherish us.

And at all times, O God, fill our hearts with love for our children, each other and you. Amen

Christopher Herbert – from *Prayers for Children*

What happens next?

You have already made the first step, which was to contact the minister and receive this leaflet. The process of your child's baptism will continue in the following stages:

A visit – two members of our church will visit you to answer your questions and help you make the final decision about baptism or thanksgiving. Please ask them whatever may be troubling you about the service, the declarations or any practical issues.

Your visitors will be :

.....

Rehearsal – whether you opt for thanksgiving or baptism, you will have a rehearsal in the church and meet the minister.

Your enquirers meeting has been arranged for:

.....

The service – we hope that your service will be part of the regular Sunday morning worship of the church so that we can welcome your child into the church. The minister will arrange this date with you.

The Church – St Barnabas is a lively church with many activities for all the community and all ages. We will keep you informed of the family services, special services (like Christmas and Easter) and other clubs and events so that you and your child may continue to take part in the activities of the church.

Contact details

If you have any other questions that you would like to ask, please contact:

Revd Derek Chandler, Vicar

20 St. Barnabas Rd, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8RA

Telephone: 0118 947 8239