

Christian
Baptism



at



St Mary's
Andover



St. Mary's Font

What is baptism?

Christian baptism (commonly known as christening) is a Christian sacrament which signifies spiritual cleansing and rebirth. Baptism comes from a Greek word meaning to 'immerse' and in the church service it is the ritual act, with the use of water, by which a person is admitted to membership of the Christian Church. Baptism marks the beginning of a lifetime journey of turning away from evil and living a Christian life.



Parents

When a child is too young to speak for him/herself the parents thank God for His gift of their baby and his/her new life as a Christian. So when as parents you bring your child for baptism, you will be asked to say, on behalf of your little one, that you believe in God and that you will bring up your child to follow Jesus.

Godparents

The role of godparents is to help parents bring up the child in the life of the church, and to set a Christian example through the life they lead. Being asked to be a godparent is not only a compliment and a privilege but also a responsibility. You are asked to share in the Christian life of a young child.

You will make the same promises as the parents at the Baptism Service. Godparents promise to support the parents in bringing the child up as a Christian within the family of the Church. The Church believes that those it baptizes should have the promise of a Christian upbringing. That is why the Church of England requires all godparents to be baptized themselves and to be confirmed as well.

The Church normally requires at least three godparents, often two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. Parents can also be godparents. When parents do not take part in church life themselves, we expect them to choose godparents who do.

Promises

When children are baptised their parents and godparents make the promises that they will:

- pray for them
- bring them up as Christians
- set them a good example of living as a Christian
- bringing them to church to share in worship



Making promises

If you feel that you can make these promises, and if you are resident in the parish or a regular member of St. Mary's Church, we would be delighted to speak further with you about baptism.

It is important to consider whether you can make these promises and decisions and answer the questions truthfully.

If you decide that you are unwilling or not ready to make the promises required in a baptism service, you may still want to give thanks for your child and pray for God's support throughout his or her life. If so, you should choose instead to have a **Service of Blessing** or **Thanksgiving**.

Non Parishioners

People are normally baptised in their own parish church. In the case of families who are not members of St. Mary's, the minister cannot proceed with baptism without the permission of the family's own parish minister. If this is the case, St. Mary's Church Office has a letter for the parents to present to their parish priest for his signature.

Baptism Preparation Evening

All families must attend a Baptism Preparation Evening before the baptism can take place.

At the Baptism Preparation Evening, Christian baptism will be explained. We will go through the service so that you know what to expect on the day. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions and meet other parents bringing their children to baptism. Baptism Application forms will be available to complete at this evening. There is a standard fee of £12 payable on the evening for a Baptism Certificate and Godparents Prayer Cards.

Baptism Preparation Evenings in 2012 will be held on:

Wednesdays 11 January, 8 February, 2 May, 13 June, 5 September and 7 November

Attending Church

Parents and, if possible godparents, are also required to attend a 10.30am Active All Age Worship Service at least once before the baptism of their child. This particular service is always held on the first Sunday of each month.

It is also a good idea to start attending church as a family as soon as possible.

Little Saints

The younger members of St. Mary's have their own time of age-related teaching and activities at 10.30am on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month in Young Church. They start in church for a time of worship before leaving to go to the Church Centre for their activities.

Baptism Services in 2012 at St. Mary's will be held at 2.30pm on Sundays 22 January, 19 February, 18 March, 15 April, 20 May, 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November and 9 December.

All friends and family members will be very welcome to attend your child's baptism.

Guests, particularly parents and godparents, are asked to be in Church at least 15 minutes before the start of the service. We would ask that videos and cameras are not used during the service, but at the end do feel free to gather around the font to record or take photographs of this very special occasion.



After your child's baptism, St. Mary's Church hopes that your family will become part of our large church family.

We warmly invite you to join us and worship with us.

The Reverend Canon John Harkin
Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Andover
Area Dean of Andover Deanery

Do contact the Parish Administrators (01264 366373) with any queries.

A Parent's Prayer

Father God

You have given us the joy of a new baby.

We thank you for and wish to share our lives with him/her and You.

Teach us how to grow together as a Christian family and always remember that you love and care for us as your children.

Amen



A Godparent's Prayer

Father God

I thank you for and ask that You will help me to set a good example to him/her.

I know I have not always done or said the right things but I would like to start again.

With Your help, Lord, I know this will happen.

Amen



St Mary's Church
Andover