

Parish Church of All Saints, Birchington

HOLY BAPTISM INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS
AND CANDIDATES



*I baptize you in the name
of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit*

What is baptism?

Also known as “christening”, baptism is the service in which the church welcomes your child into the family of God.

It’s the start of an amazing journey of faith for your child and a special day for all your friends and family, and for you local church, who will welcome you all with joy.

Your child is precious to you and precious to God. You want the very best for them, and so does God. You want them to make right choices in life, for themselves and for others.

A christening is just the beginning of this and so much more.

Over the years to come, it’s a journey you, the godparents, and your local church can share together with your child by:

- **Being there for your child** to talk about the bigger questions of life – about hope, faith, and love.
- **Praying for your child** through the ups and downs of their faith journey.
- **Showing them practically** how to make those good choices in life.
- **Helping them to learn more about their Christian faith**, through their church and in other ways.

So, by having a service of Holy Baptism, we make a commitment to start as we mean to go on.

We are here to support you in this, and we welcome you to our Church family.

What happens during a baptism service?

During the baptism your child will be baptised by being sprinkled with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He or she will be anointed with blessed oils.

Godparents will be chosen, who will make promises to support the child as they grow in faith and throughout their life.

You the parents will also make a commitment to support the child grow in faith.

We share some prayers, hear a reading from the Bible, sing some songs, and worship God. It's usually a very joyful service which lasts about 45 minutes.

If you would like us to, we will help you to choose songs and Bible reading(s) that are meaningful to you for this special day.

Who are Godparents? What does a Godparent have to do?

Choosing the right people as godparents for your child is a big decision. Here are some key things which might help you decide:

- Godparents will be people who will be in touch with your family for many years to come. They may be relatives or friends of the family.
- They will be people who you know you can trust, and who will be there for your child to talk about the bigger questions in life; questions about faith, hope, and love.
- They should feel ready to make some big promises about faith for your child in church at the baptism ceremony in front of everyone.
- Every child should have at least three godparents. Although there is no official maximum number of godparents, choosing three or four is usual.
- Because of the very special role godparents have in supporting your child's faith journey, *they must be baptised themselves.*

- If the people who you'd like to be godparents aren't baptised, they can still be involved in the service as "Supporting Friends".
- Parents may be godparents for their own child, provided they have at least one other godparent.
- If you're thinking about asking someone who is under 18 to be a godparent, talk to your vicar first. There is no minimum age for godparents, but they must be mature enough to understand the responsibilities they're taking on; we can help you decide if this is the right choice for your child and the young godparent.

We can always baptise would-be Godparents ahead of your child's baptism, if they would like this to be done!

Practical Steps

There are several things that you will need to do ahead of the baptism service:

- **Meet with our Priest-in-Charge, Rev. Mark** and discuss why you would like your child to be baptised

- **Agree a date and time for the service to be held in church:** this can be in our main Sunday service in the morning, or other dates are possible, for example, in the afternoon.
- **Choose Godparents:** find out if they were themselves baptised; if not, why not, ask whether they want to be baptised themselves or be recognised instead as “Supporting Friends”

Baptism service for _____

Meetings with Revd. Mark: _____

Service: _____

Baptism service: ___ am/pm on _____

Key information:

Your Priest is: Revd. Mark Ham

01843 840777

email: priestbmba@gmail.com

We look forward to welcoming you and your family and friends.

