

Some Q & As

Q Does my child need to be baptised in order to have a proper name?

A NO. Names are given by a child's parents and then entered on the birth certificate by a Registrar. The church has no authority to 'name' a child, though of course the child's given name is reinforced by its use in public at either a Thanksgiving and/or a Baptism.

Q Can my child be married in church if she/he is not baptised?

A YES. In England everyone has the legal right to be married in their local church. This right is irrespective of any religious view they hold or whether they're baptised or not.

Q Can my child have a Christian burial or cremation if she/he is not baptised?

A YES. Again, this is not affected by baptism at all.

Q What about 'godparents'?

A When a child is baptised he/she can't answer for him/herself. 'Godparents' are people who make the promises of baptism on the child's behalf, and promise to help the parents to bring the child up in the Christian Faith, by praying for them and helping them to prepare them for Confirmation. For this reason they must be baptised themselves. There are normally three Godparents.

For a 'Thanksgiving Service' parents can ask close friends or family to act as 'sponsors'; they promise to do all they can 'to help and support the parents in bringing up the child.'

For more information please contact the Vicar:

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The Vicarage
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WF17 9JJ

01924 473715

vicar@stpetersbirstall.co.uk

Or speak to Alison Sowden (Baptism Co-ordinator) after a 10:30am service.

A Parent's Prayer

*God our Creator,
we thank you for new life, for parenthood,
and for the gift of this dear child entrusted
to our care.*

*May we be patient and understanding,
ready to guide and forgive, so that through
our love they may know your love.*

*Please give us quiet strength and patient
wisdom as we nurture them in all that is
good, and true, and just,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



Celebrating New Life



Thanksgiving and Baptism

St Peters Birstall

Congratulations!

Congratulations on the birth of your child. We hope that you're fast settling into new routines together and enjoying each other's company.

And thank you for approaching St Peter's as you consider how to celebrate and thank God for this new addition to your family, and to ask his blessing on your child and home.

This leaflet will outline what we can offer you and how we can join in celebrating and praying for your family.

There are two services that we offer, and there is no charge for either of them.

Service of Thanksgiving

We always start with a 'Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child.' This service can happen as early in your child's life as you like; within the first few weeks if you want, and can normally be arranged at very short notice.

This service allows you to call together family and friends, and to:

- Thank God for this new life
- Join with us in asking God's blessing on your child and family
- Receive a special gift
- Invite friends and family to play a special part in your child's upbringing.

This service of Thanksgiving does not require any particular Christian commitment on your part and we are able to offer it to everyone.

It normally takes place during one of our 10:30am services. Once a month (normally on the first Sunday of the month) our 10:30 service is 'All-Age Worship' and, as the name implies, it is a service which aims to have something for people of all ages.

Moving on to Baptism

For many families a service of Thanksgiving is all that they are looking for but, for some, the further step of having your child baptised (or, as some call it, Christened) is appropriate.

If you are considering Baptism for your child a member of the congregation will become your 'Baptism Friend' and be someone who will help you as you move on.

The Baptism service is for children who have at least one parent who would consider themselves to be a committed Christian.

Unlike a Thanksgiving, a Baptism service is all about commitment. It celebrates God's commitment to us, and it is an opportunity for you, the parents, along with the godparents you choose, publicly to state your personal commitment to Jesus Christ and to bringing up your child to know and love Jesus within the family of the church.

Baptism services normally take place at a special service at 12 noon on a Sunday towards the end of the month. On the following Sunday we include 'The Welcome'

into the 10:30am service. This happens so that the members of the church will be able to welcome your child into the family of the church. This completes the Baptism which is, of course, only the first step in bringing your child up in the Christian Faith.

Preparing for Baptism

Because commitment is such a key part of the service we feel it is important to make sure that parents realise the importance of what they are saying and that they are ready to do so, and so if you want to have your child baptised we would ask you to come on a short Baptism Preparation Course. If any of the godparents live locally we would also encourage them to come on the course, but we realise in many cases that simply isn't possible.

Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God

Before considering Baptism we would ask that if you are not already you become a regular worshipper at St Peter's. You certainly don't have to come every Sunday, but we hope that you would come often enough to start to feel part of the church family of St Peter's and to contribute to our life together.

What to do next

- Come to a 10:30am service. You can check the time of the service by looking at the This Week page of the web site www.stpetersbirstall.co.uk
- Make an appointment to meet with Paul, the Vicar.