



ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH WITH ST MARK'S CHURCH

GETTING BAPTISED IN THE PARISH

What is Baptism?

Christian Baptism, commonly known as Christening for babies and young children, is a Christian sacrament that signifies spiritual cleansing and rebirth. Baptism comes from a Greek word meaning 'to immerse' and 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, being reconciled with God and living a Christian life.

Parents

When children are too young to speak for themselves, the parents give thanks for God's gift of their baby and his or her new life following Jesus. 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.

One important decision is the choice of godparents.

Why have 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. The Church of England expects you to choose at least three godparents, that they are all baptised themselves and prefers that they are also confirmed, when they make commitments for themselves.

More information can be found in the booklet [Guide for Godparents](#).



What are Godparents for? What do they do?

Godparents make the same promises as parents: that, on behalf of the child, they will:

- ▶ Pray for the child
- ▶ Encourage and support the parents in giving the child a Christian upbringing
- ▶ Set an example of Christian living
- ▶ Bring them to church to share in worship



Parents and godparents need to take these promises seriously, to think through the meaning of what is being asked of them and to reflect carefully on how they will fulfil their promises.

Adult Baptism

You are never too old to be baptised! Baptism is a visual testimony of commitment to Jesus Christ, reminding us and others that we are devoted to God and belong to Him. Before making that decision however, it can be helpful to join a group freely exploring the basics of the Christian faith so we offer the [Alpha Course](#).

Promises, Decision and Profession of Faith

During the Baptism Service adults, or parents and godparents, make a number of commitments and statements. They are asked questions which they answer together about turning to Christ and making a fresh start by saying sorry to God for anything they have said or done which is wrong. Before making these promises, they should ask themselves whether they have decided to follow Jesus and therefore whether they are ready, willing and able to say these things about their own faith.

Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

As an alternative to baptism, we can create the opportunity to publicly say thank you to God for the gift of this precious life, without the extra commitment and promises which baptism requires. There are no godparents.

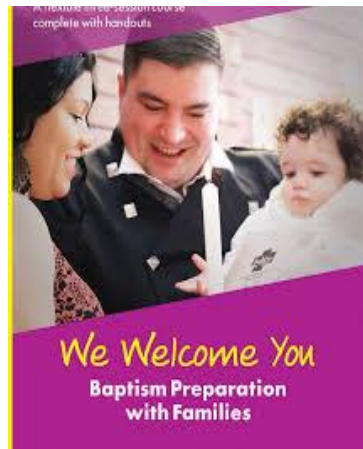
If you are unsure about a Thanksgiving, or would like to know more, please do contact one of our clergy team who will be happy to talk this through with you. Should you choose a Thanksgiving for your child, you may also have a Baptism Service for your child at a later date when you feel ready.

Steps towards Baptism or Thanksgiving

As part of the creation of our new extended parish, to be known as **Godalming Minster**, we join members of Busbridge Church on the first Sunday of each month for Muddy Church. This is an exciting activity, a new style of family worship as we get out and about and learn about God through nature. Baptisms and Thanksgivings now take place during one of the 10am Holy Communion Services held on the other Sundays of each month and we encourage you to join us for at least two of these services prior to the baptism. All friends and family members will be very welcome to attend your service, guests are asked to be in church 15 minutes before the start of the service.

During the service families will be seated together. We would ask that videos, cameras and mobile phones are not used during the service (please inform your guests), but at the end do feel free to gather round the font to record or take photographs of this very special occasion.

Following your initial enquiry, we will invite you to meet with one of our clergy team or to a **Baptism Preparation Evening**, these times together last approximately one hour. We briefly share what we do and offer as churches, before explaining what baptism is and what it means. We then explain the service, what words and questions are said, and share some practical details. There will be opportunities for any questions, completing an application form and confirming the baptism date. This is a relaxed evening simply to chat together so we all understand what will happen on the baptism day.



After the Baptism

Baptised adults and children will have become part of our church family and are welcome to join us for our Sunday services.

Families with children are very welcome and at the Parish Church there are supervised children's activities known as **Sunday Club**, a quiet area at the back of church and a separate playroom for children.

Squash, water and biscuits are available for the children after the service, with refreshments also available for adults at both churches.

We do pray you have found this leaflet to be helpful in providing you with the information you need to make a decision about the best way forward for you, your family and friends.

If you would like to discuss a Baptism at St Peter and St Paul's, please contact our Baptism Co-ordinator Sarah Tyler, email godalmingparishbaptism@gmail.com

or for a Baptism at St Mark's, please contact Reverend Sheila Samuels, telephone 01483 374784

