

"WHAT DO I DO NEXT?"

Talk to us about what you would like.

Our Contact Details are shown below.

If you'd like your child to be baptized, we shall arrange with you what preparation you'll need. If you're new to our church we'll talk about how best you can be involved with us. When this is under way we shall be able to set a date and make other arrangements for the service.

If you'd like a Thanksgiving, we'll arrange a date and talk with you about what it will involve.

If you're not sure, we'll be very glad to talk it through with you – with no obligation at all. We want simply to help you do the very best for your child, and to enjoy doing it.



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

"WE WANT OUR CHILD CHRISTENED"

Congratulations! You've had a baby. You want to give her, or him, the best start in life. You want to celebrate with friends and family – to let them share in your joy. You want to say "thank you" to God for the precious gift of a new life. And you've come to the church for us to help you do that.

We offer various possibilities: please take some time to think which is most suitable. The decision is yours, but we shall be glad to advise you. This leaflet suggests three possible approaches, outlined in more detail inside.

First is full-blown Christian **Baptism** (sometimes called 'christening'). This is a declaration of commitment as a believer in God and a follower of Jesus; so it's the official way, the 'sacrament', of joining the church. Adults and children are baptized as part of becoming Christians, and many Christian parents bring their children to be baptized, promising to bring them up in the Christian faith.

But perhaps you're not sure of your Christian commitment; or perhaps you don't want to make promises on behalf of your child. So secondly we offer a **Thanksgiving**, which provides everything in the paragraph above but without requiring you to declare publicly your Christian commitment or to promise to bring up your child in the church. As with Baptism, you're welcome to choose 'godparents' for your child, though they're not actually necessary and their rôle won't be quite the same.

Everyone is different, and so thirdly we're happy to tailor a service to your requirements. More details are given inside.

BAPTISM

You join us in church, often at one of our Sunday services or else for a separate ceremony. Either way, like marriage, it is a public event, when you enact outwardly what is true for you inwardly.

You promise to bring up your child as a Christian "*within the life and worship of Christ's Church*". Also to "*pray for them, draw them by your example into the community of faith and walk with them in the way of Christ*".

You commit yourself publicly to turn your back on living for yourself, and to be a follower instead of Jesus: "*I renounce evil ... I repent of my sins ... I turn to Christ*".

You declare that you believe in God, and also that you entrust yourself to him: "*I believe and trust in God the Father ... in Jesus Christ ... in the Holy Spirit*".

The minister names and baptizes your child, pouring water on him/her in the name of God.

Everyone welcomes your child into the church: "*We welcome you into the fellowship of faith; we are children of the same heavenly Father ...*". (If the Baptism is not taking place in a main Sunday service, the welcome will be repeated on a separate occasion – eg a Family Service.)

THANKSGIVING

We thank God for your child: "*God our creator, we thank you for the wonder of new life and for the mystery of human love. ... We thank you for the gift of this child, entrusted to our care..*"

You ask for God's help: "*May we be patient and understanding, ready to guide and to forgive, so that through our love they may come to know your love ...*"

The minister names and blesses your child.

We pray for you: "*Bless these parents and give them grace to love and care for their children. ... Surround this family with the light of your truth and the warmth of your love ...*"

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

Perhaps you are a committed Christian, but want to delay your child's baptism until s/he is older. We can offer a 'Dedication' – like the Thanksgiving above, but with a clearer expression of your Christian commitment.

Perhaps you're quite unsure about the Christian faith, but still want to say "thank you" for your child. We can devise something like the Thanksgiving above, but avoiding any phrases that you wouldn't feel honest saying.

Perhaps you don't want a public ceremony at all, but a more private occasion. We can meet with you in your home, or in church when no-one else is there, to thank God together.