



The Parish of Yate

The Diocese of Bristol

St. Mary's Church, Church Road, Yate
St. Nicholas' Church, Abbotswood, Yate
St. James' Church, Westerleigh,
St. Peter's Church, Wapley

BAPTISM POLICY

Version 2.0

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Baptism Policy

1. Background

The members of Yate Parish include both:

- people who are convinced that baptising the children of believing parents is right, and
- those that are convinced that baptism should only follow adult profession of faith.

Our policy must allow both positions to be held with integrity, recognising that both have long histories among Bible-believing Christians.

We recognise:

- a) that the Church of England encourages the practice of baptising children of believing parents.¹ This practice, commonly known as Christian Family Baptism, acknowledges that the Christian Family is made up of people of all ages, and God welcomes all equally. Scripturally, there is no distinction between “infant baptism” and “adult baptism” – baptism is baptism and there are several New Testament examples of whole families being baptised², but there is the recognition that where a child is baptised before they are able to make their own decision about becoming a follower of Jesus, the decision taken by their parents will require some form of public affirmation by them at a later date. In a Church of England context this normally happens at Confirmation, although it could equally happen through a service to affirm the baptismal vows.
- b) that as a parish we will regularly be approached by people outside the church family to have their children baptised / christened, and who make that request without any clear knowledge of the Christian message. This provides us with a missional opportunity to enable them to learn about God’s incredible love for all people and about Jesus’ saving work. If we ignore this opportunity and allow baptism to occur with no preparation or understanding of its spiritual significance we risk devaluing baptism and leaving it as an empty ritual. We should always allow parents the option of considering a Thanksgiving for the birth of their child as an alternative to Baptism.
- c) that the Church of England requires us to prepare adult candidates, or parents and godparents in the case of children, but does not allow us to refuse anyone baptism although this can be deferred for appropriate preparation of parents and god-parents.³ We believe that we should take this preparation seriously and rise to the missional opportunities that such preparation offers. The preparation should include attendance at services prior to the baptism to get to know and become part of the community of faith
- d) that within the missionary context of the work of the Parish and the current mission emphasis of our Vision & Strategy, baptism provides opportunities for engaging with people who are not yet members of the church. The post-Christendom and post-modern nature of the culture around us requires us to respond to all enquiries for Baptism with pastoral sensitivity to engage with people where they actually are while aiming to preserve the theological integrity of Baptism as a sacramental sign of membership of the church.

Traditionally the Church of England has maintained a stance between the Catholic view that justification is brought about in baptism and the view of the more extreme end of the Protestant movement, which maintains that baptism is merely symbolic and doesn’t do anything at all. It views baptism as a pledge of God’s acceptance and a sign of his loving welcome to all, but it does not confer salvation automatically or unconditionally. It is like a seed that only germinates when it

¹ Article 27

² Lydia’s household (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailer’s household (Acts 16:33), Cornelius’ household (Acts 11:14) and Stephanus’ household (! Cor. 1: 16)

³ Canon B22(4)

encounters the water of repentance and the sunshine of faith.⁴ In other words it only becomes effective when the person who has been baptised repents, believes and makes room for the Holy Spirit in their life. It is a sign of what God has done and will do, rather than what we do and is testament to God's love rather than our faith.⁵ This is the stance adopted by this policy and is why we consider some form of preparation essential to ensure that those coming for baptism understand the nature of the ceremony of Baptism

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to any person (whether child or adult) seeking baptism within any of the four churches within the Parish of Yate.

As the principle qualification for baptism is simply the desire to be baptised, we will welcome all from this parish, including those who regularly attend worship here but live in another parish in the wider area. This includes:

1. Anybody, child or adult, who lives in this parish
2. Anybody on the electoral roll of this parish ⁶
3. A child with at least one parent on the electoral roll of this parish
4. A child of parents married at any of the four churches within the parish
5. A child with grandparents or great grandparents who are on the electoral roll of this parish

Those outside the parish and without a direct link with the church will be encouraged to approach their local church for baptism there. In the event that we do agree to baptise anyone who is currently living outside the parish we will make contact with the incumbent of the parish in which they live so that a relationship can be fostered with the local church.

3. Definitions

- i. The Parish – refers to the Parish of Yate which incorporates St. Mary's Church, Yate, St. Nicolas' Church, Abbotswood, St. Peter's Church, Wapley and St James' Church, Westerleigh.
- ii. PCC – refers to the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Yate, which acts as the Trustee body for the parish and therefore carries the legal responsibility for its activities
- iii. Children - refers to any person under the age of 18 years
- iv. Vulnerable Adults - refers to any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation
- v. Staff - refers to all those employed the Parish of Yate PCC or by the Diocese of Bristol and assigned to the Parish of Yate, other than external contractors engaged on a contract for the provision of services

The aim of the policy is to: -

- Avoid confusion by ensuring consistency and uniformity of practice across the four churches within the Parish
- Create clarity as to when baptism is appropriate and when it may be deferred or refused
- Enable Parish staff to respond clearly to any enquiries by reference to this policy rather than having to seek a decision from the Rector
- Enable us to publish a clear policy on our web-sites so that those interested in knowing more about baptism may know where we stand
- Clarify our part in God's mission to all people and the opportunities that Baptism presents to encourage a growth in understanding of and faith in God's incredible love for all people

⁴ Baptism – its purpose, practice and power: Michael Green: Hodder London [1987] – p.56

⁵ Baptism – its purpose, practice and power: Michael Green: Hodder London [1987] – p.77

⁶ Anyone worshipping with us (at any of the four churches) for a period of six months is eligible to register to be placed on the Electoral Roll

5. Our Policy

- 5.1. Before Baptism can take place there should be some expression of desire (either by the candidate themselves, or in the case of an infant, by at least one parent) to follow Jesus and claim the benefits of his saving work.⁷ It does not need to be well articulated and may, in part, be evidenced by seeking baptism in the first place. We also recognise that growth in faith and maturity is a lifelong journey and that faith may only be minimal at the time of baptism, but it does need to be real as it will be affirmed in the declarations made as part of the Baptism service. The baptism of babies and very young children requires the support of at least one believing parent.
- 5.2. Baptism and Thanksgiving will normally be presented as part of the preparation process as alternative options so that the choice is understood and an informed choice can be made.
- 5.3. We affirm and respect the preference of some parents who wish to leave the baptism of their children until later years
- 5.4. We recognise and respect those parents who, in all in conscience, feel that they are not able to make the necessary Christian promises required in baptism whilst keeping their personal integrity. In such circumstances we will encourage such parents to consider the option of a service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child⁸, which does not require parents to commit to promises but enables them to celebrate the new birth and to give thanks.
- 5.5. In accordance with the practice of the Church of England we require parents to go through preparation before their children are baptized. We take the view that good preparation is an essential part of the baptism process, and concur with the view of world-wide Anglicanism⁹ that parents should be actively encouraged to participate in the life of our Parish community prior to the baptism of their children. As part of the preparation parents and adult candidates will be encouraged to attend some of our regular services¹⁰. The importance of attending some services will be fully explained to parents in terms of the need to get to know the spiritual family into which their child will be welcomed at baptism.
- 5.6. The nature of the preparation may vary according to circumstance and will be at the Rector's or the Team Vicar's discretion, but will always include making sure that the parents study the teaching and promises in the baptism service and that the significance of the gospel is explained. This will normally happen at one of the monthly Baptism Preparation sessions, but may happen at a home visit.
- 5.7. At the end of the preparation, if at least one parent is willing to make the promises in the Baptism service then the Baptism may proceed and a firm booking may be made, but Thanksgiving should be presented as a valid and attractive alternative. We cannot prove that people mean those promises, but we must make the meaning of them as clear as possible. In the event that one parent expressly refuses to consent to their child being baptised we will refer the matter to the Diocesan Adviser on such matters and only proceed with the baptism on his/ her authority. If Thanksgiving is to be an alternative to Baptism it should be given equal weight with the child being taken in to the minister's arms, and, should the normal practice in baptism be to give a book or a Bible, there should be the same book or Bible given.
- 5.8. We recognise that realistically there is unlikely to be contact with godparents before the service. The information gathered at the initial enquiry deliberately does not ask for

⁷ Matthew 28: 19-20

⁸ Service of thanksgiving for the gift of a child in Common Worship (Christian Initiation) p.16

⁹ "Toronto Statement" – Walk in Newness of Life: "Parents who have not participated actively in the eucharistic fellowship should be integrated into the worshipping community prior to the baptism of their children. Efforts to encourage a family's active participation in the community after the child's baptism are predictably unsuccessful where a parent has not already been integrated."

¹⁰ Our expectation is that families will attend public worship at one of the churches in the parish at least twice a month for three months.

the names of godparents in order not to raise false hopes. However, if baptism is going ahead then we will ask for the godparents' names and provide some information to be sent to them explaining the service, its meaning and their responsibilities

- 5.9. As baptism involves welcoming the candidate into the Christian family baptisms will normally take place within the context of the principal church services within the Parish so that new Christians can be welcomed by their brothers and sisters of faith in reality and not vicariously. We include Sunburst and Messy Church as among the "principal services within the Parish", and are willing to consider whether baptism can be conducted at Praise & Play. Only in very exceptional circumstances will "private" baptisms be considered¹¹
- 5.10. We will offer a range of options to parents as to where and when they can have their child baptised. This range will normally include:
- the 10.45am Morning Worship at St. Mary's on the first Sunday of the month,
 - the 10.30am Morning Worship at St. James' on the second Sunday of the month,
 - the 9.30am Sunburst service on the third Sunday of the month, and
 - the 10.30am Morning Worship at St. Nicholas' on the fourth Sunday of the month.
- Baptisms will only be offered at St. Peter's Church where the candidate has a special connection with the church and is willing for the baptism to be part of the 6.30pm Evening Prayer service on either the first or third Sunday of the month
- 5.11. We will encourage the baptism of adults and older children who have become part of the worshipping community of the Parish and who have not previously been baptised. However, this will take place after they have clearly accepted that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour and confirmed their belief in the essential elements of the Christian faith as defined by the Apostle's Creed
- 5.12. We recognise that it is not possible to be baptised a second time and will recognise the baptism of those baptised in another Christian denomination that uses water and undertakes this commitment 'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.
- 5.13. We recognise that for Christians who have been baptised some time ago there is value in renewing their baptismal promises. Accordingly we will encourage any who wish to renew their baptismal commitments and will, from time to time, provide services where this can be done – e.g. at Easter or as part of a return to a more intentional Christian way of life
- 5.14. Confirmation in many ways completes our Baptism as we profess our faith with our own lips and as the Bishop lays hands on our head, praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us. So this service is reserved for adults and young people who are able to make their own promises.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Procedure for booking of baptisms

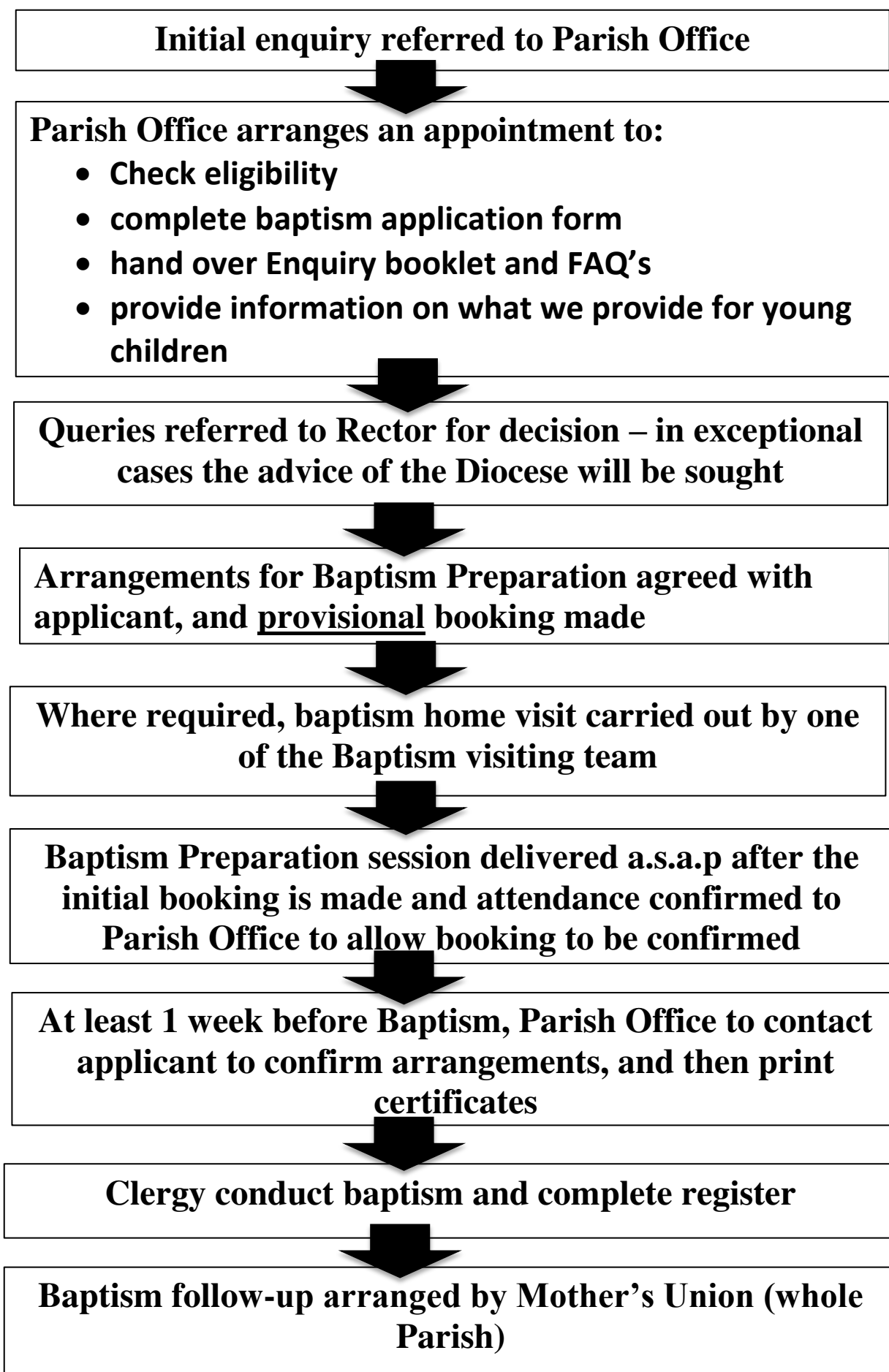
Appendix 2 – FQA's leaflet to be sent to all candidates and parents bringing children for baptism

Appendix 3 – Baptism Enquiry booklet to be sent to all candidates and parents bring children for baptism

Appendix 4 - Order of Service for Morning Worship with Baptism

¹¹ Canon B21 (and B22(9))

Appendix 1 – Procedure for booking Baptism



Appendix 2 – Frequently Asked Questions

We in the Parish Yate, are delighted that you are considering baptism, whether it is for yourself or your child (baptism is also known as 'christening'). Our four churches (St. Mary's, St. Nicholas', St. James, Westerleigh and St. Peter's, Wapley) welcome the baptism of infants and children as well as adults and we are committed to providing a place of welcome and hospitality in which those coming forward for baptism, together with parents and godparents can explore and grow in the Christian faith and remain faithful to their baptismal promises.



1. What should I do first of all?

- Parent(s)/Adults are first encouraged to come along to the worship at one of our churches to ensure that they are comfortable with the type of worship and happy to make that church their spiritual home.
- When you are sure this is the church for you, you should speak to the Vicar or to the Parish Administrator and they will agree a date and time and complete a Baptism application form.
- We encourage Parents and where possible, Godparents to come along to six of our family-friendly services – these take place every Sunday at St. Mary's at 9.30am (known as Sunburst) and at St. Nix at 10.30am on the second Sunday of the month. There is also a monthly service at St. Nix called Messy Church which takes place on a Saturday afternoon. These services will help to give you a basic grasp of the life and worship of the Christian community and enable you to feel part of this worshipping community.

2. Are there any special legal requirements to be baptized in the Church of England?

There are certain legal requirements that must be met, but these shouldn't be an obstacle to baptism.

- Parent(s)/Adults must either be resident in the parish of Yate or a member of one of our four churches. You can find out which is your parish church, by going to the "A Church Near You" website and entering your postcode. The website is: <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/parishmap.php>. It is also possible to have your child baptized at one of our churches if you have a qualifying connection to the Parish. The Vicar can advise you of this. If you are concerned that you may not qualify, then please don't give up and speak to the Vicar or the Administrator and they will do their best to help you.
- Where parents are bringing a child to baptism, at least one parent must be baptized. If one parent is not baptized, they may like to consider baptism for themselves.

3. What does it cost to have a baptism?

There is no Baptism fee but you may like to consider a donation as a contribution towards the certificates, candles and administrative and service costs. If this can be Gift Aided, the Church is able to provide Gift Aid forms or envelopes. We suggest a donation of £15

4. Do I have to go through any special Teaching?

In baptism, God pours out his Grace upon those who come to be baptized. To prepare you for this special moment you will be invited to a Baptism Preparation evening. There will also be an explanation of the order of service so that it will be familiar to you on the day. Godparents are invited to this session but we recognise that it may not always be possible for Godparents to attend.

5. When do Baptisms take place?

Baptisms take place during the main Sunday services as follows:

1st Sunday of each month	10.45am at St. Mary's Church
2 nd Sunday of each month	10.30am at St. James' Church, Westerleigh
3 rd Sunday of each month	9.30am (Sunburst) at St. Mary's Church
4 th Sunday of each month	10.30 am at St. Nicholas' Church

6. Do I have to be a regular Church-goer to get my child baptized?

We recognize that many people who want a baptism for their child may not be regular Church-goers. Since the service of Baptism requires promises on the part of the parent(s) and godparents to bring their child up as a worshipping member of the Church and to instruct their child in the Christian faith, it is hoped that the family will join in the worshipping life of the Church at least up until the date of Baptism. There is a special service for Children & Young Families each week at St. Mary's (9.30am – Sunburst service) and children's groups at St. Nicholas' Church at 10.30 that parents may want to consider for their children, including Messy Church at 4.30pm on the third Saturday of the month. Yate Parish is wonderfully friendly and lively and will do all that it can to welcome you and your child.

7. Is there a special number of Godparents?

It is usual for there to be between three and five godparents and traditionally, for girls to have 2 godmothers and 1 godfather and for boys to have 2 godfathers and 1 godmother. This is merely a guideline and there may be exceptions to this. The role of the Godparent is to pray for their godchild, to help them find their place in the Church. It is a requirement that godparents are baptized. If a chosen godparent is not baptized and they are committed to their role as godparent, it is possible for them to be baptized prior your child's baptism. They will require some teaching beforehand and this can be tailored to meet their needs. For more information, please speak to the Rector or Team Vicar. It should be noted that there is only enough space in the baptism register to note four god-parents, although others can fulfil this role without being noted in the register.

8. Baptizing Adults

The Church is aware that there are many adults who were not baptized as children. Often adults in this situation will feel like they have missed their chance for baptism. We would like to reassure you that it is more and more commonplace to baptize adults and these are joyful and wonderful occasions. Baptism preparation for adults is tailored to meet the needs of the individual and may include a recommendation to go on the Alpha Course, and the Baptism will take place during the main Sunday morning worship.

9. Can I be baptized by Immersion?

Yes, if you would like to be! Many people prefer to be baptized at the font inside the church where water is poured upon them. It is becoming more common for adults to choose to be baptized by full immersion. We are happy to offer baptism at the font or by full immersion according to a person's preference.

10. A Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing

Many people feel they would like to give thanks for their child in Church in a very special way, to seek God's blessings for their child and mark the occasion with a family celebration. For some people, however, baptism can feel like it is too big a commitment which they are not yet ready to make. In this case, parents may like to consider a special service of Thanksgiving and Blessing. This is a shorter service without the water or the promises of baptism. A service of Thanksgiving and Blessing occurs during the main Sunday Service (see para. 5 above). For more details, please speak to the Rector or Team Vicar

Appendix 3 – Enquiry Booklet

[we need to develop our own Baptism Enquiry booklet by updating the current booklet and incorporating any ideas from what others are doing that we feel will help to enhance our mission. Below are two examples from other churches to help us develop our own booklet]

CONGRATULATIONS!

The birth of some children is carefully planned; others come as a surprise. But it is always a wonderful privilege - and a great responsibility - to care for a young child.

So it's very natural to want to give thanks to God for one of the greatest gifts he has ever given you, and to ask for his blessing on your child and your family.

We will be delighted to arrange a service for your child.

TWO OPTIONS

Things have changed a little in the Church since we were children ourselves. Parents now have two options.

You can choose to have a Thanksgiving Service only for your child. This is described in greater detail on pages 4 and 5 of this booklet.

Or you can choose to have a Thanksgiving Service, followed some weeks later by a Baptism Service. The Baptism Service is described on pages 6 and 7.

Every child, therefore, has a Thanksgiving Service. Some families choose to have a Baptism as well; other families feel that the Thanksgiving alone is more suitable for them.

THIS BOOKLET

The purpose of this booklet is to explain these two options.

On the back page it also gives guidance on Choosing Godparents. Please read the booklet carefully.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

In a few days time, you will be telephoned by a couple from the Church who will arrange to visit you in your home.

They can answer questions you may have about your choice of Thanksgiving or Thanksgiving and Baptism. They will also give you a simple Application form to fill in at your leisure and return to the Church Office (address on the form).

COMING TO CHURCH

We strongly encourage you to come as a family to All Saints on Chapel Green or St. Richard's (Fermor Road) as often as 'You can over the next weeks.

Thanksgivings and Baptisms are now always part of ordinary Sunday services, and you will very likely see one in action and understand it more fully.

In addition, many families start coming to Church after the birth of a child because they know they will need God's help in caring for their new member. Coming to All Saints or St. Richard's for several weeks will help you decide whether you want to make the knowledge of Christ's love part of your family life.

The main services are:

All Saints, 10.45am; St. Richard's 11.00am.

Babies are very welcome; we like their noise! There is a room at the back for feeding a child in privacy.

OPTION ONE: THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Thanksgivings take place within a normal Sunday service. They are very happy occasions and quite brief. The whole service will last about an hour; the Thanksgiving will be about 5 minutes of that hour.

WHAT HAPPENS?

There are three principal ingredients in a Thanksgiving Service:

1. Thanking God.

As the name suggests, the whole purpose of the service is to say a heartfelt thank you to God for his wonderful gift to you of your child. The Vicar will say these prayers on your behalf.

2. Praying for your family

We will pray for your child, for any other children you may already have and especially for you as parents, in your responsibility of bringing up this child.

3. Receiving a book

You will be given an illustrated book called 'Jesus', about the life of Christ. This is:

- as a permanent reminder of the Thanksgiving Service
- for you yourselves to read as soon as possible, to understand Christ and his teaching more fully

- for you to read to your child in a few year's time, when (s)he is old enough to understand

WHO COMES?

We encourage you to invite as many people as you like to the Thanksgiving Service: Godparents, Grandparents, Family

Members, Neighbours and Friends. Often people have a big party afterwards.

OTHER DETAILS

The child can of course come dressed entirely as you like.

Some parents bring their child in a long Christening robe; other bring them in their ordinary clothes.

There is no fee for a Thanksgiving Service.

WHY THANKSGIVING ALONE?

There are probably 3 main reasons why an increasing number of families choose the option of a Thanksgiving Service only:

1. They simply want to give thanks to God for their child. This is their main wish and they have no desire to do anything more.
2. They are making no promises. In the Baptism Service parents make some very serious promises and commitments (see next two pages); there are no promises made when parents opt for a Thanksgiving alone.
3. They would prefer their child to experience baptism when (s)he is older. Parents may still pray with their child, read them Bible stories and tell them about Jesus. But the child will experience being baptised, and later be able to remember it. All sorts of people are now choosing this option.

OPTION TWO: THANKSGIVING AND BAPTISM

Baptisms also take place within a normal Sunday service; this is now the standard practice throughout the Church of England. The whole service will last about an hour; the Baptism will be about 7 minutes of that hour.

WHAT HAPPENS?

There are three principal ingredients in a Baptism Service:

1. Parents and Godparents make promises

At three points in the Baptism Service, parents and godparents together make

promises to God about their own Christian faith and about bringing up their children to know Christ and to come regularly to Church.

2. Water is poured over the child

The Vicar will take your child into his arms and pour water three times over the child's head, baptising 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'.

3. The child is welcomed into the Church Family

In Baptism you will be making a commitment to bring up your child as a member of the Church community. So the whole congregation welcomes its newest member.

THE PROMISES

Quite rightly, people want to know what promises they will be making to God, so that they can decide whether Baptism will be right for their family.

Essentially you will be making 4 promises:

1. To pray regularly for your child.
2. To teach your child about Jesus: his life, teaching, death and rising again to new life.
3. To come to church from now on as a family at least once a month.
4. To bring your child to Sunday School at least from the age of three.

You will be given a beautifully produced Certificate to show that your child has been baptised and that you have made these promises. You will sign the Certificate, to show that you accept these commitments.

There is no fee for the service or the Certificate. You can have the Certificate framed for a small charge.

PREPARATION EVENINGS

There is a lot to consider in deciding to have a Baptism for your child. A young couple from the Church, with children of their own, hold three relaxed preparation evenings in their own home; you will need to go to these and can of course bring your baby along. Several parents only decide during these preparation evenings whether to ask for a Baptism for their child.

WHY THANKSGIVING AND BAPTISM?

There are two main reasons why families choose the option of Thanksgiving and Baptism:

1. They want to make promises before God. Many couples feel they made promises before God at their wedding, and this has helped them to be better husbands and

wives. Now they want to make promises before God after the birth of their child, because they feel this will help them to be better parents.

2 They want to become part of All Saints and St. Richard's. Baptism is a way of identifying you and your family with your local church. Many couples want to do this after their child has been born, even if they have not been regular churchgoers in the past. This is incidentally why baptism almost always takes place in the parish where you live.

GODPARENTS

It is normal to have Godparents, whichever option you choose:

Thanksgiving Service only or Thanksgiving followed by Baptism.

HOW MANY?

You may have as many Godparents as you want for your child. Traditionally, a boy has two Godfathers and one Godmother; a girl has two Godmothers and one Godfather.

You may have chosen Guardians for your child, people who would bring up your child if something happened to you. It is not necessary for the Guardian to be the child's Godparent; they have quite different roles.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

All Godparents promise to help your family in two ways:

1. To Care for your child, taking a special interest in their Godchild.
2. To Pray for your child, asking God to bless your family.

GODPARENTS AND THE BAPTISM SERVICE

If you choose to have Baptism as well as Thanksgiving, the Godparents also promise:

3. To Encourage your child to learn about Christ and to join the local Church.

If you choose the second option (Thanksgiving and Baptism) the Godparents must themselves be baptised. We will send them a letter explaining their responsibilities. If they are living near Crowborough, we will invite them to join with you in the Preparation Evenings; and we will give them a card as a reminder of the Baptism Service.

OUR PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN FAMILY BAPTISM FROM NON-CHURCH-ATTENDING ENQUIRERS

Unless a child is dangerously ill Baptism always takes place during the main service in Church at 10.30am on a Sunday morning. The service lasts just over an hour and in addition to the baptism itself includes songs of worship, reading of the Bible, teaching from the Bible and prayers led from the front. You are very welcome to hang around for refreshments after the service and chat to people.

We don't permit photography of any sort during the service because it is an act of worship. However, you are very welcome to take photographs after the service.

3.1 Initial enquiries may come through the parish office, by telephone or by personal contact. A leaflet and application for Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child [TGC] should be given or sent to the enquirer.

3.2 It may be that enquirers want to discuss this before submitting an application. If so, one of the clergy or a lay member of the Baptism Team (lay visitor) should visit or meet with the family.

3.3 On receipt of an application, a lay visitor (ideally) or a clergy member will visit to arrange a date for a TGC. The lay visitor's small group should, where possible, be involved in prayer for, and befriending of the family.

3.4 By agreement with the Vicar, a TGC may be held in a Sunday morning service, on a Sunday afternoon in Church, in the family home (at a mutually agreed time), or in another suitable venue on the occasion of a gathering of the family and friends (eg. a hotel).[6] It will usually be conducted by one of the clergy, but when deemed appropriate a Reader might officiate. Members of the small group that has been praying for the family should be encouraged to attend.[7]

3.5 If, subsequent to the TGC rite, the family express an interest in proceeding to Christian Family Baptism, those who have had previous contact should visit to (a) invite the family to begin attending church (if they have not already done so), and (b) to attend a pre-Alpha course[8] (6-7 weeks duration). The relevant small group should continue prayer support, care for the family in all kinds of informal ways, and take care to invite them to any social occasions the group runs.

3.6 Depending on demand (ie numbers), pre-Alpha courses will normally run termly (ideally lay led). The aim here is to present the Gospel in as accessible a way as possible. At its conclusion the family choose whether to proceed with baptism, or defer. One of the clergy will normally conclude the course with an evening on Baptism.

3.7 For a Baptism to proceed the requirements of Canon B23 must be observed. That is that for each infant to be baptised there should be three communicant godparents.[9]

3.8 Baptisms will take place in a morning service (either an all-age service or Morning Worship, though preferably not Holy Communion).

3.9 Following Baptism, it is hoped that families will be worshipping. This should be encouraged. Attendance at an Alpha Course will be encouraged with a view to parents being confirmed (if they have not already been so).

3.10 It is not our policy to baptise the children of families resident outside of our parish – except in the case of those who regularly worship at INSERT: Name of Parish/Church, and whose names are on our electoral roll.

4. OUR PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN FAMILY BAPTISM FROM CHURCH MEMBERS

4.1 The choice of whether to bring young children either to Christian Family Baptism (CFB) or Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child (TGC) (sometimes called "Dedication") is for the parents in consultation with the Vicar.

4.2 Parents choosing CFB, might consider first coming for TGI, the reason for this being that it promotes a sense of unity across the congregation and parish – everyone beginning, as it were, from a common starting point. This could have a supportive impact upon the policy outlined (so far) above.

4.3 Preparation should be agreed with the Vicar and be appropriate to the family concerned.

4.4 Baptisms will normally take place in a main morning service.

5. OUR PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF OLDER CHILDREN

5.1 By "older children" we mean those able to understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus (in ways appropriate to their age) and able to make the promises in the Baptism service for themselves.

5.2 Preparation for primary age children should make use of the material in When a Child asks to be Baptised[10] [or a suitable alternative]. Ideally, this should be done by the parents. However, there might be circumstances in which another adult might be appropriate (eg a godparent). The clergy will be available for support, and will meet with the child(ren) and parents prior to baptism.

5.3 Preparation for teenagers should be conducted by the Youth Worker (involving others) in consultation with parents, and with clergy in overall support and supervision. It is probably best for this to be done in a group (using a course like Youth Alpha). This might be done in conjunction with Confirmation preparation for those teenagers baptised in infancy or early years.

5.4 Each child or teenage candidate should have at least one "sponsor" who is a practising Christian.[11]

5.5 Teenagers should normally be ready to be confirmed as well as baptised.

5.6 The mode of Baptism will normally be by immersion in a main service. Where this takes place with Confirmation, the Bishop may wish to be the baptising minister.

5.7 In the case of child or teenage candidates whose parents do not worship with us, we would only baptise with their consent and good will.

6. OUR PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF ADULT CANDIDATES

6.1 Candidates for "adult" baptism should be able to articulate their personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, a relationship with God as Father, and an experience of the Holy Spirit.

6.2 Clergy (or others) will be available to provide preparation. New Christians should have completed Alpha (or something similar).

6.3 Candidates should choose at least one "sponsor".

6.4 The mode will be immersion at the main service, or a specially arranged service.

7. OUR PRACTICE IN RESPECT OF PERSONS ALREADY BAPTISED REQUESTING "RE-BAPTISM"

7.1 Theologically (in Anglican terms), there is only one Baptism whether administered in infancy or later years.

7.2 That said, we recognise that there is sometimes a real pastoral issue here to which we have responsibility to minister[12]. People baptised very young, sometimes feel that their baptism (which they can't remember) is lacking, in some sense.

7.3 There are two options. (a) For some, the (purely verbal) renewal of baptismal vows (either at a Baptism or Confirmation service) will suffice. (b) Others may sense the need for something more than this; in such cases we offer a renewal of baptismal vows with immersion in water.[13]

7.4 Where this latter option is chosen it is administered on the understanding that it is an experiential renewal of an existing and valid baptism, for pastoral purposes. As such, it makes up for a perceived lack – ie a personal profession of faith and the experience of immersion in water.

Appendix 4 – Order of Service for Morning Worship with Baptism

Welcome

	Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you		Parents and Godparents, the Church receives <i>these children</i> with joy. Today we are trusting God for <i>their</i> growth in faith. Will you pray for <i>them</i> , draw <i>them</i> by your example into the community of faith and walk with <i>them</i> in the way of Christ?
All	and also with you.		
	This is the day that the Lord has made.	All	With the help of God, we will
All	Let us rejoice and be glad in it.		
	We rejoice today as we thank God for the gift of life and bring <i>these children</i> for baptism.		In baptism, <i>these children</i> begin <i>their</i> journeys in faith. You speak for <i>them</i> today. Will you care for <i>them</i> and help <i>them</i> to take <i>their</i> place within the life and worship of Christ's Church?
	God our creator, we thank you for the wonder of new life and for the mystery of human love. We give thanks for all whose support and skill surround and sustain the beginning of life. As Jesus knew love and discipline within a human family, may <i>these children</i> grow in strength and wisdom. As Mary knew the joys and pains of motherhood, give these parents your sustaining grace and love, through Jesus Christ our Lord,	All	With the help of God, we will
	Amen	The Decision for Christ	
			In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask: Do you turn to Christ?
All		Ps & Gps	I turn to Christ.
			Do you repent of your sins
		Ps & Gps	I repent of my sins
Hymn			Do you renounce evil?
	The Family of God seek his forgiveness	Ps & Gps	I renounce evil
	Christ came in humility to share our lives: forgive our pride. Lord, have mercy	We declare what the Family of God believes	
All	Lord, have mercy		Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess together [<i>with these candidates</i>] the faith of the Church.
	Christ came with good news for all people forgive our silence. Christ have mercy		Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?
All	Christ, have mercy		We believe and trust in him.
	Christ came in love to a world of suffering: Forgive our self-centredness. Lord, have mercy	All	
All	Lord, have mercy		Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?
	A Reading from God's Word		We believe and trust in him.
	The Message (a short talk)	All	
	Preparation for Baptism		Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?
	<i>Where the candidate is able to answer for themselves</i>		We believe and trust in him.
	Do you wish to be baptized?	All	
Candidate	I do		This is the faith of the Church.
	Faith is the gift of God to his people. In baptism God is adding to our number those whom he is calling. People of God, will you welcome <i>these children</i> and uphold <i>them</i> in <i>their</i> new life in Christ?	All	This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
		We gather around the water of baptism	
		<i>Parents & God-parents move to the font with the Minister</i>	
All	With the help of God, we will	All	Praise God who made heaven and earth who keeps his promise for ever.
			Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.
 Father, for your gift of water in creation,
All we give you thanks and praise.
 For your Spirit, sweeping over the waters,
 bringing light and life,
All we give you thanks and praise.
 For your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
 baptized in the river Jordan,
All we give you thanks and praise.
 For your new creation,
 brought to birth by water and the Spirit,
All we give you thanks and praise.
 For your grace bestowed upon us
 your children, washing away our sins,
All we give you thanks and praise.
 Father, accept our sacrifice of praise;
 may your holy and life-giving Spirit
 move upon these waters.
All Lord, receive our prayer
 Restore through them the beauty
 of your image in creation and bring those
 who are baptized to new birth in
 the family of your Church
All Lord, receive our prayer
 For all might, majesty, dominion and
 power are yours, now and forever
All Amen

The Baptism

N____, I baptize you in the name of the Father,
 and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen

The Signing with the Cross

Christ claims you for his own.
 Receive the sign of his cross.
 May God, who has received you by baptism
 into his Church, pour upon you the riches of
 his grace, that within the company of Christ's
 pilgrim people you may daily be renewed
 by his anointing Spirit, and come to
 the inheritance of the saints in glory.
All Amen

A Prayer for the journey ahead

As part of the Church of Christ we all have a
 duty to support and encourage *these children*
 by prayer, example and teaching. As *their*
 parents and godparents, you have the prime
 responsibility for guiding and helping *them* in
their early years. This is a demanding task for
 which you will need the help and grace of God
 Therefore we pray for you, that you may have
 grace to guide *these children* in the way of
 faith. **Amen**

The Welcome into God's Family

There is one Lord, one faith,
 one baptism. N____, by one Spirit
 we are all baptized into one body
**We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;
 we are children of the same heavenly Father;
 we welcome you.**

The Peace

We are all one in Christ Jesus;
 we belong to him through faith,
 heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.
 The peace of the Lord be always with you
All And also with you
We greet one another

Hymn

We Pray to God on behalf of others

This response may be used
 Lord, Your kingdom come
All Your will be done

The Collect (prayer for today) is read

We end by saying the Lord's Prayer together

**Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come
 your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins, as we forgive
 those who sin against us.
 Lead us not into temptation
 but deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours
 now and for ever.
 Amen**

We prepare to leave as the light of the world

The Minister gives a lighted candle
 God has delivered us from the dominion of
 darkness and has given us a place with the
 saints in light
 You have received the light of Christ;
 walk in this light all the days of your life
**Shine as a light in the world
 to the glory of God the Father**
 Go in the light and peace of Christ
Thanks be to God

Closing Hymn

Where appropriate a Baptismal Blessing is

