



Baptism
at
St Jude's Church

There are two ways of looking at baptism. The first is a response by an adult to discovering a relationship with God through Jesus and then wanting to acknowledge that publicly by obeying Jesus' request that we repent (turn away from the things that hurt others and God) and be baptised. In this case it is you saying at the start of your journey of faith that Jesus has become special to you and you want to begin something new. Baptism signifies that you are joining with the community of believers known as the Church.

Patently, children cannot take these decisions in the same way as they are still young, but baptism is made available for both adults and children, so we need to look at the baptism of children differently.

That is why the second way of seeing baptism is to consider it as children being welcomed into the same community that their parents and godparents are already a part of – the community they want to acknowledge as being important – the community who acknowledge Jesus as the saviour of their lives and the world – the local and worldwide Church.

This is why, at either an adult's baptism or at a child's, versions of the following Baptism Service Extract are used to acknowledge what is happening. The promises being made can only be said honestly when a relationship with Jesus has started and when the adults involved are part of the community of a church – showing their belief by their walk with others in getting to know Jesus more and more. This is also why we use our normal Sunday morning services so the community they are joining can welcome them.

BAPTISM SERVICE EXTRACT

You would say the parts in bold

Parents and godparents, the Church receives *N* with joy. Today we are trusting God for his/her growth in faith. Will you pray for him/her, draw him/her by your example into the community of faith and walk with him/her in the way of Christ?

With the help of God, we will.

In baptism *N* begins his/her journey in faith. You speak for him/her today. Will you care for him/her, and help him/her to take his/her place within the life and worship of Christ's Church?

With the help of God, we will.

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 reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

WHAT IS NEXT?

If you are thinking about making these promises on behalf of your child to bring them up to follow Jesus and be part of His church, we would recommend you come along a few times to see if it is what you expect. We often find folks' thoughts about church don't match the way we meet and worship today. And, when the last three questions ask about your relationship with Jesus Christ – if you don't attend a church somewhere, it is a bit difficult to see how you can affirm them. Also, you and your chosen godparents should be baptised, as again the promises you will be making don't make sense unless you have already taken the step to follow Jesus. If you want to explore baptism for yourself, again, please just ask. Please also give a copy of this leaflet to the potential Godparents.

So before you ask for a baptism, please do join us for a variety of our services to find out what we are like, and also think if this is what you believe before you promise to come and say so publicly. If you aren't sure about the meaning of the promises we can help, please just ask.

And there is no rush for baptism. It isn't an "innoculation" that means you or your children are safe and can go to heaven – that comes from a living faith in Jesus and all he has done for you. Instead, baptism is about acknowledging Jesus as the one who has saved us from an eternity without God and our wanting to join Him and his worldwide family – the Church, for an exciting journey through life and into eternity with Him.

So, for baptism of children, it only makes sense if the parents of the child have a living faith and are members of the Church. If they are not, then the promises can't be honestly made. Also, please do consider this before you ask any friends or family members to be Godparents as it would be very easy for them to feel uncomfortable making promises they can't yet keep.

To be baptised at St Jude's you normally need to live within its parish boundaries. However, if you are a regular worshipper at St Jude's Church, but live outside the parish, then it is quite reasonable to want to have your children baptised where you worship. There is no charge made for baptism.

So, please, don't plan your thoughts for a baptism without coming to a few services. Your aim should be to decide if you can commit to this community, but more importantly, to Jesus Christ. Then speak with the Vicar on a Sunday morning (NB not every service is suitable to include baptism so please don't plan any dates until things are confirmed with the Vicar) And if you want help exploring a faith in Jesus, the Vicar will be able to give you some options.

RE-AFFIRMATION OF CHILDHOOD BAPTISM VOWS

We offer the opportunity to our own Church members to re-affirm their childhood baptism vows. Some adults may want to publicly affirm the promises made on their behalf by their own parents. You cannot be baptised twice – you are accepted into the worldwide church once only – but for some that doesn't 'feel' enough. Therefore, on a few occasions when we are considering some full immersion baptism, re-affirmation is always a possibility.

BAPTISM APPLICATION

Once you have been attending church for a short while and are sure about everything above, please ask the Vicar for a Baptism Application Form.