

The United Benefice of Catherington and Clanfield
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR BAPTISM ENQUIRY – SOME BASIC INFORMATION FOR YOU

Thank you so much for enquiring about baptism at All Saints' Church, Catherington or Saint James' Church, Clanfield. Here is some basic information about baptism in our Benefice churches that you may find useful in your planning.

Baptism is, above all, about welcoming the newly baptised into the family of Christ, the church. Because this is so important, at All Saints' and Saint James' we hold baptism services as part of our normal Sunday worship – not as "private" events. To assist us in providing an authentic welcome, we need to know the person coming for baptism, which means that we expect to see them in church for a few weeks over the 3 months before the baptism date.

When the person coming for baptism is of an age where they are able to make their own faith decisions and speak for themselves at the baptism, they will make personal and important promises before God before their actual baptism.

Where someone is brought for baptism by others because they cannot decide and speak for themselves (usually at infant baptism) then parents and godparents will make these promises on their behalf. Because of the nature of the promises that are being made, and the vital role that godparents are expected to play in the developing faith life of the newly baptised in these cases, the Church of England requires that all godparents are baptised before taking on this role. You will be asked to confirm this before the baptism can go ahead.

Because of the importance and gravity of the promises that are made, either the candidate for baptism or the parents (and godparents if possible) will be expected to undertake some preparation. This will need to be arranged before the baptism can take place, and would run comfortably alongside the 3-month "getting to know you" period if you aren't already part of the regular congregation.

If you live within either Catherington or Clanfield parish then you are entitled to be baptised, or have your child baptised, once the things covered above are satisfied. You can check which parish you live in by entering your postcode or address at <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>. If you live outside the parish then you may need to have a conversation with your local parish priest before we can plan anything here – this can be discussed alongside your initial enquiry. Please understand that family connections to the church, or being married or christened yourself in the church, does not establish a right to baptism if you live beyond the parish boundaries.

The Church of England website has lots of helpful information on planning for baptism – you can find it at either <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/adult-baptism> if you are planning your own baptism or for someone able to decide and speak for themselves; or <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/christenings> if you are planning on having your baby or young child baptised.



You will notice that it will take a few weeks to be in a position for your planned service to go ahead, particularly if you are not already a regular worshipper at one of our churches, so please don't leave things until the last minute. Our capacity to host baptism families alongside our regular congregation is also somewhat limited, so please be prepared to consider a range of dates as you enquire about a baptism service (as a rule of thumb we can accommodate two baptism families at All Saints' and one at Saint James' on any given Sunday). Baptisms are conducted at All Saints Church on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, during the 9.30am Holy Communion Service. At St James Church we conduct baptisms on the 2nd and 4th Sunday each month at the 11.15 Service, which is a non-Communion service.

We really look forward to welcoming you, your family and friends to our church service – to get to know you and then to sharing the amazing experience of a baptism service with you!

Blessings,



The Reverend Richard Hutchins, Priest-in-Charge