

The United Benefice of Catherington and Clanfield
% The Parish Office
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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 has at its heart the welcome of 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.

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. The decision to proceed with baptism in this situation will follow a conversation between the Priest-in-Charge and the person requesting baptism – during that conversation they will decide what preparation is needed.

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.

If you live within either Catherington or Clanfield parish then you are entitled to be baptised, or have your child baptised, once suitable preparation is complete. 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 will need to speak to your local parish priest before we plan anything here. 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.

There are two elements to preparation for baptism at All Saints or St James. As already mentioned, essential to baptism is the welcome of the newly baptised into the church and the key part of preparation is a period of attendance at our services. This helps prepare us to give an authentic welcome and helps to prepare you for the commitment (your own or on behalf of someone else) "...to take [your] place within the life and worship of Christ's church."¹ The second part of preparation will be some guided time with a minister or someone else from the church thinking about what baptism means.

If you have already been part of our regular worshipping community (including consistent attendance at services) for more than six months, that's great! Just have a chat with me or one of the other ministers, and with the Parish Administrator, to get the ball rolling.

¹ From the Service of Holy Baptism, *Common Worship: Christian Initiation*, © 2006, The Archbishops' Council

If you are not currently a regular worshipper with us then you will need to start coming along to services – if you live outside either of the parishes then you will need to come along at least monthly for six months before the baptism can be arranged. If you live within the parish then the time scales are slightly shorter; you will still need to attend the church where you wish to have the baptism service at least six times, but this can be completed over six consecutive Sundays if desired. In either case, other preparation meetings can take place in parallel, but please note that we will not firmly commit to conduct the baptism until the preparation is complete, and any date set before that point is purely provisional. You will find a form below to print out and bring along to church when you attend, to have signed by the minister taking the service to record your attendance; please do have this completed each time you attend as we will not be able to firmly arrange the baptism until this form is complete.

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 little while 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

CHURCH ATTENDANCE RECORD FORM

Name(s): _____

My/our home address is WITHIN / OUTSIDE (delete as appropriate) the Parish as listed on AChurchNearYou.com.

Date	Church Attended	Service Attended	Minister Signature

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