
Thinking about a Christening?
www.chwbenefice.org

Baptism

We sometimes use the words ’baptism’ and 'christening' interchangeably – a child is 'baptised' in a 'christening service'.

Baptism is a celebration of God’s love, a mark of belonging to God’s family and a commitment to going together on the journey of faith.

When we talk with people about baptism we talk about

Beginning: It is the start of a life-long journey to know God more, not just a single event.

Believing: It is about trusting in God and His promises and coming together with the church to learn how to live out this Christian faith.

Belonging: It is about becoming a part of the church, the life -long journey of faith that begins with baptism is not meant to be travelled alone but with the help and support of others in the church.

We are always delighted to carry out baptisms for regular members of our congregation and for people who live within our parish boundaries.

Sometimes when people have moved away from the parish where they grew up it is a good opportunity to start a new relationship with their local church. However, if you consider St Mary's or Holy Trinity as 'your church' then talk to us about how you see you can bring your child up in the Christian faith *here*.

If we do go ahead with a baptism here, we will also need to contact your local vicar to ask if they are happy for the baptism to take place outside your parish.



The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, baptised Prince George, son of Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge. There are some of his words given as part of the sermon.

Those who make this journey must look in two directions. First, they look at the world. Jesus tells his disciples to let people come to him. To do that they have to be outward looking, in touch with the world, welcoming, generous-spirited, alive with the life of the Christ to whom they will introduce all who come. A Christian is to share the life of Christ which is in them, regardless of whom they meet, their faith or nature or habits, so that others find life. That sharing may be in words, or generous actions - most likely both - but it will be both very costly and infinitely rewarding.

The second direction in which Christians must look is towards Christ. Jesus centres his commands on himself: come to, abide in me. He is the only place to go to for the resources George will need so that he is everything he can be, so that he becomes fully the person God has created him to be. Without me, says Jesus, you can do nothing.

The parents and godparents of Prince George have a 'simple task' to 'make sure he knows who this Jesus is. Speak of him, read stories about him. Introduce him in prayer. Help to grow and flourish into the person God has created and has called him to be. For life to be complete, the living and trusted love of Jesus Christ is the foundation. That is something we grow into, live out, hold onto, and which finally carries us home. With Christ and his love as our centre, all the needs we meet are faced, all the hopes we have are shaped, and all the possibilities of our life journey are fulfilled.



THE PROMISES

Do you turn away from sin?

Do you reject evil?

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

Do you trust in him as Lord?

About Godparents

Godparents make promises on behalf of a child too young to speak for themselves and promise to guide them and pray for them as they grow up.

All children who are being baptised will need to have at least three godparents, two of whom are the same sex as your child, who speak on behalf of the child.

All godparents must themselves have been baptised and it is recommended that godparents should also be confirmed.

We do recognise that families often have friends who are important to them and their child, but are not baptised, or are of other faiths or who are not comfortable or able to make Christian vows. While they cannot be godparents, they can still stand with you as 'supporting friends'. Please speak to the Vicar about this.

To find out more:

churchofenglandchristenings.org/godparents/

Preparing You for Your Child's Baptism

The Vicar will arrange to visit you before the baptism. He will talk about the promises that you will make and the meaning of different parts of the service. He will discuss any more general questions you may have about Christianity, faith or the church. Please bring a copy of your child's birth certificate to the meeting with the Vicar.

Thinking it all through

To begin to think about your child's baptism go to:

churchofenglandchristenings.org/for-parents/

To help your guests who may not be familiar with a baptism:
churchofenglandchristenings.org/for-guests/

All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Galatians 3:27)

Do I have to pay for a Baptism?

There is no charge for a baptism (or Thanksgiving Service), but you may wish to make a donation to the church.

Baptism is the start, not the end …

We encourage those who are baptised to learn and grow in the faith they are baptised into. To help you with this, you are invited to our services (please see our website for details).

When do baptisms happen?

We conduct baptisms either in our main 10.30am Sunday services, or after the Sunday service at 12.30pm.

Whilst we may be able to indicate if a date is available, it is only agreed when you meet the Vicar.

What do I do next?
Contact the Benefice Office, enclosing the completed application form. The Vicar will then will arrange to meet you.

Parish Administrator
(St Mary's)
Church of St Mary the Virgin
The Green
Westerham
Kent
TN16 1AS

01959 561330
office@chwbenefice.org

To find out more:

churchofenglandchristenings.org/

Service of Thanksgiving

There may be reasons why you feel a baptism service is not the appropriate way right now to mark your child's new life:

- Some Christians would rather leave baptism to when their child grows up and decides themselves to be baptised.
- Some parents want a service to mark their child's birth, but are not yet ready to make the promises about faith that the baptism service requires.

In these cases, we are delighted to offer a **Service of Thanksgiving**. This is still an appropriate service to invite family and friends to for a celebration of your child's birth and you can still have a baptism at a later date, perhaps when they are older and can decide to be baptised themselves.

To find out more:

churchofenglandchristenings.org/for-parents/thanksgiving-service/



Application for the Baptism of a Child

Please complete the form, detach the page and return it to the Benefice Office.	
Full Name *of the person to be baptized*	
Date of birth and age	
Preferred dates for service*	
***Please give more than one date. While we will endeavour to meet your preference, this may not always be possible.**	

Please list everyone who has parental responsibility for your child:	
Father's full name	
Occupation	
Mother's full name	
Occupation	
Address **Telephone and** **email**	

Godparents *(full names)*

1.

Have they been baptized/christened?

2.

Have they been baptized/christened?

3.

Have they been baptized/christened?

Signed 1.

2.

Data Protection: *Your privacy is important to us.*

We will use the information you have provided to contact you to prepare for your baptism service, and will record your child's name, date of birth, your name, address, occupation and names of godparents with the date of baptism in our baptism register which is kept permanently. See our website for further details.

We would also like to be able to contact you about what is going on in the Benefice , such as special services or family events, particularly at Christmas. If you tick the box we will add you to this mailing list. You can unsubscribe at any time, by contacting the Benefice Office by e-mail: office@chwbenefice.org or by phone: 01959 561330.

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We do understand that sometimes family circumstances may be complicated, or not 'traditional'; please talk to us in such circumstances—a person with parental responsibility has the right to present a child for baptism.

A child's right to baptism is in no way is dependent on the marriage or baptism or expressed gender of the parents .