

Special Services for Children & Families



***At St Mary's Church,
Church Road, Ferndown***

WELCOME

A warm welcome from the wider Church family of St Mary's!

We are so pleased to hear from you, and thank you for enquiring about a special service for your child. At St Mary's we cherish every child as a gift from God, and we look forward to helping you find the right service to celebrate God's goodness to you.

This pamphlet hopefully explains everything you need to know about what special services we offer. You may well have made an enquiry, probably for a Christening. The word 'Christening' means the same as Baptism. Every Church has a tailor made policy on Baptism, and St Mary's is no exception. Please read on further for an explanation of the steps we will encourage you to take in the coming months.

STEP 1 – Arrange for a Thanksgiving Service.

A Thanksgiving Service is a short Church of England ceremony within the main morning service, whereby we thank God for your child, and ask God's blessing on them. Your child may be a baby, a Toddler or a few years old. The Thanksgiving Service is the right start for everyone, and reminds us that we can thank God for:-

1. The safe arrival of your child
(or the first few years of life if your child is older!)
2. The privilege and joy parent-hood
3. The way God blesses us by giving us a family to belong to & care for

For some people, the Thanksgiving Service is all that is desired. The service expects nothing more of you than you commit yourselves to be loving and faithful parents. The congregation offers you love and support and prayers for your family. We can normally arrange one of these services quite quickly. A full text for the service can be found on pages 4-5 of this booklet.

On the day of the service, do please arrive 15 minutes before the service so we can welcome you and make sure you have everything you need.

Following the Thanksgiving Service, you may still want a Baptism for your child. If so, that's great, as Thanksgiving leads perfectly onto the next step.

STEP 2 – Belonging to God's Family locally

Baptism Services are held during the main morning service at 10.45am. If you want a Baptism Service for your child, we ask you to attend St Mary's regularly for 6 months prior to the service. Half way through this period you can contact us to arrange for one of the Clergy Team to visit and prepare you for the Baptism Service.

Baptism requires you as parents to state your faith in Jesus, and your desire for your child to be brought up within the Church Family. The service acknowledges the important influence parents have upon children and so asks from you a commitment to worship, prayer and the family of God. It is also important that parents who are making this public commitment to their child have first made a public commitment to each other in marriage. If you are not yet married, we would wish to delay the baptism until after your marriage. In which case, one of our clergy would be pleased to discuss this with you.

A full text of the Baptism Service is found on pages 6-8 of this booklet.

STEP 3 – The Baptism

On the day of the service, do please arrive 15 minutes before the service so we can welcome you and make sure you have everything you need.

Frequently asked questions about Baptism

Q. What's the difference between a baptism and a christening?

A. None, they are just different words for the same thing.

Q. What happens during the service?

A. Your child's baptism will take place during the 10.45am Sunday service. This is so that your child can be seen to be joining the family of the Church and be welcomed into membership. In turn the Church will promise to support and pray for you and your child. The member of the clergy taking the service will make sure you know where to sit and when you need to move to the front, gathering by the Font. Some parts of the service will be for the whole congregation to join, some will be for you and the godparents.

Q. What does the service cost?

A. The Baptism service is free.

Q. What do all the symbols mean?

A. A number of important symbols will be used during the service itself:

The sign of the cross - the priest will make the sign of the cross on your child's forehead. This is like an invisible badge to show that Christians are united with Christ and must not be ashamed to stand up for their faith in him.

The priest says: 'Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross. Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.'

Water - the priest will pour water on your child's head. Water is a sign of washing and cleansing. In baptism it is a sign of being washed free from sin and beginning a new life with God. Water is a sign of life, but also a symbol of death. When we are baptised our old life is buried in the waters (like drowning) and we are raised to new life with Christ.

A Candle - Jesus is called the light of the world. You will be given a lighted candle at the end of the service as a reminder of the light which has come into your child's life. It is up to you, the child's godparents and the church community to help your child reject the world of darkness and follow a way of life that reflects the goodness and light of Jesus.

Q. Can we have a private service of baptism?

A. Baptisms usually take place in the church's main service, because they are a public declaration that your child has become part of the church family. It is important that the church congregation is there to support you and welcome your child.

Q. What is the right age for baptism?

A. Baptism can happen at any age. What matters is that those concerned believe it is right to ask for baptism.

Teenagers and adults may also be baptised. At St Mary's we often do this by full immersion. We may also suggest teenagers and adults are Confirmed by the Bishop.

Q. What do I need to know about godparents?

A. Godparents make the same promises on behalf of the child being baptised as parents. Godparents promise to pray and support the child and to help the parents to bring up the child in the Christian faith. It is an important and responsible role.

You normally would choose at least three godparents: two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. Godparents can be family members or friends. However, it is important that you choose people who will take an interest in your child's spiritual welfare and who will pray for you and your child. Ideally they should be baptized themselves.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

INTRODUCTION

We are here today to give thanks for *N*, with *their* family and friends, and to support *their* parents in their responsibilities with prayer and love.

God became one of us in Jesus, and understands all that surrounds the arrival and upbringing of children. It is God's purpose that children should know love within the stability of their home, grow in faith, and come at last to the eternal city where his love reigns supreme.

QUESTIONS TO THE PARENTS

Do you receive *N* as a gift from God?

We do.

Do you wish to give thanks to God and seek his blessing?

We do.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the wonder of new life and for the mystery of human love. We thank you for all whose support and skill surround and sustain the beginning of life. We thank you that we are known to you by name and loved by you for all eternity. We thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, who has opened to us the way of love. We praise you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God forever.

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of *N*, entrusted to the care of (.....). May they be patient and understanding, ready to guide and forgive, so that through their love *N* may come to know your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

BIBLE READING

Minister: Listen to the Word of God in Mark's Gospel:

"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him bless them, but the disciples turned them away. When Jesus saw this, he was very cross. He said to the disciples, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."

THE BLESSING OF THE CHILD

Minister:

As Jesus blessed the children then,
so now we ask him to bless *N*.

Heavenly Father, we praise You for *N*'s birth;
surround *him/her* with Your blessing,
that *he/she* may know Your love,
be protected from evil, and know Your goodness all *his/her* days.

When all the children have been prayed for all join in saying:

**May *N* learn to love all that is true,
grow in wisdom and strength, and, in due time,
come through faith and baptism to the fullness of your grace;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

GIVING OF THE GOSPEL

A copy of the Gospel is presented, with these words

Receive this book. It is the good news of God's love.
Take it as your guide.

A PRAYER FOR THE FAMILY

Minister: Heavenly Father, bless this family, watch over them, reveal your love and purposes to them, and draw them closer to you, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

***All:* Amen.**

THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

Minister:

Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us
that to enter the kingdom of heaven
we must be born again of water and the Spirit,
and has given us baptism as the sign and seal of this new birth.

Children who are too young to profess the Christian faith are baptized on the understanding that they are brought up as Christians within the family of the Church. As they grow up, they need the help and encouragement of that family, so that they learn to be faithful in public worship and private prayer, to live by trust in God, and come to Confirmation.

The Minister addresses the Parents and Godparents

Parents and Godparents, the *children* whom you have brought for baptism depend chiefly on you for the help and encouragement *they* need.

Are you willing to give it to *them* by your prayers, by your example, and by your teaching?

Parents and Godparents: I am willing

The Minister addresses the whole congregation

In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling.
People of God, will you welcome *these children* and uphold *them* in *their* new life in Christ?

All With the help of God, we will.

THE DECISION

The Minister (addressing parents and godparents) then says:

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.

SIGNING WITH THE CROSS

N, Christ claims you for His own.

Receive the sign of His cross.

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

Fight valiantly under the banner of Christ, against sin, the world, and the devil, and continue his faithful *soldiers* and *servants* to the end of your *lives*.

PRAYER OVER THE WATER

Heavenly Father, thank you, for the water of baptism.

In it we are buried with Christ in his death,

and by it we share in his resurrection.

By your Holy Spirit, please bless *N* as they are washed in this water,

And raise *them* to full and eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Let us all declare the Christian faith into which *these children are* to be baptized.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

THE BAPTISM

N, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

THE WELCOME

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body.

**We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;
We are children of the same heavenly Father;
We welcome you.**

GIVING OF 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.



Do come and join us for our Sunday Services!

9.00am – Morning Worship

A quieter service with worship accompanied by the organ and/or piano. Holy Communion is held on the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month.

9.00am - 10.00am - Breakfast Church in the Hall

Join us for breakfast and an informal & interactive service, suitable for all ages.

Join us for coffee in the hall from 10.15am – 10.40am

10.45am – Morning Worship with Children’s Groups

(Family Communion held on the 1st Sunday of the month)

An all-age service with a worship band.

There is a crèche and groups for children aged 0 - 13

6.30pm – “Hungry” Contemporary, informal Service

*(A cafe-style service held in the hall,
starting with refreshments)*

Do keep in touch!

St Mary’s Church
Church Road, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 9EU

Website: www.stmarys-ferndown.org.uk

St Mary’s Church Office (Open 9.30am – 4.30pm)
Tel. (01202) 897087 e-mail: office@stmarys-ferndown.org.uk

Rev. Sarah Pix (Associate Minister) Tel. (01202) 890798

Mrs Mary Tyler (Children & Families Ministry) Tel. (01202) 861516