



Celebrating new life

Thanksgivings and baptisms for infants

The gift of new life is something we are all grateful for and it is natural for us to turn in thanks to our creator God when we are blessed with children. Baptism (christening) has long been the 'go-to' ceremony for people to celebrate and give thanks to God for the birth of our children - but it may not be the right thing for everyone. This leaflet outlines your options for a ceremony led by one of our ministers and is designed to help you make the right choice for your family. Whatever you choose to do, be assured that God and his whole church rejoices and celebrates with you at the amazing gift and blessing of little children.

Option 1 - Thanksgiving

A service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

This service provides an opportunity for parents and families to give thanks for the birth or adoption of a child and to pray

for family life. It may be a private celebration at home or in hospital, or it may be a public celebration in church, sometimes with a number of children.

In our parish Thanksgivings will normally take place as part of our regular family-friendly morning services. 'Supporting friends' can stand with parents as part of the thanksgiving ceremony and join with the parents in making important commitments. Your child's name will be entered in our Thanksgiving register and they will be given a special certificate.

If you simply want to say thank you for the gift of your child in an informal service, this will be the right one for your family.

Option 2 - Baptism (Christening)

A service of Holy Baptism

Baptism is a special and significant religious ceremony whereby a person becomes a member of the church. Since ancient times it has marked the beginning of a person's deepening journey into the Christian faith, with regular church attendance being a key part of that. Baptism is not to be thought of as an insurance policy to guarantee a place in heaven - nor is it a step to be taken lightly, or simply out of family tradition.

For all involved, particularly those being baptised but also parents, godparents and sponsors, it is a joyful moment when we rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ, making

serious promises and declaring the faith. The wider community of the local church and friends welcome the new Christian, promising support and prayer for the future.

In our parish Baptisms are a regular Sunday feature in St. John's and St. Swithin's, taking place most months, and less frequently in our other churches. At St. John's and St. Swithin's it will normally be the case that two infants will be baptised on a given Sunday morning.

Our ministers are required by church law to adequately prepare parents who wish to raise their children in the Christian faith, starting with baptism. The way we do this in our parish is by asking parents to attend church for a minimum of three Sundays before the baptism takes place. This demonstrates the parent's own Christian commitment and sense of belonging to their local church, as well as providing the opportunity for parents to receive Christian teaching.

Baptism is also equally about the church's responsibility to welcome new Christians fully into the life of the church, especially babies and children. Consequently our parish has prioritised investment in good provision and activities for children and young people, and we are fully committed to the Growing Faith outcomes where: 'children are valued, included and regarded as equals.'

If you want your child to begin their lives as Christians, journeying on in the Christian faith (as well as thanking God for them), Baptism will be the right service for you.

Still not sure?

If this leaflet has left you with more questions than answers it is probably best for you to have a conversation with one of our ministers. They would be only too happy to chat about this over the phone, or better still over a cup of coffee!

What to do next

If you have decided on one of the options above please contact the Parish Office to book in your ceremony. The office staff will give you more information on that ceremony and be able to answer most of your questions.

Good to know...

- There is never any charge for these ceremonies!
- These ceremonies are available from every parish in England, and it is normally expected that they take place in the parish where you live. If you live in our parish your ceremony can take place in any of our five churches: St John's (Dronfield Parish Church); St Swithin's (Holmesfield Parish Church); St. Andrew's (Dronfield Woodhouse/ Gosforth Valley); St. Philip's (Coal Aston and Holmesdale); and St Mary's (Unstone).

Get in touch

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