

Welcome to Baptism and Thanksgiving in the Parish of Dudley



St Augustine's Holly Hall
St Francis' Wren's Nest & The Priory
St James' Eve Hill

What is Baptism or Christening?

Baptism takes place in a main church service and is sometimes called a Christening. In this service parents thank God for His gift of life and make a decision to start their child on a journey of Christian faith. Godparents promise to help and support the parents and child on this journey. The church also promises to welcome the child and to pray for the family. This is why we ask you as a family to join us at the church where the Baptism is to take place before your child's Baptism. You can begin (if you haven't already) to get to know the Church family and take your place in the life of the Church.

For your child, being baptised marks the start of a lifelong journey of faith as part of the local and worldwide Christian family. Although most people think baptism is something that happens to babies and young children, adults can also be baptised if they haven't been baptised as a child.

What is Thanksgiving?

Some parents want to celebrate the gift of a child in a different way without the commitment that Baptism involves. During the Thanksgiving, parents and families give thanks for the birth or adoption of a child and everyone prays for family life and for God's blessing on their child. A Thanksgiving Service is not a Baptism. There are no promises to make about the Christian faith. The child will be blessed and prayed for, and supporting friends will promise to support the parents in bringing up their baby. Baptism can follow later if you wish, when parents or the child themselves are ready to take that step of faith and commitment.

Where do we go from here?

Please feel free to contact the clergy to ask any further questions. You can generally ring us on the numbers below or better still catch us after one of the Sunday services, which will give you a chance to come and worship at the church. To prepare for Baptism we'll arrange to talk through what's involved in making your Baptism vows to follow Christ. If you decide on a Thanksgiving, you may choose not to have the preparation – though you are very welcome to take part– and it may help you choose between the two.

Godparents

For Baptisms, godparents must have been baptised themselves. They need to be willing to set a personal example of living as a Christian and be prepared to help the parent(s) bring up the child in the Christian faith. Normally, there are three godparents: two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. In a Thanksgiving there is no formal requirement for godparents, but sponsors can be chosen, to act in a similar way to support the parents.

Some final thoughts...

The Christian faith is an exciting journey to start out on, whether for ourselves or our children. It's not an easy journey, and not one to set out on lightly. Nor is it something we can do alone, but it needs the help and support of the Christian family. For all its shortcomings, we need the church – and the Church needs each of us! We look forward to welcoming you into the life of the church.

A Prayer for you and your child

Dear God, we thank you from our hearts for our child.

We thank you for this precious gift

and for the love and wonder s/he has brought into this world.

Give us your love and strength to be the best parents we can be.

Please bless our child, now and always.

Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Further Information and contact details

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You may find these sites useful too: <https://churchofenglandchristenings.org/>

<http://www.rejesus.co.uk/> - exploring Christian faith further