



The Astwell Benefice

St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury and St Lawrence Radstone and St James the Great Syresham with St John the Evangelist Whitfield,

St Mary and St Peter Lois Weedon with Weston and Plumpton and St Mary the Virgin Wappenham

BAPTISM

It is simply wonderful that you've decided to have your child baptized and I am delighted to be part of this celebration

Your child is precious to you and precious to God. What follows is a short guide to our Baptism service along with answers to some of the most commonly asked questions.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have more questions or queries or just want to chat.

Reverend Carole Peters



So what is Baptism?

In baptism, you as parents are: thanking God for his gift of life, making a decision to start your child on the journey of faith and asking for the Church's support.

For your child, baptism marks the start of a journey of faith, which involves turning towards Christ and becoming a member of the local church

The Church believes that God's love is available to all, regardless of their background or churchmanship or lack of it, there is only one criteria, that at baptism you and your chosen Godparents promise to raise your child to know God loves them, and to help them to follow Jesus as a member of the Church. This means they must be baptized themselves. If you Godparents have not been baptized, I am very happy to baptize them privately any time before the “main event”.

At our churches, while we do offer to baptize you child as part of one of our morning Sunday morning services, we tend to find that most families who are not regularly churchgoers prefer to have a private Sunday afternoon baptism simply devoted to them.

Because I have six churches and lots of Sunday services, I am afraid Baptisms outside of the main services can only take place on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at around 2pm and this will be a simple service without any hymns.

And we ask is that you come back to one of our regular services (any service that suits you) to receive your certificate and candle and to meet us all.

The Service

The service lasts about half an hour and contains the following elements:

From the Chancel steps at the front of Church
A Greeting and Introduction to the service

A Special Opening Prayer (known as a Collect)

Readings.

One or more of these must be from the Bible, but you may also have secular readings as well and it is always nice if you ask family members or friends to do these readings.

(See below for more details)

You may if you wish also have one or more hymns during the baptism service and we can talk about these when we meet up

**Presentation of the Candidate
And the Promises made on their behalf by Parents
and Godparents.**

You may have as many Godparents as you wish and when choosing a Godparent remember this is a very special role. It's about helping a child to come to know God, encouraging them in their spiritual life and supporting them in their membership of the local church.

(See below for information for Godparents)

At the Font

The Blessing of the water

The Profession of Faith

The Baptizing and naming of the child

From the Chancel steps (again!)

The signing of the Cross

The Welcome

A Brief Talk and Prayers

The Blessing and Departure

*At the next one of our regular Church service you can get to
or, if you live out of the area, at your local Church*

**Giving of the lighted candle and baptism certificate
and Bible**

The Welcome to our Church.



Other Stuff:

Choosing Readings

The church requires that you have a reading from the Bible as part of the service, but you can have more than one of you like.

You might like to use the readings you had at your Wedding or at another child's baptism. It might be a favourite reading of an older relative or a close friend. Don't be afraid to ask around or browse the bible. In the back of most Bibles is a concordance, which is like an index, although it is usually not as comprehensive. If you don't find what you're looking for there, you can check an online Scripture search engine, such as Bible Gateway. There, you can search by keyword and get a list of all the verses that contain that word.

And if you don't find anything you like, trying expanding the search by looking for Bible verses that include the word baby, child, born, guide, care, angels or love.

You can also have one or more secular readings as well and again browse "baptism readings" on websites or ask friends and family for their favourite readings.

Although I am happy to read these for you, it is so much nicer if you can persuade a family member or friend to read them instead.

Unless they are very shy, most people find it a real privilege to be asked.

Godparents

At the Baptism the Godparents will be given certificates - a special card to remind them of the baptism and the promises they have made.

When we meet up (in the weeks before the Service) I will let you have a copy of the service with the promises written out in full, do have a look at the questions you will answer in the baptism service and show them to your Godparents. Take some time to think through the commitments you make when you answer them. But don't forget that the Church can support you in encouraging and praying for your child. The promises the Godparents make on behalf of your child can only be made if they have already been baptized and obviously have to be there on the day so they can make the promises to help to bring them up in the Christian faith. If some one you want to be a Godparents hasn't be baptized, but is willing to be, I am happy to baptize them privately at any time in the weeks before the Service. As adults they obviously don't need godparents!

Coming back to a Service

Being baptized means you are asking not only to have your child blessed, but also you and the Godparents are promising on behalf of your child that marks the start of a journey of faith, which involves turning towards Christ and becoming a member not only of the Church of England, but also of your local church. By coming back to one of our regular services it gives our congregations the chance to welcome you properly to our Church. If you would prefer and live elsewhere, you could ask your local church to take over with this bit



Some other Questions

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

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

What is the right age for baptism?

Baptism can happen at any age. What matters is that those concerned are committed to bring up a child as a Christian. Teenagers and adults may also be baptized. You can only be baptized once, but there are ways of renewing your

What does it cost?

A Baptism service is free – it is our pleasure.

Is it appropriate to have a party afterwards and give gifts?

A party is a great way to celebrate a Baptism and while the most important gifts you can give your godchild are your time, presence and prayers, you will probably also want to mark the baptism by giving a special gift such as a book of bible stories for children, a collection of children's prayers or a cross

If you bring this to the service I will be more than happy to bless and sign it as a real souvenir of the day.

This is a very special day of celebration and it should be fun as well as prayerful, so please feel free to ask any questions at any time!



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