



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.

You are also making a decision to start your child on the journey of faith and asking for the Church's support. As your child is probably too young to make any promises for themselves, you and your chosen Godparents will make the Baptismal promises for them.

At baptism you and your chosen Godparents promise to raise your child to know that God loves them. You promise that you will help them to follow Jesus as a member of his Church.

You also promise to lead by example, teaching and that you support them in their journey of faith.

You make these promises on their behalf until they are old enough to “confirm” the promises for themselves, if they wish.

The Church believes that God's love is available to all, regardless of their background or churchmanship or lack of it, but for the promises to make sense, the Godparents should have been baptized.

(see page 5)

For your child, baptism marks the start of a journey of faith, which involves turning towards Christ and becoming a member of the Church of England. And so here in the Astwell Benefice we prefer you to have our baptisms during one of our Sunday morning Services.

We feel by coming to one of our regular services it gives our congregations the chance to welcome you properly to our worldwide family of faith and also because we just love Baptisms!

Suitable Services for a Baptism

St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon and St James the Great, Syresham have services suitable for Baptisms on the second and fourth Sundays of most months.

St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham has suitable services on the first and third Sundays of most months

St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon has suitable services on the first and fourth Sundays of most months.

However, as we sometimes share services across the Benefice it is worth checking that there is a service on the Sunday you would like to have the Baptism.

If you would like your child baptized at **St Lawrence, Radstone** where we only have one service a month or **St John the Evangelist, Whitfield** where the current Sunday services would not be suitable for a Baptism, please do speak to me about possible alternative arrangements.

In exceptional circumstances I am sometimes able to take a Sunday afternoon baptism.

Godparents

There is no set number for Godparents, but it is most common is to have 3.

At the Baptism the Godparents and you will make a series of promises on behalf of your child.

These will be a series of answers to a series of questions asked by me.

The promises are available online at www.churchofengland.org/weddings-baptisms but if you would like a hard copy beforehand, just let me know. Do have a look at the questions 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 will support you in encouraging and praying for your child.

As I have said, the promises the Godparents make on behalf of your child to help to bring them up in the Christian faith can only be made if they have already been baptized.

As Parents you do not need to have baptized.

If your Godparents have not been baptized, I am very happy to baptize them privately any time before the “main event”.

Also the Godparents need to be present on the day so they can make the promises in person.

If one of your Godparents cannot be at the service, we can arrange for them to make the promises at some point in the weeks before the Baptism.

But you should have at least one other Godparent present at the service.

The Service

The service lasts about an hour and includes a Communion, family members and friends who are not confirmed are invited to come and receive a blessing, so no one feels left out!

Choosing Readings

Whilst the Sunday Gospel reading is set, it would be lovely if you would like to choose another reading from the bible and you may also have one or more secular readings that mean something to you.

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. 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, try 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. It is always nice if you ask family members or friends to do these readings.

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

Choosing Hymns

You are also welcome to choose one or more hymns, again these may be old favourites, or you might like to ask the Godparents for their choices.

We normally have 3 or 4 hymns at the service.

I will need your hymn choices around 2 weeks before the service.



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.

Do we have to meet up with you before the service?

No, we can do all of it via phone and email. With six churches my time is somewhat limited so unless you would rather meet up I am happy to talk on the phone or email with you.

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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