

## A Service of Thanksgiving

Having a new child in the family (through birth or adoption) is a source of great joy and blessing. It's natural to want to celebrate this special event with family and friends, and to say thank you for the wonderful gift of this new life.

One way of doing this is through bringing your child to church for a service of thanksgiving. In this service you entrust the life of your child to God's love and grace, and they are welcomed into the Christian family.

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.

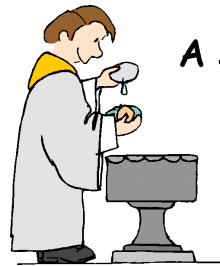
You, your family and friends are invited to come together in church to give thanks for the life of your child, and to pray that you may come to know the love of God, and the

support of the church family, in the responsibilities and joys of caring for your child.

God became human - one of us - in Jesus, and understands all that surrounds the arrival and upbringing of children.

Where parents wish to recognise the role of supporting friends, they may be invited to stand with the parents at the thanksgiving. Your child is named and blessed. We pray that they will learn to love all that is true, and grow in wisdom and strength. We will then pray for God's help and blessing for you in the raising of your child.

By choosing a service of thanksgiving for your child, you enable them - when they are older - to decide for themselves that they would like to be baptised.



## A Service of Baptism

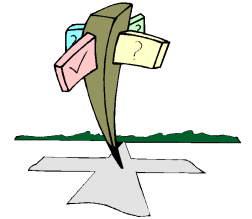
Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God, which continues for the rest of our lives;

the first step in our response to God's love. It is a joyful moment when we rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ, we make serious promises and declare the Christian faith.

The wider community of the local church, and friends come together to welcome this new member of the worldwide church, promising their support and prayer for the future.

This service paints many vivid pictures of what happens on the Christian way:

1. There is the sign of the cross, which reminds us of Christ's death for us.



2. Our 'drowning' in the water of baptism, where we believe we die to sin and are raised to new life, unites us to Christ's dying and rising. Water - essential for animal and plant life - is also a sign of new life, as we are born again by water and the Spirit, as Jesus was at his baptism.

3. A candle is a sign of that new life; a picture of the light of Christ conquering the darkness of evil.



*Jesus said, 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'* John 10.10

The baptism service takes place in church; it is a public ceremony, when you enact outwardly what is true for you inwardly.

You and the baby's godparents will be asked to make promises on the child's behalf.

**You promise** to bring up your child as a Christian "*within the life and worship of Christ's church*":

**You promise** to "*pray for them, draw them by your example into the community of faith and walk with them in the way of Christ*"

**You commit** yourself publicly, to turn your back on living for yourself, and instead, to be a follower of Jesus: "*Do you turn away from sin?... Do you reject evil?... Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?*"

**You declare** that you believe in God, and also that you entrust yourself to him: "*I believe and trust in God the Father... in God the Son (Jesus)... in the Holy Spirit*".

We will pray that in Jesus Christ, those being baptised will know the forgiveness of their sins and the new life of the Spirit.

We will pray that they will have the help and encouragement of the Christian community, so that they may learn to know God in public worship and private prayer,

follow Jesus Christ in the life of faith, serve their neighbour after the example of Christ, and in when they are older, consider being confirmed.

\*These are serious promises, undertaken in church, in the presence of God, and therefore, should not be taken lightly.

*If you and the godparents don't feel ready to make these promises at this time, you may feel more comfortable with a Service of Thanksgiving; the child will then have the opportunity to decide for him/herself when they are older, that they wish to be baptised.*

\*\* Godparents

For infant/child baptism, you will need to choose godparents (normally 3) to take the vows on the child's behalf.

The godparents must have been baptised themselves; people who will be a good moral and spiritual influence on your child. They should be people you know very well, who will remain in close contact with the child as they grow up, and people you would confidently put your trust in to take good care of your child in your absence.

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BENEFICE OF FOUR SAINTS

THANKSGIVING

AND

BAPTISM