

People who were not baptised as children are often baptised and confirmed in the same service. People wanting to be confirmed take part in a period of preparation in a small group, and confirmation services are held in St. Albans Abbey or in local churches. It is our hope that those who bring children to baptism are both baptised and confirmed members of the Church. If you would like to know more, please ask.

### PLANNING THE SERVICE

It is always a joy when a baptism takes place within the context of the main Sunday service because your child will be welcomed by the whole household of faith. However in the Tring Team we recognise that it isn't always easy for families to travel in time for the morning service. By arrangement with the clergy it is often possible to arrange a special service in an afternoon. We do however have to be clear that there is no such thing as private baptism. All services worshipping God are public worship. If you do have an afternoon service you will need to give special consideration to readings and on occasion it may be possible to have hymns too. There are some suggested readings on the parish website and you can talk to the clergy about music.

### BAPTISM PREPARATION EVENINGS

Because baptism is always about joining the church community we feel it is important to meet with others bringing their children to baptism and also to meet members of the church community who will answer any questions you may have. Baptism preparation evenings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday evening of each month excluding August and December in the St Peter and St Paul Church, Tring. During these meetings we use a video which highlights the elements of the baptism service which helps us to share some of the joys and concerns we may have. If you would like to attend one of these please write to or call Margaret Oram - 31 Nathaniel Walk Tring. Tel: 01442 824575

#### More information

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# BAPTISM INFORMATION SHEET

## Infant Baptism in the Tring Team Parish

### THANKSGIVING, BAPTISM AND WELCOME

In the Tring Team the process of baptism begins with a service of **Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child**. This provides an occasion for parents to join with members of the church congregation in recognising that there is more to the gift of their child than just themselves, and that God is the maker of all that is living. No water is used because the baptism is something that happens at a later date. The service of thanksgiving usually takes place within the main service on a Sunday. This enables the wider congregation to pray for you and your child. If you are uncertain about baptism, or do not feel ready to make the serious commitment that is involved in baptism, then a thanksgiving service may be appropriate and joyful celebration in its own right.

However, hopefully you will want to bring your child to baptism, which means membership in the Christian Church. (Sometimes baptism is referred to as christening, they are the same thing.) In the **Baptism Service**, the child is baptised with water and God's Spirit and welcomed into membership of the body of Christ, the Church. There is some form of obligation whenever anyone becomes a member of any organisation, and, in the service of baptism, parents and godparents undertake to bring up their child within the family of the Church, and to play their full part in its life. This means, in the words from the baptism service, becoming "*faithful in public worship and private prayer.*" Public worship is about becoming part of a worshipping community that meets in church for prayer, education, and a social atmosphere. Private prayer is developing a personal, prayerful relationship with God.

After the service your child will be **Welcomed** into the church community. If the baptism takes place at the 10 am service this will happen immediately. If the baptism is at a separate service you will be invited to the next appropriate service so that the congregation can welcome your child and you will be given the **Baptism certificate**.



## YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Your child has probably already begun to reflect some of your personality and characteristics. In a similar way, your faith will influence your child as he or she gets older. For Christians, as for people of all religions, passing on their faith to their children is something that is very important. Involvement in the life of the Church is something they welcome, for themselves and for their children. As you want your child to become a member of the Christian church through baptism now is a good time to think a little about the following questions:

- How important is God in your life?
- What do you think about Jesus?
- Do you think of yourself as a Christian?
- How do you feel about the Church, and all that it stands for?

In thinking about all this you will probably want to involve the people you hope will act as godparents to your child.

## GODPARENTS

Having thought about yourselves and your own faith, it is also important to consider carefully who should be a godparent to your child. The concept of godparents goes back to the days when most adult converts to the Christian faith had no Christian parents. Godparents spoke up for the baptised person and, if necessary, helped him or her to grow in the faith. Traditionally three godparents are appointed, two of them being the same sex as the child. However, what is really important is that you should choose your child's godparents carefully. It is their ongoing relationship with the child, and their own Christian faith that you must consider:

- Will they be able to form a loving and caring relationship with your child?
- Will they help the child to grow up in the way you want?
- Will the godparents help your child to grow in the Christian faith and to be part of the family of the Church?
- Will they pray for and with your child?
- Will they be able to offer help and advice as the child grows up and considers Confirmation?

Godparents are to help your child to grow in the Christian Faith - not just to give good presents! In the baptism service the godparents **must** have been baptised themselves and should, ideally, also have been confirmed. They should also be mature enough to understand their role and be prepared to commit themselves to it. It is important that you discuss with the godparents what you are expecting of them so that both you and the godparents have the same expectations. We will be happy to discuss all this with you, if you wish. It is worth clarifying that godparents have no legal rights or responsibilities should 'anything happen to you' but when you are planning the baptism it may be a good time to also think about legal guardians.

## WHAT ABOUT YOU?

For many people the Church is a rather forbidding organisation. The buildings can sometimes seem daunting, and what goes on in them can feel strange and unfamiliar. Our experience is that the Church offers something extremely valuable, and we hope you may sense something of this too. Perhaps it is helpful to think about it in this way:



*Churches often have stained glass windows. You can look at them from two sides. From the outside the details are usually dark and obscure. Yet step inside the church on a fine day and the effect is a total transformation. The window shines in all its multi-coloured beauty. Every detail of the scene is clearly displayed. Lit by the sun it becomes a shining picture.*

Some people often use this example to describe how their appreciation of their faith has changed and blossomed with their entry into the Church. It is from within the Church community that the full richness of Christian living can be experienced and enjoyed.

Many people who bring their children to church for a thanksgiving service or baptism are not themselves baptised, nor have they been confirmed. Is this true for you? If so, may we encourage you to think about it?

As we explained earlier, infant baptism makes the child a member of the Christian Church, and at confirmation a person re-affirms before God, the Bishop and the Church, the faith into which they were received when they were baptised as a child. Confirmation is another step in the process of growing in the faith, which began with baptism.