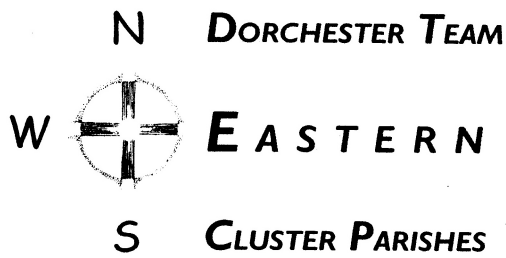


A Christening in the Parish Church



*Newington, Stadhampton with Chiselhampton,
Warborough and Shillingford*

St Giles, Newington

What is Baptism?

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, or Christening as it is popularly known, is the way in which any person becomes a member of the family of God.

In the earliest days of the Christian Church men and women were baptised when they became Christians and customarily their whole household was baptised with them. As new babies were born in Christian families the practice of infant baptism gradually emerged. As the years went by this often happened on Easter Eve. Baptism (whether of adults or children) was always by full immersion and a white robe was worn to preserve decency as the candidate descended into the water. The Christian church has always believed that through baptism we become one with Christ. It was also common to anoint candidates for baptism with special oil called the oil of Chrism (blessing) – thus the name Christ-ening gradually became common in the western church.

The Church of England is a state Church and therefore anyone who lives in a parish and requests it has the legal right of Baptism or Christening in their own parish church. We are delighted that you are interested in Baptism, and hope that this leaflet will answer some of your questions.

Most people enquire about Christening for new (or relatively new) babies and this leaflet deals with the Baptism of Children. If you are interested in being baptised as an adult or you have an older child please speak to the Vicar, Rev'd Nigel Hawkes in the first instance, or Rev'd David Cleugh, who will be delighted to chat with you about what is involved.

How do I set the date?

Normally one of us likes to meet you before we make formal arrangements for a christening – obviously we know quite a few of you already! The purpose of this meeting is to make sure that you understand what christening your baby means and what responsibilities you take on as a result of christening.

What must I do?

In this Church we do not have any “regulations” – that is to say there are no rules about attending a certain number of services before you are allowed to have your baby christened. However we like to meet you and explain the service and the important promises you will be making. As these promises include bringing up your child as a member of God’s family we like to discuss ways in which you might do this and introduce you to the family-friendly services in the area which are some of the easiest and most comfortable ways of introducing your growing child to his or her godly family.

When does the Baptism happen?

This depends largely on you. Because christening is about becoming part of God’s family it is ideal for it to take place when that family meets together – that is as part of a regular service. If this isn’t possible then christenings can take place on a Sunday afternoon, or even on a Saturday – please talk to the Vicar to find a convenient time. Most people like to find a time to allow for a celebration lunch or tea party afterwards. Christenings are very important occasions and they need to be celebrated properly both in Church and at home!

How many Godparents?

Traditionally a baby has three; two godparents of the same sex and one of the opposite sex. Parents often want two couples and that is fine – so are other combinations. If you are unsure please talk to us about it. Godparents are usually expected to be adults.

How much does it cost?

Baptism is a free gift of the love and grace of God – so we don’t make a fixed charge. Of course a Baptism does incur substantial additional costs and if you would like to make a donation there will be a collection. Gift Aid envelopes that allow us to reclaim tax for donations from British taxpayers are in the pews – please encourage members of your family who wish to make a donation to use them on the Christening day – a pound in the envelope is worth about £1.28 to us!

What happens if I’ve moved from the village?

You do not have the same legal right to baptism as a resident but it is normally possible to arrange for a Baptism at St. Giles if you have a past or family connection with the Church. As Christening is all about your child becoming a member of God’s family we always ask that you make contact with the parish priest in the area where you now live because it is *most* important that he or she gets to know you as well. This way you get the best of both worlds!

We hope you have found this leaflet useful. Please feel free to contact the Vicar, Rev’d Nigel Hawkes, 01865 858381 or revnige@btinternet.com to arrange an appointment and to ask any other questions you have about your child’s christening.