

The Church in the Walks



St John the Evangelist

THANKSGIVING AND BAPTISM

for children

Important information on how to book your
Thanksgiving or Baptism at St John's



January 2009

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Application form for Thanksgiving or Baptism

Month of Baptism: Feb Apr Jun Which service are you applying for:

 Thanksgiving:

 Aug Oct Dec Baptism:

NB: Thanksgivings / Baptisms are held on the second Sunday in the month and form part of the 10.30am Sunday Morning Worship Service.

Name of Child/Children/Person whom you are celebrating/who is being baptised (please print)

Forename (s): Surname: Date of birth:.....

Forename (s) : Surname: Date of birth:.....

Forename (s): Surname: Date of birth:.....

Father:

Mother:

Full Name: Full Name:.....

Occupation: Occupation:

Contact Person/Address:

.....

.....

Post code:

Tel Home: Tel Mob:

Siblings:

Forename (s):..... Forename (s):.....

Forename (s):..... Forename (s):.....

Were any of the siblings baptised at St John's? Yes No

If you live outside St John's parish, please explain your connection with the church below:

Godparents: Please give details below of each Godparent. (When more than one child is being baptised please specify which child the said Godparent is sponsoring).

Title & Name:		Title & Name:.....	
Address:		Address:	
.....		
.....		
	Yes	No	
Baptised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confirmed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Name of God Child:		Name of God Child:	

Title & Name:		Title & Name:.....	
Address:		Address:	
.....		
.....		
	Yes	No	
Baptised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Confirmed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Name of God Child:		Name of God Child:	

Approximate number of guests expected:	Approximate number of children expected:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children under 10: <input type="checkbox"/>
	Children over 10: <input type="checkbox"/>

www.stjohnskingslynn.org.uk

Celebrating Your Child – Two Possible Services



Everyone is different, and there are many situations where parents want to celebrate the beginning of their child's life. You may want to give thanks for a safe delivery and for the precious early months. You may have had complications, or you may have adopted a child, in which case you may wish to recognize the point you have now reached. People come to parenthood with different backgrounds of faith, and the desire to hold a service for your child can come from Christian conviction, from a sense of wonder that is difficult to place, or simply from tradition. There are different services for these different circumstances, and we invite you to consider which will be best for you.

A *Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child* can take the form of a public celebration during Sunday morning worship, or a private celebration of a birth or adoption at home with only close family present. Parents sometimes choose this form of service as a step on the way to baptism. Others feel that they are not ready for the vows that accompany baptism but simply want to thank God for their child. In these cases, the Service of Thanksgiving (a relatively new service in the Church of England) is an excellent option.

Baptism (sometimes called christening) is a service that welcomes both adults and children to be fully part of the Christian church. When the person being baptized is very young, parents and godparents make promises on their behalf, trusting that as the child grows they will choose to continue in the Christian tradition they have begun their lives in. The vows that parents and godparents make are whole-heartedly Christian. An order of service for baptism is included in this pack – you might like to look at the sections called 'The Decision' and the 'Profession of Faith' and see if you feel able to make these vows. If this strikes a chord with your faith, then the service of baptism will suit your family.

There may be exceptional circumstances where other arrangements can be made. For instance where children are suffering serious illness or disability, baptism can take place at home. If your child is in hospital you can still make arrangements with St John's although often parents contact the hospital chaplain.

Whatever your circumstances, it can be very fulfilling to mark the beginning of your child's life with a special service. It is worth taking some time to think and pray this through. The vicar and other members of the church will be glad to help you with this. We hope that you will find a warm welcome at St John's.



Thanksgiving and Baptism services – what's the difference?

Thanksgiving

Flexible – can be held on most Sundays or even privately

Suits many people, including those who are less familiar with Christianity or not regular church-goers

Involves naming, blessing and praying for the child, and presenting them with a gospel

Baptism

Special occasional service, held every other month

Suits confidently Christian people who are sure at this stage that they would like their children to be a part of the church family

Involves washing with water and signing with the cross, two long-standing Christian symbols

Preparing for the service

The parish

The Church of England is organized according to a parish system, which means that your local parish church will depend on where you live. (You may already have talked with us about whether you live in St John's parish.) If you live within the St John's parish boundary, then you are automatically entitled to come to the church for a thanksgiving or a baptism. If you live outside the boundary, then it may still be possible to come to St John's, for instance if you are a regular member of the congregation. Otherwise you will need to ask the permission of your local minister before the service can be arranged. The reason for this system is to establish relationships between local people and their local church.

Arranging a service of thanksgiving

If you are interested in a service of thanksgiving, then you can arrange this directly with the vicar (tel. 773 034) or through the church office (774 660, staffed weekday mornings). If you would like a thanksgiving to take place during a Sunday morning service, then please note that this is not possible on the first Sunday of the month (since this is a longer communion service). You can arrange to have sponsors – similar to godparents – alongside you during the service.

Arranging a baptism service

We hold baptism services *every other month* (starting in February) on the *second Sunday of the month*. These special services aim to be sympathetic to baptism families with children present (ie not too complicated or lengthy). There may be other baptism families present as well, although we try to make sure that there is enough space for everyone in the church!

Some time before your child's baptism, the vicar or another representative of the church will arrange to visit you.

This is a chance to talk about the Christian understanding of baptism and about the service itself, and for you to ask any questions that you may have. In addition to this, we recommend that you try to visit the church for an event or a service before the day of the baptism – this way you will feel much more ‘a part of things’ when the baptism service arrives. The person who visits you can advise you about suitable events for you to attend, such as Family Services on a Sunday or our after-school ‘Messy Church’ sessions for young families.

In the meantime, please complete the ‘Application for Baptism’ form and return to the parish office (tel. 774 660). The parish office (staffed weekday mornings) is your point of contact while you are arranging a baptism.



What happens during the service?

Unless you have asked for a service of Thanksgiving at home, your thanksgiving or baptism will be part of a Sunday service beginning at 10.30am. Please arrive *at least* 15 minutes before the service starts – you will probably need some time to talk to your family and guests! Please do not take photos during the service, which can be distracting. There will be a chance for this after the service.

The service will begin with a welcome, prayers, and songs. Parents and godparents/sponsors will then be invited forward together with the child. Bring your service sheet with you, since you will be asked to make some personal responses (see the orders of service in this pack for details).

In the case of a **baptism**, St John's has a portable font which will be at the front where the baptism takes place. You will be asked to declare publicly on behalf of your child that you believe in God and that you will bring your child up to follow Jesus. You will be asked to answer on your child's behalf that you have decided to turn away from sin and towards Christ. These declarations, which you will make with godparents, will be made in front of the congregation. The congregation will, in turn, promise to encourage you and pray for you and your child.



Two important symbols are at the heart of the baptism service. One is the sign of the cross, traced invisibly on the child's forehead. This is a traditional Christian symbol and a mark of membership in Christ's family. The other symbol is water, a sign of being cleansed from sin. It is also a symbol of dying and rising to a new life with Jesus.

Having talked here about the baptism of a young child, it is worth remembering that baptism is equally possible for **older children and adults**. The service for an adult baptism is more or less the same, except that the individual being baptized makes the declarations for himself or herself.

People who have been baptized when they were younger and who now wish to make their own declaration of faith can do so in a service of **confirmation**. Please ask for further details.

Godparents

Godparents are important people. They have the responsibility of being an example to their godchild, praying for their godchild, helping him or her to come to know God, and encouraging him or her in due course in their membership of the church.

Being a godparent does not involve being a legal guardian. It is a spiritual role. A godparent should take an interest in their godchild's spiritual life. They must be baptized themselves, and it is good if they have also been confirmed.

In the baptism service godparents make declarations (along with the parents) that they wish to turn from sin and turn to Christ. They also make promises to pray for their godchild and help him or her in his or her spiritual life. It may seem a big responsibility. It is! But the whole church will promise to pray for and encourage you and your godchild.



Before a baptism, it is important to keep in close contact with the parents of your godchild. Make sure you know what you will be asked to do and say, so that you are mentally and spiritually prepared.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many godparents do I need for a baptism?

You should have at least two godparents, although you can have more if you wish. It doesn't particularly matter whether they are the same gender as the child to be confirmed.

Do godparents need to be baptized and confirmed?

Godparents must be baptized, and although it is good if they are confirmed as well, it is not necessary. The important thing is that they should take their role seriously and be faithful in the years ahead.

Do the parents need to be baptized and confirmed?

Parents do not need to be baptized or confirmed to bring their children for either baptism or thanksgiving.

Does St John's hold private baptisms?

Since the baptism service involves public declarations made before the church family, baptisms take place at main services, not privately.

I want my child to go to heaven if they were to die unexpectedly. Is baptism the way to ensure this?

In short, no. Baptism concentrates on how a person will live, not on how they will die. It marks the beginning of a journey of faith; it is not an 'insurance policy'. Ask the vicar of a member of the church if you have more questions about this.

How long is the service?

A baptism service is usually around an hour long. During the part of the service that comes after the baptism, there are activities provided for children, and there is a crèche area at the back of church for parents who would like to use it.

What time should we arrive at the church?

You will probably be inviting family and friends to the service, and it is easy to underestimate how long it takes to catch up with them! Arrive 20 minutes or half an hour before the service starts (aim for 10am for a service that starts at 10.30am). It is also easier to park if you arrive earlier!

We are arranging a venue for a celebration after the thanksgiving / baptism. How soon can you confirm that my child's thanksgiving/ baptism can take place on the date that we are interested in?

If you return the application form to us in person, we can usually confirm the application immediately or within a couple of days. If you return the form by post, please phone us to confirm the date.

How much does it cost?

The Church of England does not charge any fees for either Thanksgiving or Baptism services. Family is important to Christians (the church is often thought of as a family, and the Bible describes Christian people as God's children). It is a pleasure to welcome people who are celebrating a new member of their family.

**Thanksgiving for the gift of a child
Or Dedication of a Child**

Welcome and Introduction

All **Loving God**
You hold all things in life
And call us into your kingdom of peace;
Help us to walk the path of your truth
And fill our lives with gratitude and faith
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

All **Amen**

Hymn

Confession

All Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our
whole heart. We have not loved
our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we
have been, help us to amend what
we are, and direct what we shall
be; that we may do justly, love
mercy, and walk humbly with
you, our God. Amen

Absolution

The Lord's Prayer

All Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed is your name,
Your Kingdom come,
Your Will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil,
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory
Are yours now and forever. Amen

Hymn

Thanksgiving and Blessing

Do you receive [name of child]
as a gift from God?

Parents: We do

Do you wish to give thanks
to God and seek his blessing?

Parents: We do

God our creator, we thank you for
the wonder of new life and for the
mystery of human love. We thank
you for all whose support and skill
surround and sustain the beginning
of life. We thank you that we are
known to you by name and loved by
you from all eternity. We thank you
for Jesus Christ, who has opened to
us the way of love. We praise you,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

What name have you given this child?

Parents: His/her name is [name of child]

As Jesus took children in his arms
and blessed them so now we ask
God's blessing on [name of child].
Heavenly Father we praise you
for his/her birth:

surround [name of child]
with your blessing that he/she
may know your love, be
protected from evil, and know
your goodness in all his/her days.

All: **May [name of child] learn to love
all that is true, grow in wisdom and
strength and, in due time, come
through faith and baptism to
the fullness of your grace; through
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

May God the Father of all bless [name of parents]
and give you grace to love and care for
[name of child]. May God give you wisdom
patience and faith, help you to provide for
[name of child] needs and by your example
reveal the love and truth that are in Jesus Christ.

All: **Amen.**

Offertory Hymn
(after which children leave for their classes)

Reading:

Finishing : This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Prayers and Intercessions

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Hymn

Closing Prayer and Blessing



The Baptism Service

Welcome and Introduction

All We have come together in the name of Christ to celebrate with the families of N and N they thank God for the gift of life and bring their children to baptism. We are also here to offer praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins and that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Hymn

Confession

All Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our
whole heart. We have not loved
our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we
have been, help us to amend what
we are, and direct what we shall
be; that we may do justly, love
mercy, and walk humbly with
you, our God. Amen

Absolution

The Lord's Prayer

All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sin against us. Lead us not
into temptation but deliver us
from evil. For the kingdom, the
power, and the glory
are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

Hymn

Faith is the gift of God to his people.
In baptism the Lord is adding to our
number those whom he is calling.
People of God, will you welcome N and N
and uphold them in their new life in Christ?
With the help of God, we will.

Parents and godparents, the Church receives
these children with joy. Today we are trusting
God for their growth in faith. Will you pray
for them, draw them by your example into the
community of faith and walk with them in
the way of Christ?

With the help of God, we will.
In baptism these children begin their journey
of faith. You speak for them today. Will you care
for them, and help them to take their place within
the life and worship of Christ's Church?
With the help of God, we will.

Decision

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you renounce evil?

I renounce evil.

Prayer Over The Water

Praise God who made heaven and earth,
All who keeps his promise for ever.

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan: we thank you we thank you that through the waters of the Red Sea, you led your people out of slavery to freedom in the promised land; Bless this water, that *N* and *N* who are washed in it may be made one with Christ in his death and in his resurrection to be cleansed and delivered from all sin. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to bring them to new birth in the family of your Church and raise them with Christ to full and eternal life. For all might, majesty, authority and power are yours, now and for ever.
Amen

Profession Of Faith

I ask you to profess together with these children the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**All I believe in God, the Father
almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

All I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

All I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Baptism

N (& N), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Signing With The Cross

Christ claims you for his own.
Receive the sign of the cross.

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

All Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil, and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.

Welcome

God has received you by
baptism into his Church

**We welcome you into the
Lord's family.**

**We are members together of the
body of Christ; we are children
of the same heavenly Father; we
are inheritors together of the
kingdom of God.**

We welcome you.

Offertory Hymn

(after which children leave for their activities)

Reading:

Finishing: This is the word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Prayers and Intercessions

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Hymn

Closing Prayer and Blessing



SERVICES

First Sunday in the month:

10.30am Family Communion
6.30pm Informal Reflective Service

Second Sunday:

9.15am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Informal Service—Café Style

Third Sunday:

10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Holy Communion

Fourth Sunday:

9.15am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Teaching Service

Fifth Sunday:

9.15am Holy Communion
10.30am Morning Worship
6.30pm Informal Service

You are welcome to come and join us!



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