

Baptism Policy

12 October 2017

Eligibility

Part of the church family

1. We will accept baptism and thanksgiving requests from anyone who is part of the church family (e.g. attends church services, groups and events regularly). If they live outside the parish, we will contact the local vicar as per (6) – it is highly unusual for a vicar to refuse in these circumstances.

Not part of the church family

2. We are required by Canon Law to baptise anyone who lives in the parish, and can only delay the service for reasons of preparation (see below). We will also accept applications for thanksgiving services from families who live in the parish.
3. Accepting or refusing an application for baptism from outside the parish is at the vicar's discretion.
4. Where someone does not currently reside in the parish, nor attend church regularly, for their application to be considered they must:
 - have resided in the parish previously, for a significant amount of time;
 - or have been themselves baptised, confirmed or married at St Editha's Church.

If neither of these applies, the family will be encouraged to start attending church on a regular basis for at least six months, before the application can be considered.

5. Families must also be able to undergo sufficient preparation for baptism, at the vicar's discretion.
6. Before an application from outside the parish can be accepted, we must contact the local vicar to seek her / his good will (this is required by Canon Law).

Procedure

7. Anyone seeking a baptism or thanksgiving service from outside the church family, will be asked to attend a 10:30 service, to meet the church family, and to fill in an application form.
8. If the candidate(s) are not old enough to speak for themselves, we will liaise with the parent(s) about a suitable date for a thanksgiving (this is a requirement before proceeding to baptism):
 - For members of the church family, this will take place in the service they normally attend.
 - For others, this will take place in the 10:30 service (no more than twice a month). We can accommodate a maximum of 20 guests due to the presence of the normal congregation.
9. After the thanksgiving service, or if the candidate(s) can speak for themselves, the candidate(s) and/or parent(s) are required to undergo sufficient preparation, according to the separate Baptism Preparation Policy.
10. Once the baptism preparation has been completed, we will liaise with the candidate(s) and / or parent(s) about a suitable date for the service:
 - For members of the church family, this will take place in the service they normally attend.
 - For others, this will take place at 13:30 or 14:30, on a Sunday when there has not been an early morning service. We can accommodate a maximum of 120 guests.

11. Two or three weeks before the service, the family should be visited to confirm all the details by the minister taking the service.

Follow-up

12. Families with young children should be made aware of the different activities and services we offer for the appropriate age group.
13. In the year of baptism, families / candidates should be invited to the Christmas services.
14. All families / candidates should be offered the opportunity to attend the next Alpha / Christian basics course being run by the church.
15. Each subsequent year (for three years), candidates should be sent a card on the anniversary of their baptism, signed from the church family, and containing a simple prayer. This card might also contain an invitation to a special event, if coming up / appropriate.

Notes

Godparents / sponsors

16. Children who are not able to answer for themselves may have godparents, who must be baptised themselves, and ideally confirmed (though parents do not). There should be a minimum of two, but normally three godparents (two of the same sex as the child, one of the opposite sex).
17. There are no age limits for godparents, but they should be of mature enough faith to encourage and model the Christian life to the candidate(s) – and normally adults.
18. We do not baptise people simply so they can be godparents, but anyone wishing to explore the Christian faith (and in due course come to baptism themselves) is welcome to speak to the vicar.
19. For children or adults able to answer for themselves, where godparents are not required to speak on their behalf, they shall choose two or three sponsors instead, who will encourage and model the Christian faith to them.

Gifts

20. At a thanksgiving the parent(s) will receive:
 - a card from the church family;
 - a gospel.
21. At a baptism each candidate will receive:
 - a certificate;
 - a candle;
 - a presentation Bible (age appropriate).
22. Each godparent or sponsor will receive:
 - a card or certificate.

Fees

23. We are not allowed to charge a fee for baptism services, however we should normally encourage families / candidates to make a donation to the church, as they deem appropriate.
24. If the service is in the afternoon and the family / candidate would like music, we charge the same fee for the organist and band as we do for funerals, blessings and renewal of vows services (see current schedule of fees).