

Baptism

At St Mary's, Buckden



Why baptism (or Christening)?

The arrival of a new baby is a miracle – you may want to come to church to say ‘thank you’ to God for all that your child means to you. But Christening is not just a time to give thanks to God for the gift of a child; it also means becoming a member of God’s family.

Baptism (or ‘Christening’ – they are just two words for the same thing) is the first step on a much longer journey of faith, a journey that will take a lifetime. We each need people to support us and be with us on our journey of life and faith. Parents and godparents play a very important role in helping to nurture children in the faith, so it is important to choose godparents who will take an ongoing interest in your child’s growth in body, mind and spirit. Godparents themselves have to have been baptised, and it is good if they are also confirmed; bringing a child for baptism or being asked to be a godparent can be a time for people to think about their own faith journey, and perhaps make the decision to start going to church again, or to prepare for confirmation.

When a child is baptised (or Christened) we use three important symbols:



The Cross is the sign of Jesus Christ. We make the sign of the cross on the child’s forehead to show that he or she belongs to the Christ, and is a member of the Christian church. No-one can see the sign of the cross, but we pray that the way your child lives their life will show that they belong to God.

Water is health, presence in blessed and person this the beginning the beginning of a



essential for life. Just as we need water for growth and refreshment, we also need God’s our lives to keep ‘spiritually healthy’. Water is poured over the child’s head. For an older would signify the washing away of an old life and of a new one. For a young children, it also marks new life as a member of God’s family.

Jesus said, ‘**I am candle** saying glory of God the children: that their lives. Why



the Light of the world’. We give a **lighted** the words, “shine as a light in the world, to the Father”. This is our prayer for all newly baptized they will shine with the light of God every day of not light the candle on the anniversary of the baptism each year?

Can my baby be Christened here?

If you live in the parish of Buckden we shall be glad to christen your child in the parish church. If you live elsewhere, we shall be happy to give you details of how to get in touch with the vicar there. There may be circumstance in which it would be appropriate for you to have your baby christened here even if you live outside the parish – please contact Revd Ally Barrett (01480 810371; vicar@stmarysbuckden.org.uk) if you're not sure.

What next?

Around the time of the baptism we can support you in a number of ways:

- When you contact us, somebody from the Church, usually the vicar, will come and see you to arrange the date, and to talk through the service (the main parts of which are given later in this leaflet). Usually there is a choice as to whether the baptism will take place during a main Sunday morning service, or separately in an afternoon service.
- If you're not already a regular member of the congregation, you are also invited to come to Church one Sunday morning (or more than once!) – this will help you get to know the church (both the building and the people).
- We can offer you the services of a “spare granny”! Our grannies are available to sit with you when you come to church (both for the Christening itself and at any other time), to help you find your way around the service and generally assist in any way they can. They would be happy to visit you in advance so that they can get to know you and your child, and to be an ongoing point of contact with the church. They are all CRB-checked, and are experienced in working with children.
- If the Christening takes place in a separate service, we will invite you to bring your child to a main Sunday service sometime afterwards so that he or she (and you!) can be officially ‘welcomed’ by the church congregation.

After baptism

As you seek to bring your child up and to help them come to know God for themselves:

- You can come and pray with us and learn with us; our regular main Sunday service is at 10.30am. All our services are listed in Buckden Roundabout, and are also on the church website.
- You can bring any older children (age 3 and above) to Junior Church, which takes place in termtime during the Sunday 10.30 service.
- We are about to launch a new monthly service on a Sunday afternoon at 4pm, especially for young families, in which parents, grandparents, and children can all come to church and worship together. We will write to you with an invitation to this service.
- You can bring your children (babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers) along to our 'tea chat and toys' group that meets at the vicarage most Thursday afternoons at 1.30pm during termtime.
- You can join in with the 'Puddings and conversation' group, a fun and sociable way to learn more about the Christian faith and meet others who are on the same journey as you are.
- You are welcome to leave a prayer request any time – there is a box for prayer requests on the table just inside the door of the church, and any prayer requests left there are offered every day at midday prayers.
- You are very welcome to contact the vicar or ministry team at any time. Please do let us know if you change your contact details so that we can keep in touch with you, and invite you to church events particularly for families and children.

At baptism, the church promises to welcome you and your child, and to support you in your journey of life and faith. We are always seeking to improve the way that we welcome young families and children into God's family and into the church. We would be delighted to hear from you with any suggestions for further improvement.

Contact us:

**www.stmarysbuckden.org.uk
vicar@stmarysbuckden.org.uk
01480 810371**

The presentation

Those to be baptized come forward, together with their parents and godparents

The minister addresses the whole congregation

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 *these children/candidates* and uphold them in *their* new life in Christ?

With the help of God, we will.

The minister then says to the parents and godparents

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 in 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.

Baptism is a reason for the whole church to celebrate, and all faithful people have a responsibility to welcome, nurture and encourage the newly baptized child.

Praying for a child is a wonderful thing to do for them – whether by 'formal' prayers every day, or by simply holding them before God in your heart, not only if they are sick or in trouble, but all the time.

Leading by example will happen whether we want it to or not! Your own beliefs about life, and about God, will be picked up by your child. Who is God for you?

It can be more challenging to think about how you can help your child to grow in faith, especially if you are not yourself a regular churchgoer. Is this a good opportunity for you to think about your own relationship with God and the church?

The decision

The paschal candle is lit,

and the minister addresses the candidates through their parents and godparents

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

To follow Christ means 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.

The candle is a symbol of the light of God. Here, we turn away from all that is dark, and turn towards Christ, the source of all that is light and good. As you say these words, why not silently 'name and shame' the darkness in your own life and in the life of the world, and ask God to shine his light in your heart.

The signing with the cross

The priest signs the cross with oil on each candidate's forehead

N, Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross. Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

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.

The cross is the sign of Jesus Christ. It is the 'badge' or 'banner' under which the baptised child will lead their life, and it is their strength whenever they later face challenges to their faith and to their integrity.

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, restore in you the image of his glory, and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ. **Amen.**

The minister and candidates (with their parents and godparents) gather at the font, and the congregation turns towards them

The prayer over the water

The minister of baptism stands before the water of baptism and says

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life. Over water the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through water you led the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the promised land.

In water your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us from the death of sin to newness of life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of baptism.

In it we are buried with Christ in his death.

By it we share in his resurrection.

Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in joyful obedience to your Son,

we baptize into his fellowship those who come to him in faith.

Now sanctify this water that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, they may be cleansed from sin and born again. Renewed in your image, may they walk by the light of faith and continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

We affirm our faith

The minister of baptism addresses the congregation

Brothers and sisters,

I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,

Just as water is vital for the body, so God's Holy Spirit is vital to our spiritual life.

We pray that God will use this water as a way for us to receive his forgiveness, his grace, and his Holy Spirit.

As our Father, God made us and never stops loving us. The love we feel for our own children is only a shadow of how much God loves us.

who made all things?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ,
who redeemed the world?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust
in his Holy Spirit,

who gives life to the people of God?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

We believe that Jesus is God's Son, and that he came to live as one of us. By knowing Jesus we can know God.

The Holy Spirit is God's way of being with us. At baptism we pray especially that God's Holy Spirit will be with the child so that they will know that God is with them every day of their life.

The baptism

The minister pours water on each candidate, saying

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

The minister of baptism prays for each of the newly baptised

May God, who has received you by baptism into his Church,
pour upon you the riches of his grace,
that within the company of Christ's pilgrim people
you may daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit,
and come to the inheritance of the saints in glory. **Amen.**

*Each of the newly baptized is given a lighted candle, lit from the paschal candle
When all the newly baptized have received a candle, the minister says*

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and has given us a place with the saints in light.

You have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life.

Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.

Why not light the candle again on each anniversary of the baptism as a way of reminding yourselves and your child about what their baptism means?

The minister of baptism and those who have been baptized return from the font

A prayer

(based on the three main symbols used in baptism)

Lord Jesus, may the sign of your cross
keep me strong and faithful when life is hard.

When I am tired, or burdened down by things I have done wrong,
refresh me and wash me clean.

The world sometimes seems a very dark place.

Shine your light in my heart,
and help me to shine as a light for others.

Amen.