

allowed to act as 'sponsors' but cannot be a 'godparent'. The primary role of Godparents is as a witness to the baptism, as a **Christian example**, and to **pray** regularly for your child. Friends of other faiths cannot be Godparents, even though they might be excellent examples of love and compassion. They can, however, act as **sponsors**. *Please speak with us about this if this might apply to you.*

How long will the service take?

The whole service will last about 30 minutes.

Is there a charge for the service?

The Baptism service is an acknowledgement of the great gift of God in the life of a new human being. God's gifts to us are many, and our response to God should come in the light of that truth of our faith. There is, therefore, **no statutory charge for Baptism. If you require a printed order of service there will be a charge of £1 per colour copy. Please note that when there is more than one family bringing their child/children to baptism (as there often is), we do not produce personalised orders of service.**

Your gift back to the Church should include your willingness to support the mission of the church through your prayers, example and teaching, through regular attendance at worship and through **regular giving** to help maintain the ministry offered by the Church in this place.

We would very much appreciate it, if you are able to offer a financial offering at the service for your child, that you make it using our 'Gift Aid' envelopes available in Church. All you have to do is fill in the details on the front of the envelope and hand it in on the offering plate.

If you are a tax payer, this means that we are able to claim back the tax on any donation you make. For every £10 given, we are able to collect an extra £2.50 from the government **AT NO COST TO YOU**. This really does make a significant difference. **Contactless giving is available in church, or you can give by text message: Text SNCGIVE followed by your donation amount to 70085 to give that amount. Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message.**

Offerings gathered at Baptisms are used to support the mission and ministry of St Nicholas' Parish Church - including our support of our partner charities working specifically with children and young people.

Thank you for your support and commitment

We very much hope you feel part of the community of faith at St Nick's

The Rev'd Rachel Curley

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**PLEASE READ THIS LEAFLET
BEFORE MAKING
AN APPLICATION
FOR BAPTISM**



Marked
as
Christ's Own
Forever



Holy Baptism
Information Brochure



Version 6 – July 2023

CONGRATULATIONS!

The birth of some children is carefully planned; others come as a surprise. But it is always a wonderful privilege, and a great responsibility, to care for a young child. So, it's very natural to want to give thanks to God for one of the greatest gifts God has ever given you, and to ask for God's blessing on your child and your family. We would be really delighted to arrange a special service for you and your child, and your family and friends.

Whether your child has been born to you, or whether you have recently adopted, we are here to help you make the right Christian choices for your child.

First things first...

The single most important thing to say is how **delighted** we are that you'd like God to be part of your celebrations!

As a community of faith, we are here to help you and guide you through the next steps.

Giving thanks to God for the gift of new life in the arrival of your child is an important part of what we offer in our ministry to the very young and their families. We want to do our best to help you understand the choices that are ahead of you.

We believe that baptism is a GIFT from God to the Church. It is first and foremost about an **on-going commitment to building your relationship with God and God's Church. You will be asked to make promises - and to make them publicly and with sincerity.**

We want to get to know you as a family and we assume that your request for Baptism is part of your commitment to being part of the local church. That commitment is worked out through your **participation** in the life of the church, your offering of time, talents and resources, and your commitment to be part of the family of faith here.

We want to get to know you! We hope the feeling is mutual.

What next?

The process usually starts by contacting the Minister The Rev'd Rachel Curley for an initial enquiry, then completing and submitting an online enquiry form from our website, or a phone call to the Parish Office.

If you are not resident in the ecclesiastical parish of St Nicholas, Chislehurst, and you have no link to St Nicholas', you must seek the goodwill of the Church of England parish priest where you live.

Having read this booklet and discussed it as a family, you should then arrange to meet with Rev'd Rachel (if a date and time has not already been arranged). At that meeting Rachel will want to get to know you a little better and talk about how we proceed together. We want to make your celebrations the best we can, so it does take a little time to get things planned out correctly.

The first thing to note is that this is a *journey*. Since we are dealing with a treasure of yours, we need to remember that this process is not just like purchasing a product from a shop. The journey will involve getting to know you and your family a little better.

You will need to attend a 9.30am service on the 3rd Sunday of a month prior to the baptism. At this service we will present you and your child to the church. We will plan this with you. It is a requirement and forms part of the preparation for baptism. We want to get to know you, and pray for you!

Rehearsal

Your family (parents and child) **must attend a rehearsal** in the week before the baptism. Again, this is a requirement and part of the process of preparation for baptism—even if you've had a little one baptised with us before.

Baptisms usually happen on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, at 3pm.

Please remember that you may not be the only family with a baptism at that service. Sometimes they also happen at the 9.30am service on the 3rd Sunday of the month. We can discuss this with you.

After the baptism, we look forward to getting to know you more, as a family, in the weeks, months and years to come!

Some of the practicalities...

Baptism is a commitment

In the case of a small child, it is a commitment on the child's behalf, through the parents and godparents. At least one parent should be baptised already.

Baptisms usually take place in the church building.

Under extreme pastoral circumstances, the baptism may happen elsewhere.

Godparents

Canon Law (Section B 23.1) states that "there shall be not fewer than **THREE Godparents**, of whom at least two shall be of the same sex as the child and of whom at least one shall be of opposite sex; ...when three cannot conveniently be had, one godfather and godmother shall suffice. **Parents may be godparents for their own children provided that the child has at least one other godparent."** **Please note that is not possible to add or replace godparents after the baptism has been carried out. Godparents are both WITNESSES and PARTICIPANTS in the ceremony - making promises on behalf of your child - and cannot be changed afterwards.**

Godparents **must already be baptised**. Those who do not meet this criteria are