



The Parochial Church Council

Baptism Policy

General Principles

In order to give as much time, care and attention to those requesting baptisms, we:

- I only take baptism requests (and other pastoral office requests) by telephone. Those who email are asked to telephone so that we can have a conversation.
- Whenever possible baptize only one candidate at a time, unless specifically asked.
- The option of baptism within the Parish Eucharist or later in the day will be offered.
- Typically, baptism take place outside of the main services. The reasons for this are:
 - We wouldn't be able to keep up with numbers.
 - In recognition that those on the fringes of faith may feel uncomfortable in at Parish Eucharist
 - In recognition that the numbers that come for baptism would be a great disruption to the regular pattern of worship.
 - Part of the process of thanking God for the gift of a child is the coming together of the wider family circle. In our modern world, many travel hundreds of miles to attend baptisms, and 10 a.m. may be an unrealistic time to get families and friends together.

Booking a date and time

- The family contacts the Vicar, who establishes whether they are entitled to have their child baptized in the parish. If they do not reside in the parish, they are asked to seek the permission of their parish priest for me to baptize their child.
- A mutually agreeable date is negotiated and agreed. Sometimes this is simple as they have an accommodatable date in mind; others ring with no date in mind, and they are then invited to ring back with three or four possible dates. If they do not reside in the parish, this date is provisional, subject to their parish priest's consent.
- The word of the family is taken that they have obtained their parish priest's consent* [Might it be wise to ask family's to request that their Parish Priest sings a consent form?]
- The time of the baptism will usually be at 12 noon.
- The process will then be outlined:
 - The family are to select three or four godparents, all of whom must be at least baptized, preferably baptized and confirmed.
 - They are asked to ensure that they know the full names of the godparents.
 - When parents approach us having already asked half a dozen people, they will be asked to select those they wish to be included in the Baptism Register (explaining that the registers have space for four).
 - The couple are asked to telephone me a month prior to the date of the baptism to arrange a Baptism Preparation Visit. If there has been no contact within two weeks of the baptism, the Vicar will make contact. A date, time and venue for the visit is agreed, and the parents are reminded of the need for three godparents who are themselves baptized, and that full names will be needed at the visit.

Adult Enquirers

- Whilst Canon B24 states that the Bishop should be advised of any adult baptism a week prior to the baptism, and Confirmation should follow as soon as possible afterwards, realistically this rarely happens.
- Adult candidates speak for themselves. Rather than having godparents, they select three sponsors to present the candidate and support them in their journey of faith. Sponsors, like godparents, should be baptised.

The Visit

- Usually takes place in the family home, where they are more relaxed. It also offers the priest the opportunity to get a glimpse into their family life.
- The visit is done by the priest taking the service, so that a relationship begins to emerge.
- The Baptism Form is completed, gathering all required information.
- The service, from arriving at Church, to leaving, is discussed. Baptism is explained, and practicalities are addressed.
- Working through the baptism preparation booklet, the service is unpacked and the symbolism, language and so forth are explained.
- The baptism preparation booklet is left for the family to keep, along with an information sheet for each of the godparents outlining their role, the decisions they are to take and what these mean, a suggested conversation to have with the parents about how they will fulfil their promises.

The Baptism

- The solemnity of the occasion is balanced with a light touch to both help the family and their guests relax, but also to provide a positive encounter with the Church.
- A Verger is usually present to welcome our guests.
- All baptisms are advertised in our weekly and monthly notices, and congregants are invited to join us to meet, welcome and support the families through the service.
- Hymns are not sung. Should a family wish to sing hymns, they will be responsible for hiring our organist and printing any necessary hymn sheets.
- Where appropriate (age, parental supervision, willingness, etc.) siblings are included in the liturgy, for example by signing with the oil of catechumens, holding the baptism candle, and so forth.
- A sermon is not preached. The liturgy, symbols and actions is explained at each stage, helping those present to engage and, deepen their understanding of what is taking place.
- The candidate receives a baptism candle, certificate and a card for each godparent.

Afterwards

- The candidate is prayed for on the anniversary of their baptism

Signed:



(Chair of the PCC)

Date adopted by PCC: 19th May 2024

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