

Merstham And Gatton Team Ministry

Thanksgiving and Baptism

We are delighted that you are thinking of having your child baptised. No doubt you want the best for your child in every way: physically, the local doctor is there to help educationally, the local schools will help spiritually, the church is here to help with that.



It is great that you want to celebrate your baby's arrival with family and friends, and to have an occasion to share your joy with them. You may well feel you want to come to church to say "thank you" to God for the miracle of this precious new life, and to ask God's blessing as your child grows up.

There are several ways to do this in church. The most usual are a *Thanksgiving service* and a full *Baptism*. Copies of both services are enclosed for you to look at.

Baptism is sacrament of entry into the Church. At the beginning of the Church's history it was solely adults who were baptised,



making a public affirmation of their faith and of their decision to become disciples of Christ. Soon the children of such adult disciples also began to be baptised, with the significant adults in their life promising to nurture them in their own faith and lead them by prayer, teaching and example. The wider Church also has a part to play in this and so also makes pledges and offers a welcome in the baptism service.

As well as being a joyful and happy occasion, a baptism marks an important stage in someone's life (even if, as a baby, they are not aware of it at the time!) Like all important events, it is good to think beforehand about what it involves and how things might change afterwards. The leaflet that accompanies this will, we hope, help you to do this in your own good time. Do read it through and if you have any questions, one of the clergy will be very happy to try and answer them.



The Thanksgiving service has some things in common with the *Baptism* service (both use authorised Church of England liturgies): the naming, the thanksgiving, the prayers and the blessing. In addition it includes the giving of a gospel as a gift. But, unlike baptism, there is no water and no one is publicly asked to make solemn promises or to answer questions about their faith.

The Thanksgiving service stands as a service on its own, expressing simple and sincere thanks to God and asking his blessing. Some people also choose it because they feel they should allow their child to decide whether or not to be baptised when older.

Others do not yet feel able to make the vows which are required in the baptism service, or plan to have their child baptised later, but would like to thank God for their child's birth early on.

What happens now?

Come along to a service. If you have not been before, this will be a good opportunity to gain a feel for what goes on.

Introduce yourself to one of the clergy after the service (the main Sunday service is at 9.30am in St. Katharine's or 10.am in All Saints). They will then fix up a time to come and visit you.

When the clergy visit

At the visit they will ask you to share with them what you would like for your child. This may well include looking with you at the two options of a *thanksgiving* service or a *baptism*. For the latter, they can help you think about the meaning and significance of the promises contained in the *baptism* service. They will give you the opportunity to ask any questions, for example about baptism it may be about godparents, the service, the church or anything else and they will, of course, enjoy just spending time with you and getting to know you a little better.

To fix the date after the clergy visit

If you want to go ahead with either a thanksgiving or baptism service, the next thing to do then is to phone or email one of the clergy team to fix up a date.

The services - timing

Baptism and Thanksgiving services usually take place during **a Parish Communion service or a Family service**. It is possible to arrange other times according to the church calendar, occasionally at 12.30 after the main morning services. We, of course, aim to make the service as special to you as possible, but there may well be other children being baptised at the same time. This adds to the joy of the occasion.

What happens afterwards?

A child's baptism marks the start of a journey of growth to a fulfilled Christian life. Children are an important part of the church family and we warmly welcome them to Sunday worship. There are many ways for them and for you to be involved with what goes on. Listed below are some of our children's activities. At their visit the clergy will be very happy to discuss with you what might be the most appropriate activity.

Junior Church: Ages 3-11

St Katharine's: Meet 9.30- 10.30 St. Katharine's Church Hall

Contact : Val Williams 01737 644850 or Mary Dardis 01737 643962

All Saints Meet 10am in Church : Scramblers, (3-5)

Climbers,(5-7) Explorers (7-10) and Pathfinders (11-14)

Contact: Mrs Yvonne Richards 642648

Youth Emmaus + Confirmation classes: Ages 10 upwards

Contact: The Revd P Mark Pullinger 01737 642647

mgteamrector@btinternet.com

It is also possible to be part of the choirs or music groups contact Judith Hendry 645352 or Melvin Hughes 241355 or The Rector

For further information please contact:

Team Rector: The Revd P Mark Pullinger 01737 642647

mgteamrector@btinternet.com

Team Vicar: Vacant please contact the Team Rector

Hon. Curate: The Revd Val Williams 01737 644850