

Thanksgiving & Baptism Services



A Church for the whole community

Welcoming your child to St. Peter's Church

Congratulations!

You are probably reading this leaflet because you have recently had a new baby and are thinking about a special service for your child. Congratulations!

We know that Jesus saw a special place for children. On one occasion we read in the Bible that Jesus took little children in his arms and blessed them.



So as a Parish we seek to welcome children and their families. This leaflet explains the two services we offer to parents wanting to bring young children to church, and also what else we offer to support parents and families.

You can find more information at www.churchofenglandchristenings.org

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

The birth of a child is a happy and life-changing occasion. It is certainly a reason to celebrate. Many people are overcome by a sense of awe at the creation of a new life and want to express their thanks to God.

The Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child offers you, your family and friends an opportunity to give thanks for the birth (or adoption) of a child and to join together to celebrate and pray for family life.

We offer this service to everyone who asks as an expression of God's unconditional love for you and your child. You don't have to say anything about what you believe; you don't have to promise anything; this service is about thanksgiving and celebration.

In the **Service of Thanksgiving** we:

- ☒ Celebrate the birth of your child
- ☒ Enable you to thank God for your child (or children)
- ☒ Publically acknowledge the name you have given your child
- ☒ Pray for God's blessing upon your child
- ☒ Pray for you as parents and for your family life.

This service also enables you to recognize the role of Supporting Friends in your child's life and for them to stand at the front of church with you.

We will try and arrange a Thanksgiving Service for you as quickly as possible on a date that is mutually convenient. We usually hold Thanksgiving Services on the 3rd or 5th Sundays of the month at St. Peter's during the 11am service. Other dates may be available at 10.30am at the Church of Good Shepherd or at St. Peter's 9.15am service. We can also offer a Service of Thanksgiving to you as a family celebration one Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

To book a Thanksgiving Service you can return the enclosed Enquiry Form to church one Sunday or contact the Parish Office.

A Christening (or Service of Baptism)

Baptism is the Christian sacrament of initiation into the Church, the Body of Christ. It marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step of faith in response to God's love. For all involved, but especially parents and godparents, it is a special time to rejoice in your own baptism, to recall what God has done for you in Jesus, to renew your faith and to re-commit yourselves to being part of Christ's church and bringing your child up within the church.



To help parents consider all that is involved in baptism we offer a Baptism Preparation course consisting of three short sessions. We look at the words in the Baptism Service and the meaning of the symbols used. We run these sessions every 2 months or so. The Parish Office can tell you when the next course is running.

We understand you may be a little bit nervous about attending these sessions, but baptism is not a test. We're here to help you decide if baptism is right for you, and if it is, to help you prepare for it. If you wish, you are welcome to bring others to the three sessions with you. If those you are considering as godparents live locally, or your own parents, family or friends are interested too—then feel free to bring them along with you.

Once you have agreed to joining a particular Baptism Preparation course we will be able to discuss arranging a Baptism Service for your child. Generally we hold these on the 3rd or 5th Sundays of the month at St. Peter's during the 11am service. Other dates may be available at 10.30am at the Church of Good Shepherd or at St. Peter's 9.15am service.

A few other considerations

Does it matter where I live? The Church of England welcomes parents to bring children for baptism in their own Parish church. This is to help you fulfill the promises made in baptism to bring your child up within the church. That's obviously easier to do if the church is just down the road! If you don't live within the Parish of Heswall it may however still be possible to conduct your child's baptism provided you see this as the doorway to worshipping with us regularly. If you live too far away for this to be possible then we can put you in touch with a church closer to where you live.

Parents - In order to bring a child for baptism parents need themselves to have been baptized. If this is not the case, there's no problem – we just need to talk about baptizing you as well as your child. As Christians we also believe that marriage provides the best environment for bringing up children, and that there is some inconsistency for couples who are living together to make a public declaration of Christian faith whilst not embracing God's gift of marriage. We do not however refuse applications for baptism from unmarried parents, but we do encourage unmarried couples to consider marriage—a step we believe to be of just as much significance to your child as baptism.

Godparents - It is traditional at a Baptism Service to have 3 godparents. It is important that godparents are people who can make declarations of Christian faith with integrity. They also need to be people who will genuinely help you bring your child up to follow Jesus as part of His church. Godparents are encouraged to attend the Baptism Preparation sessions if they are able to.

Others ways we try and help.

We try very hard as a Parish to make families with children feel welcome. To make it easier for parents to bring babies and young children to church we have a child friendly play area at the Church of the Good Shepherd and a crèche at St. Peter's. There are toys for the children and parents can feel relaxed about being in church whilst taking part in our services.

During the 10.30am service at the Good shepherd and the 11am service at St. Peter's we run Engage Kids for children over 2½ years where they can enjoy Bible stories, worship, games and crafts.



On the 4th Sunday of most months at 11am at St. Peter's we run Café Church in St. Peter's Centre, a shorter, noisy, interactive service to which it's easier to bring small children.

During termtime we also offer:

Baby Tiddlers—St. Peter's Centre—Wednesdays in termtime 2.00 pm

Little Fishes—St. Peter's Centre—Tuesdays in termtime 10.30 am

Toddlers—Good Shepherd —Thursdays 10.00am

What next?

Having read this leaflet you are welcome to contact our Church Office to book a Thanksgiving Service or to find out when the next Baptism Preparation course is running. You can also complete the Enquiry Form and bring it to church one Sunday or return it to the Parish Office.

More information

St. Peter's Parish Centre

Monday - Friday 9:30am - 12:30pm

office@heswallparish.co.uk 0151-342-3471

www.heswallparish.co.uk

More information about baptism is available at

www.churchofenglandchristenings.org