

## Q What are the steps leading to baptism?

- 1) The vicar or curate will visit you to get to know you and to discuss baptism.
- 2) You need to start coming to church services (10.30 on Sunday mornings). It's not possible to be a committed Christian without being part of a church.
- 3) Once you have been to at least 3 services, the vicar or curate will meet you again to discuss how you would like to proceed. If you decide to opt for a baptism, he will agree a date and talk about the arrangements.

Baptisms at St Paul's take place during the main 10.30am service, usually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month.

**At all times it is your decision whether you opt for a thanksgiving, a baptism, or whether you decide to do neither of these.**

We will not force you to take one or other option – but we will explain carefully what is involved so you can make the decision that's right for you. Whatever you decide, we will always welcome you and your child at St Paul's.

To get more information, please speak to:

Revd Edward Coombs (Vicar) 01295 264003

Revd David Huss (Curate) 01295 270692

## St Paul's Church, Banbury

### Baptism and Thanksgiving Services

This leaflet is for parents who have had a new child and want to mark the occasion with a Christian service. At St Paul's we offer a choice of services for parents and children:

#### Thanksgiving

This usually takes place in church at 12.30 on Sundays. It provides an opportunity to thank God for the birth of a child and for parents to ask God for help in bringing up the child.

Thanksgiving services do not require any public declaration of faith and no promises are made. Thanksgiving can also begin a process of thinking about the implications of having your child baptised, and a baptism could follow later.

If you would like a thanksgiving service, the vicar or curate will be able to make the arrangements and agree a suitable date with you.

#### Baptism

Baptism is different. You as parents are required to make clear promises to God, your child and the congregation about what you believe and how you will bring up the child. The godparents also make similar promises.

With this in mind, it's important to look at what baptism is...

### **Q What does baptism involve?**

The parents and godparents say out loud that they believe the Christian faith. Then the minister pours water on the child's head saying "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".



### **Q What does baptism stand for?**

Baptism is a sign of two things God wants to do for us. He wants to wash away our sins (the things we have done wrong which separate us from God). And he wants to give us a new life with his Holy Spirit living inside us.

The water in baptism is a picture of these two things. Just as we use water at home for washing and for drinking, God wants to wash away our sin and give us new life.

But being baptised doesn't automatically wash away a person's sin and give them new life. The person also needs to do something. They need to turn away from their sin and put their faith in Jesus. Without faith, baptism is powerless and meaningless.

### **Q So why do we baptise children?**

Babies and small infants are too young to make this response of faith for themselves. But the Bible encourages Christians to include their children in the practice of their faith. So it is appropriate for Christian parents to have their children baptised.

At St Paul's we consider our children to be members of the church. So we baptise them, and we pray that they will go on living as Christians as they grow up.

This means that the only valid reason for having your child baptised is that you, as parents, are committed Christians and you want to include your child in your Christian faith – you want to bring him or her up as a Christian and a member of the church.

You don't need to have a baptism for any of these reasons:

"We want to give her a name"

"So he'll go to heaven when he dies"

"So she can get married in church"

"To keep the grandparents happy"

"So he's able to join a church if he wants to"