Baptism & Thanksgiving Services
at
St John's Church, Knypersley

We are delighted that you are thinking about asking for God's blessing on your child.

To bring them up within God's family is the best possible thing that can happen to them.

St John's, as part of the Church of England, offers two approaches –

Thanksgiving and Baptism

Both are ways of celebrating the life of your child which involve making promises to God with the support of close friends. The main difference is in the **extent** and **depth** of Christian commitment that each form of service expresses.

1. What is a Thanksgiving?

"Thanksgiving for the gift of a child" is a celebration to mark the birth and naming of your child. We give thanks to God for your child's new life, and commit both you and the child to God, asking for his **help** and **blessing** in the years to come.

It is the sort of service that almost anyone who believes in God can stand up and take part in, even if they are **not sure what else they believe.** It's a way in which parents can express their gratitude for the birth of the child, and receive God's blessing on them and the child.

2. What is a Baptism?

For parents who bring children to be baptised, the service involves making promises before God and the congregation to be a wholehearted follower of Jesus Christ **(which includes a commitment to being part of the Church community).**

A Baptism is also a celebration, often with lots of friends and relatives, but rather more is involved. You and "godparents" make very solemn promises before God which are effectively a public declaration of basic Christian belief involving:

(i)… deciding to turn away from the natural way of doing things, and letting God rule every area of our lives (what the Bible calls "repentance") and

(ii)… deciding to follow Jesus Christ and accept God's forgiveness made possible by his death on the Cross (this is what the Bible calls choosing to "believe"). The promises and statements **you and godparents make cannot be made lightly!**

Similarly, we pray and trust that a baptised child will grow up to understand and take on for themselves the promises made in Baptism. For this reason, it is important to understand that Baptism is the beginning of a **lifelong commitment**; it is not a one-off event which means that a child is "done"

3. How do I know whether Baptism or Thanksgiving is right for me?

If one or both parents are committed Christians who are part of St John's Church family, then probably a **Baptism** service is appropriate.

If you want to thank God for the gift of your child, but do not want to make the solemn promises before God and other people that Baptism involves, then the **Thanksgiving** service is for you. Thanksgiving is also for those who feel they want to acknowledge God and seek his help in the child's upbringing. Of course, your child can always be baptised later on as well, should you, or the child (when older and able understand the promises made) want this. That is why a lot of committed Christians, too, opt for this service.

4. Is the Thanksgiving a "second class" Baptism?

Definitely not! The two services are different ways of responding to God's gift of a child and both are treated by the Church as great occasions. Thanksgivings are a first class alternative and joyfully used by both committed Christians and those who are not. Either way the child's spiritual status is the same.

5. Do I have to come to Church?

If you decide to have a Thanksgiving service, this does not imply any ongoing commitment to come to Church gatherings. We would love to see you - and you might be surprised by what you find! - but the Thanksgiving does not involve any promises to that effect.

The Church of England Baptism service, by contrast, does include the clear statement by **parents** and **godparents** that they will help their children "take their place within the life and Worship of the Church". This will mean a **commitment to bring your child to Church on a regular basis.**

It is the expectation that **'godparents'** should be 'confirmed members of the Anglican Church. This highlights the importance of being able to keep the promises made on behalf of the child.

6. Baptism/Thanksgiving preparation

We hope this information is helpful, but please don't worry if you still have questions!

The Church is not for perfect people, but for ordinary people like us, who are honest enough to recognize our need of God.

So, before we can consider offering you a date for Baptism or Thanksgiving, we ask you to come along to Church, meet with the Vicar on a separate occasion, this will give you an opportunity to hear more about the services from Darren our Vicar. You will also get the chance to ask any questions you may have at this stage.

7. What to do next?

If you would like to, why not come along to one of our services to make sure you are comfortable with the Church and the way we do things.

Services take place in St John Church, Park lane, Knypersley, ST87AA
Sundays at 10.30am

8. Fees

There is no fee for a Baptism or Thanksgiving service at the Church.

9. Final Thoughts

We are delighted that you are contacting the Church about a Baptism or a Thanksgiving service. If we haven't seen you since the Baptism service of your first child, or if it has been many months or even years, then there will be an expectation from the Church for you to be attending for at least 3+ months with a 6-8 week preparation course before we can explore the possibility of a Baptism for your other infant/child.

We look forward to talking about some of these things – or any other questions you have - in the near future. In the first instance, please contact our Vicar, Darren Fraser

Contact Details:- Vicar
Rev'd Darren Fraser
Telephone - 01782 512240: email rev.dfraser@gmail.com
Day off – **Friday**