

*“ Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first steps in response to God’s love”*

Thank you for your interest in having your child baptised. The birth of a child brings many new responsibilities and families often have many questions. The spiritual well-being of your child is important, as are feeding, clothing and caring for their educational needs. The Christian faith says that every person is unique and valued by God, and so we wish to encourage and help you in bringing up your child, whether very young or older, to know and love God, and to develop their God-given gifts.

Please read this leaflet - I believe you will find it helpful - and please contact one of the clergy if we can help you further.

Yours sincerely,

The Rev'd Richard Howlett, Vicar.

## **So what is Baptism, and is it the same as a Christening?**

Yes, it is the same thing.

Baptism, in simple terms, involves making promises to follow Jesus Christ. In the case of a baby or young child, parents and godparents make these promises on the child’s behalf. The hope is that, when the child becomes old enough he or she can confirm those promises for themselves at a service of confirmation attended by the bishop.

Baptism, then, is the start of a journey, and confirmation will mark a significant stage in the child’s or adult’s life journey as they make the decision, in public, to follow Jesus Christ in their own lives.

## **We aren’t churchgoers but we feel Baptism is a good thing for our child**

People sometimes mean that they want the baptism carried out but don’t intend to come to church regularly after that because it is not part of their life style.

My question to you is this: if you signed up a child for a sports club, for example, yet never brought him or her, how could they progress in that sport?

It’s the same principle with baptism. In the baptism service the church congregation - including your family and friends are asked to welcome and support the newly baptised:

Faith is the gift of God to his people.  
In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling.  
People of God, will you welcome these children and uphold them in their new life in Christ?

And parents and godparents are asked:

Parents and godparents, the Church receives these children with joy.  
Today we are trusting God for their growth in faith.  
Will you pray for them, draw them by your example into the community of faith and walk with them in the way of Christ?  
In baptism these children begin their journey in faith.  
You speak for them today. Will you care for them, and help them to take their place within the life and worship of Christ's Church?

To all of which they are asked to answer:

***“With the help of God, we will.”***

You’ll see that these are clear promises. I’m sure you’ll agree that we should not make promises unless we intend to keep them. Do you need to think about this more and discuss it with one of the ministers from St Mary’s?

## So if we don't feel we can keep these promises, what can we do?

The Church has a lovely service called "Thanksgiving for the gift of a Child"

In this service the family meets in church

- \* to give thanks for their child
- \* to support parents in their responsibilities with prayer and love
- \* To ask God's blessing.

In the service

- \* we name the child and pray for him or her.
- \* We give a Gospel (part of the Bible) as a gift to the family
- \* We pray for the child, the child's family and they receive a blessing.

We would normally do this within our Family Praise Service (9.30 am on the first Sunday each month) or our Family Communion Service (9.30 am on the third Sunday each month) and there will be songs and activities aimed at all ages.

This service may give you what you are

seeking - an opportunity to thank God for your child and receive a blessing, but without making promises you feel unable to keep.

And please remember you can bring your child for baptism at a later date - perhaps when you and he or she feel ready to come to church more regularly and make that commitment.

### For more information

Please contact one of the clergy to talk about a Thanksgiving or Baptism service

The Rev'd R Howlett

Tel: 01234 355024

E-mail: [revrhowlett@gmail.com](mailto:revrhowlett@gmail.com)

The Rev'd Jackie Buck (part-time)

Tel: 01234 407020

E-mail: [jackiebuck@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jackiebuck@hotmail.co.uk)

or speak to one of the ministers at church on a Sunday morning.

Thank you, and may God bless you in your daily life.

[www.stmarygoldington.org.uk](http://www.stmarygoldington.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number:1131568

The Parish of St Mary The Virgin, Goldington,  
Church Lane, Goldington MK41 0AP



# Thinking about Baptism?

