

www.stjohnsheathhayes.org.uk

Baptism



Is Baptism right for you?

Many people feel the need to mark the birth of a child with a church service and often they think at first that that service should be a baptism. However a baptism is not always the appropriate service to hold. There are two services that the church offers to people who wish to mark the birth of a child. The one you chose will depend largely on your own christian faith and what you are prepared to declare publicly.

A thanksgiving service is a special celebration, which gives the opportunity to come to church and thank God for the birth of your child and to ask his blessing for the future. It differs from a Baptism in that it does not ask for a public commitment to the christian faith.

A baptism service is a service to welcome someone into the church and to mark the start of his or her christian journey. It often happens shortly after birth but can happen at any point in a person's life and sometimes those who have not been baptised as children are baptised as adults.

It is possible to have both a thanksgiving service and a baptism service and if you chose to have a thanksgiving service you may also have a baptism service for your child at a later date.

What next?

If you choose to have a thanksgiving service instead of a baptism service you will not need to attend a baptism preparation session but you will need to fill out the form in this pack and return it to the office in person. You will not have any godparents if you have a Thanksgiving service, but in their place you may have supporters. Unlike godparents, supporters do not have to have been baptised themselves.

If you choose to have a baptism service you will be attending a baptism preparation session with a small group of other parents intending to have their children baptised. You will find the parents guide in this pack a helpful introduction to the service which will be built upon in the preparation session and you may wish to give the additional copies of the godparents page to your chosen godparents. Godparents are welcome at the preparation session, if they wish to come! If you would like to book your baptism at the end of the preparation session then you will need to have completed your forms and brought them with you. Otherwise you can return your forms to the parish office at your leisure. No bookings, not even provisional, will be made without the forms.

A Parents Guide

Holy Baptism: The start of a Journey

In baptism, you as parents are thanking God for his gift of life, deciding to start your child on the journey of faith and asking for the church's support.

For your child, baptism marks the start of a journey of faith, a decision to walk that journey in the presence of God accompanied by the church. The baptism service uses a number of powerful symbols to help us understand the way in which God's presence will transform all our lives.

THE SYMBOLS

Anointing with Oil

During the service we use oil to make the sign of the cross upon those who are about to be baptized. This is a sign of the way in which God adopts those who are baptised to be his own children. His children then bear the mark of his Son - the cross.

Baptising with Water

During the service we use water to symbolically wash those who are being baptised. This is a sign of new birth as those who are being baptised are born again into God's family. It is also a sign of cleansing: God washes away anything that keeps us from him.

Giving and receiving a Candle

During the service we use a lit candle to remind us that Jesus, in his resurrection, conquered death and lives forever. A candle is given to those who have been baptised as a sign that they live in Christ's eternal light.

The promises

At the centre of the baptism service are promises made in God's presence witnessed by your family and friends and the wider church. Parents and godparents make promises on behalf of those who are being baptised. These are promises to reject evil and follow Christ. This promise is the promise anyone makes who wants to be a christian and be part of the church. By making it on behalf of a child, parents and godparents are saying that it is important for them that this child is part of the church. Parents and godparents then make promises to pray and care for the child being baptised to help them to understand the christian faith into which they have been baptised. They also promise to help bring them to the point where they would be able to make those promises for themselves that have already been made for them by their parents and godparents. Finally, the whole church makes promises to welcome those being baptised and support them in living the christian life.

GODPARENTS?

The choice of godparents is an important one. A godparent is someone who is promising to have a very special ongoing involvement in your child's life. They need to be someone who is able to offer your child help and support, especially in regard to their own growing faith. You may find it useful to discuss carefully with prospective godparents what the role involves. There is a sheet included in this pack to help prospective godparents consider if this is a commitment that they wish to take on.

- You must have at least 3 godparents, though it is possible to have more.
- Traditionally 2 should be of the same gender as your child and 1 of the opposite.
- All godparents must have been baptised themselves. *If a person is not baptised they may be a supporter, but this is an unofficial role and is in addition to any godparents.*

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The church makes no charge for baptism or thanksgiving services. We see both services as expressions of God's free love for the world. However if you feel that you would like to give a donation to the church as a form of thanksgiving for this special occasion please consider using the envelopes provided in this pack (if you are a taxpayer) as this allows us to claim tax back on your donation at no additional cost to yourself. We include extra envelopes as often friends and family will also make a small donation but do not feel under any pressure to use them.

ON THE DAY!

Where do we park?

There is a car park behind the church, entered via the main gate from Hednesford Road. There is limited space in the car park and emergency access must be maintained to both the church and hall, at all times. Please encourage people to use other local car parks when the designated parking spaces are full. Please note that we do have church members who need the disabled spaces and that baptisms are public services and so guests should not use the disabled spaces unless they need to.

When do we arrive and where do we sit?

Please try to arrive around 15 minutes before the service is due to begin. Sometimes there may be services immediately before your special service so we advise not arriving too early. We do not reserve seating for people during these services as those being baptised, parents and godparents are called out to the front of church and to the font during them – you will be visible during your special moments!

Photography

Please refrain from flash photography during the service. There is usually plenty of time following a service to take lots of photographs around the font. If you wish to video the service then there is a copyright fee (£10 payable to 'St John's Church Fees Account') and you must return the correct form and payment with your baptism forms.

A Godparents Guide

WHO CAN BE A GODPARENT?

The choice of godparents is an important one. A godparent is someone who is promising to have a very special ongoing involvement in your child's life. They need to be someone who is able to offer a child help and support, especially in regard to their own growing faith. It is therefore preferable for them to be an adult.

All godparents must have been baptised themselves.

If you are not baptised but the parents would like you to act as a godparent there are some alternatives. Firstly, you could consider being baptised yourself before being a godparent. This is a serious undertaking, and will require a genuine commitment to living the Christian life of faith and you would have to do considerable preparation beforehand, but it is sometimes possible to do this. If you wish to be baptised in order to be a godparent you must contact the vicar for more information as soon as possible. Secondly, you could act as a supporter rather than a godparent to the child being baptised. This is an unofficial role, and in addition to any godparents, as a supporter is not taking on the responsibilities that a godparent would to help a child to grow in the Christian faith. However, this can be a way of affirming the important supportive role that you will be playing in a child's life if you do not feel that you can affirm a christian faith yourself. At St John's we allow supporters to stand alongside godparents in the service, but they are not named on any of the certification. This can be a particularly appropriate role for someone who is a committed follower of another faith.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A GODPARENT?

In the Service

In the service godparents stand alongside the child's parents publicly supporting them and join with them in making public promises in God's presence witnessed by the church. Godparents promise to believe and trust in God, turn away from evil and follow Jesus. They also promise to give their godchild their help and support in particular in growing in the christian faith.

In the Future

As you have publicly promised you are expected to keep in regular contact with your godchild offering support and encouragement and helping them to grow and develop in their christian faith. Some godparents like to mark the anniversary of their godchild's baptism by giving a present or card. Some will send them appropriate religious children's books and gifts. Most of all, the silent gift offered by many godparents is in lifelong prayer for their godchildren.

WHAT IF I NEED HELP?

Being a godparent is a demanding task. Sometimes godparents, support and help and advice of their own to help them in the task of nurturing godchildren. You can find resources in easy to access books such as 'Simple Christianity' by N.T.Wright and 'How to Pray: A Practical Handbook' by J Pritchard. Alternatively you could contact your local church minister or attend a local service to find someone to help you. At St John's we welcome all people and have several godparents who bring their godchildren to church from time to time.

Beyond Baptism

Baptism Anniversaries

All those who have been baptised at St John's are remembered on their baptism anniversary in our prayers and cards are sent to remind you of the special day.

Your Child

Here at St John's children are important to us. Our 2nd and 4th Sunday morning services at 10.00a.m. are shorter and snappier for young children and we very much welcome them at ALL our services. From January 2009 you can join us in the church for 'Signs and Wonders' (actions songs and stories) at 2pm on a Monday during term time. Coffee and biscuits will be available and there'll be time to chat and then collect the older children from school.

You

Having a child and exploring baptism may have raised the issue of faith for you personally. If you would like the opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith then we periodically offer an exploration course within small groups. If you contact a member of the ministry team or the office you will be contacted with further details. Alternatively if you wish to discuss any issues or would like the support and help of the church then you can contact the Vicar.

Regular Services at St John's

1 st Sunday of the Month -	10.00a.m.	Holy Communion (including story-time and activity)
2 nd Sunday of the Month-	10.00am	Holy Communion (All Age)
3 rd Sunday of the Month-	10.00a.m.	Holy Communion
4 th Sunday of the Month-	10.00a.m.	Worship for all (All Age)
5 th Sunday of the Month-	10.00a.m.	Holy Communion
Wednesday's-	10.00am	Holy Communion

Resources

PRAYERS

Lord, help us to be patient with our children, to give them time when they need it, to listen to their views however much they may differ from ours. Help us in our conversations together that we may always trust each other. As our children search for knowledge help us to learn with them. Amen.

Bless, O God, this child with the gift of your life. Bless these parents with the gift of your love. Bless us all, your family, with the Christ-Spirit of life and love and peace. Amen

YOU MIGHT LIKE TO READ...

Simple Christianity- N.T. Wright

Questions of Life- Nicky Gumbel

Stories Jesus Told -Nick Butterworth (for children!)

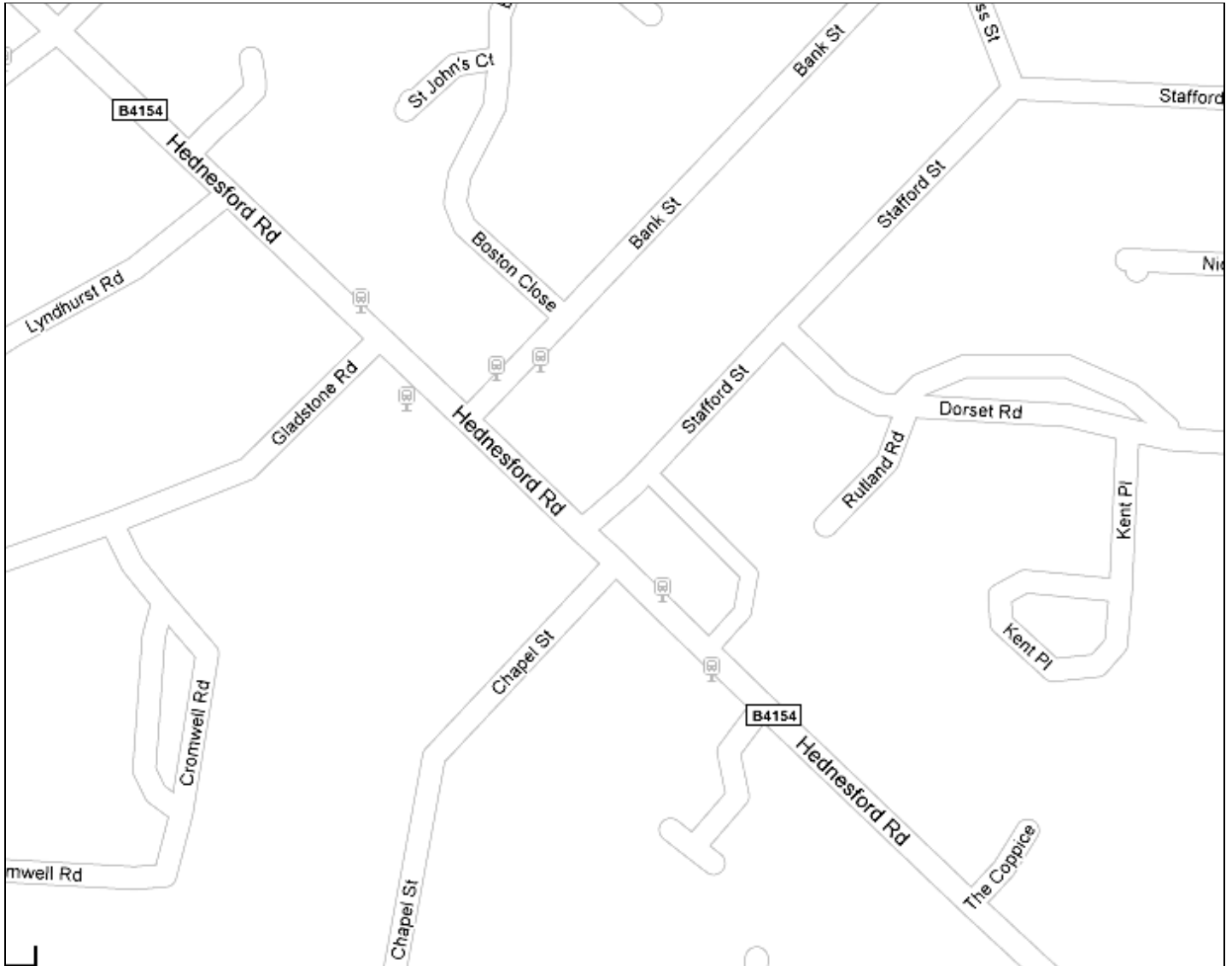
CONTACT US

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Team Vicar:	Rev'd. Leah Vasey-Saunders	450361
Curate:	Rev'd. Steve Reynolds	270940
Reader:	Mrs. Joyce Stewardson	279817
Church Office:	Monday – Thursday 9.30a.m –12 noon	
	Saturday 10.00 a.m. – 12 noon	278478

Parking

Bank Street and Hednesford Road Car Parks.



Hall Hire

The Church hall is available for bookings following baptisms, for children's birthdays and for other celebrations and events. If you would like to know more about this facility please ask for a hall booking pack.



St. John's Church, Heath Hayes.

Application for Baptism or Thanksgiving

Please PRINT all details clearly as this information
has to be entered on the Baptism Register.

Date of Baptism/Thanksgiving Service	Our Ref no:	Gender of Person to be Baptised. MALE / FEMALE
Child's Christian name(s) and surname	Date of Birth	Address Tel.
Father's Christian Name	Surname	Occupation
Mother's Christian Name	Surname	Occupation
Godparents' or Supporters' names <i>(All Godparents must have been baptised)</i>	Address	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Have any of the Godparents been confirmed?	1. Yes/No 2. Yes/No 3. Yes/No 4. Yes/No	
Would you like to video the service? (a copyright charge is applicable)	Yes/No Please enclose video fee with this form.	
Number of Guests anticipated at service		



St. John's Church, Heath Hayes.

Video Copyright Rules

This notice is issued by the incumbent to give permission for recording equipment to be brought into and used inside the church for the purpose of recording the events on the form below subject to the following conditions:

The attention of the recordist is drawn to the following matters:

- 1) The Copyright law is complex. It is most important that it is recognised that neither the incumbent nor the Parochial Church Council has the authority to give permission for the lawful reproduction or recording of any work- literary or musical- which is protected by copyright.
- 2) Certain 'blanket' arrangements have been made to facilitate the recording in church of the text of the marriage and baptism services. Without prior application having to be made to the copyright owners, copyright permission, subject to the conditions of paragraph 3, has been given for the recording on either videotape or audiotape of the the baptism and marriage services that we use at St John's. (Common Worship © 200,2004 Archbishop's Council of the Church of England) There is right to record the music in these services under the churches copyright license as long as only one copy for private and personal use is made.
- 3) The conditions on which a recording of the material specified in paragraph 2 may be made without prior application are as follows:
 - a. No rights in the recording and no copies of it shall be transferred or assigned in consideration of money and copies shall not be sold commercially except that the original recording and copies may be sold to the couple or parents who commissioned the recording.
 - b. That the recording, once made, shall not be screened in public for commercial gain.
 - c. That the appropriate fee shall have been paid prior to the commencement of recording.
 - d. That those recording will be mindful of recording children without first gaining parental consent (and if appropriate the consent of the child).
- 4) The fee payable in consideration to the recognised authority shall be £10 for a Baptism and £25 for a Wedding.
- 5) This 'Blanket' arrangement as is here entered into shall be applicable to one occasion, one video camera (the fee for each camera is £10/£25) and is only applicable in the church named above.



St. John's Church, Heath Hayes.

Video Copyright Form

<p><i>Please delete as necessary:</i></p> <p>Baptism</p> <p>Thanksgiving Service</p> <p>Wedding</p>	<p>Our Ref no:</p>	<p><i>Officiating minister's use:</i></p> <p>Video taken-</p> <p>YES/NO</p>
<p>Name of Child/Couple</p>	<p>Date of Service</p>	<p>Address</p> <p>Tel.</p>
<p>We have read and understood the conditions upon which we may video our service. We agree to follow the regulations and guidelines as set out in the 'Video copyright rules' document and will make sure that the recordist is informed of them.</p>		
<p>Signature</p>	<p>Date</p>	

Please return this form with fee enclosed with your booking form.