



St Lawrence's Church . Biddulph

Welcoming your child to St. Lawrence'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 little children. On one occasion we read in the Bible that Jesus took little children in his arms and blessed them.

So as a church 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.



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. The words we use in this service are available on our church website, or we can post a copy to you.

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 friends in your child's life and for them to stand at the front of church with you as Supporting Friends.

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 FOURTH Sunday of each month at our 11am service.

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

A Service of Baptism

Baptism, sometimes called Christening, 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 recommit 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 two short sessions at which we look at the words in the Baptism Service and the meaning of the symbols used.



We run these sessions from 4—5pm on the SECOND Sunday of every month.

In addition we will always give you a Thanksgiving Service for your child first, to enable you to come to St. Lawrence's and experience our worship and fellowship. You can book this straight away with our Church Office who can also tell you when the next Baptism Preparation sessions will be.

We understand you may be a little bit nervous about attending Preparation, 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 Preparation 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 joined in this Baptism Preparation we will be able to discuss arranging a Baptism Service for your child. Generally we hold these on the SECOND Sunday of each month at our 11am service. The words of the Baptism Service are available on our church website, or we can post them to you.

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 St. Lawrence's 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 the Parish 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 have also been baptized and 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 church to make families with children feel welcome. To make it easier for parents to bring babies and young children to church, we have a safe and child friendly play area at the front of the church. There are toys for the children, and parents can feel relaxed about being in church whilst taking part in our services. We also have toilets and baby changing facilities.



Church 4 little people

At our 11am service we run Church 4 Little People for pre-school children where they can enjoy Bible based stories,

games and crafts. On the first Sunday of the month we hold a Family Service which is usually shorter and already quite noisy. It's a good place to start coming to St. Lawrence's.

Kangas 'n' Roos

On Tuesdays afternoons we run Kangas'n'Roos in our Church Hall for pre-school children and their parents/carers. This is from 1.30 – 2.45pm during term time. You are welcome to simply turn up with your child to use the toys, to join in the craft, the singing, and to meet with other parents over coffee.

What next?

Having read this leaflet you are welcome to contact our Church Office to book a Thanksgiving Service. You can also complete the Enquiry Form online or bring this paper copy to church one Sunday. Services take place at 9.15am, 11am (when most families with small children come) and 6.30pm. On receipt of the Form a member of St. Lawrence's clergy will be in touch with you.

More information

about St. Lawrence's is available from our Church Office
Monday - Friday 9:00am - 12:00 noon, Thursday evenings 6:00 - 8:00pm.
office@biddulphchurch.org.uk 01782 513891

www.biddulphchurch.org.uk

More information about baptism is available on the Church of England's national website www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents