



# The Parish Church of St Botolph, Heene, Worthing

## Holy Baptism

(otherwise known as 'Christening')

If you are considering having your child baptised at St Botolph's, please read through this information sheet carefully.

What is Baptism all about?

- Baptism is an act of cleansing. The word 'Baptism' means to dip or immerse in water. The pouring of water over a child during the Baptism Service is a powerful symbol reminding us how Christ washes away our sins - all our wrongdoing - and gives us a fresh start.
- Baptism is an act of identity. A Christian is someone who identifies with the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the act of Baptism, we are identifying ourselves with *him*.
- Baptism is an act of belonging. It's an outward sign that we belong to God's family, the Church.
- Baptism marks a new beginning. Baptism is not an end in itself, but rather the beginning of a journey – the child's journey of faith.

Baptism in and of itself does *not* automatically make someone a Christian. Rather, our hope and prayer is that the child being baptised will grow up to discover Christ for him/herself and to make a decision to follow him, that is to say, to become a *committed* Christian.

As well as pouring water over the child's head, there are other important symbols used in the Baptism Service. One of these is marking the sign of the cross on the child's head using holy oil; this reminds us of Jesus' death on the cross for us. And towards the end of the service a lighted candle is given, reminding us that Christians are to be a light in the midst of the darkness of this world.

A key element of the Baptism Service are the promises which the parents and godparents are required to make on behalf of the child. They are as follows:

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?

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

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?

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

In Baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

**I come to Christ.**

Baptism therefore involves a serious commitment on the part of the parents and godparents. Whilst saying these life-changing declarations on behalf of the child being baptised, parents and godparents need to own these for *themselves*. That is to say, they need to be prepared to follow Christ themselves and to faithfully live the Christian life. This includes regularly attending worship at church, exploring and growing in their faith, being active in living out their faith in the context of their daily lives, and obeying God's teaching in their lives (for parents this includes, for instance, being married or planning to get married if living together). All those seeking Baptism for their child therefore need to carefully consider whether they can make these promises and declarations with integrity.

Parents who feel that they are not ready as yet to make this level of commitment but who would like to mark their child's birth by giving thanks to God for such a wonderful gift, might wish to opt for a Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child. This does not require you to make any commitments. It's aims are simply to thank God for his goodness in giving you a child, to formally declare the name of your child, and to pray to God, asking his blessing on your child's life.

### **The next step.....**

If you would like to consider arranging a Baptism or Thanksgiving, please contact the Priest-in-Charge of St Botolph's, Revd Peter Kane, on ☎01903 339656 or at [peterkane@cantab.net](mailto:peterkane@cantab.net). We will need to first of all establish that you live in St Botolph's Parish.

In the case of Baptism, you will be required to attend a preparation session explaining what Baptism is about and giving you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. You are also encouraged to come to church for worship in order to get to know members of the church community at St Botolph's; our main Sunday Service is the Parish Eucharist at 10am.

There is no charge for Baptism or Thanksgiving, but donations to the church are always welcome!

If you would like to find out more about the Christian Faith, please do have a look at this website: [www.christianityexplored.org](http://www.christianityexplored.org) and click on 'What is Christianity?'