



# HOLY TRINITY TWICKENHAM

## Baptism at Holy Trinity

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

**B**aptism at Holy Trinity Church is a very special and popular part of our church life. Nearly every first Sunday of the month we welcome children and adults into our Christian family here at Holy Trinity through our services of baptism, which form part of our main Sunday service. The parents, relatives and friends of those who are being baptised have all made a commitment to God and to the person or child who is being baptised as part of the service, and we celebrate this with them.

If you are thinking about whether you should be baptised or whether your child should be baptised, read on here to find out what it is all about. Note: Baptism is sometimes called “Christening” but, strictly speaking, baptism is the correct term for this service.

### Why should I, or my child – get baptised?

As an adult, the decision to be baptised is a very personal one. It suggests that you have made a decision to get closer to God, to follow Christ, and that you want to make a public declaration of your faith, and seek the support of the wider Christian family in the church. It is an exciting decision and suggests that you are starting to find out how important it can be to have God in your life, walking with you and working through you.

For parents, the decision is slightly different. In the past all babies were routinely baptised, reflecting different attitudes to the church at

the time. These days it is a proactive choice that you as parents need to take for your child. Of course some opt for baptism to help with school admissions (although this is not the case for Archdeacon Cambridge’s School), others because they were baptised and would like the same for their children. But whatever your reasons, the promises you will be making to God and to your child to support their development in the Christian faith, will be the same, which is why you need to be sure it is the right decision for you and to understand exactly what it means.

## What does baptism really mean?

Getting a child baptised doesn't of course make them a Christian - that is a decision your child will have to make for him or herself once they are older. However it does welcome them into the Christian community so that they can experience the Christian faith modelled to them by the wider Christian family – in our case the congregation at Holy Trinity - and by their parents and their godparents.

So if you are thinking of having a child baptised or getting baptised yourself, the first thing to do is to start coming to our church to get to know us.

## Why come to Church?

Coming to church won't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage would turn you into a car, but if you're thinking of having a child baptised, it's important to come to church for a number of reasons.

1. It's good practice! In the baptism service you will promise to bring your child to come to church and be part of the church family with them. It would be silly to make you promise to come to church after your child's baptism if you'd never come before it, as you wouldn't really know what you were agreeing to.
2. It helps you understand the baptism service and the promises you make. Coming to church will help you make sense of what it means to be a Christian and what is involved.
3. It helps you get to know us. Baptism is about bringing a child into the church family. You will want to know whether Holy Trinity is a church family that you want yourself and your child to be part of.
4. It helps us to know you. In the baptism service the whole Holy Trinity church family promises that they will welcome your child and pray for them. That is hard for them to do if they have never met you!

## What should I do first?

The best service to come to is probably our 10.30am Sunday service, as we conduct our baptisms at this service (on the 1st Sunday of every month). A crèche is run at this service – as well as a Sunday School on all the other Sundays of the month - so that you can leave your child with responsible helpers whilst you enjoy the service. Our only condition is that you pick the child up at the end of the service!

We ask that you start coming along to services for around 3 months to help you get a feel for things. Because baptism is very popular at Holy Trinity the baptism services are normally booking about 3 or 4 months in advance, anyway.

During that time, do make yourselves known to our Vicar, Tim Garrett and let him know that you would like to consider having your child baptised. Also chat to other families – find out about their Holy Trinity experience and see whether it is something you want to get more involved in for you and your child in the future.

Once you have been around in church for a few months then book in with Tim for one of Holy Trinity's monthly baptism introductory sessions. This lasts about an hour and a half, and is often held with a small number of other families. You can find out more about baptism, freely discuss whether a baptism is appropriate for you and if so when that should be.

We find that setting a baptism date can put you under undue pressure, when what we want is for you to have the time to think carefully about what baptism is, what is involved in the Christian faith and what it means to be a part of the church. Make sure that this is your choice and not that of your family or friends.

Some decide that a baptism is not right for them and opt for a Thanksgiving Service instead. This can be followed by a baptism service at a later date.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is the parents' responsibility?

When children are baptised, their parents are asked to declare their own Christian faith and to raise the child to become an active member of the church. It would therefore be usual for the parents to have been baptised themselves.

### What is the function of Godparents?

To be a Godparent is a privilege, a responsibility and a challenge. Godparents make the same promises as do the child's parents. They declare their own belief and trust in God and in Jesus Christ and promise that, by prayer and example, they will lead their Godchild into the same faith.

### Who can be Godparents and how many does my child need?

Any friend or relative who has agreed to take on this responsibility can be a Godparent provided that they themselves can make the baptismal vows and are therefore Christians and are at least 16 years old. Godparents should themselves have been baptised and, ideally, should also have been confirmed into the Christian faith. There is no set number of Godparents your child can have, but two or three would be ideal.

### How do I book into a baptism session?

Firstly you will have already been to Holy Trinity for a few months, and introduced yourself to Tim Garrett our vicar. You can then book yourself into a baptism session by emailing Tim on [tim.garrett@holytrinitytwickenham.org](mailto:tim.garrett@holytrinitytwickenham.org). He will confirm if there is space on the session you have in mind.

### What are the dates for the sessions, and where are they held?

The dates are: 26<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2013, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 12<sup>th</sup> Sept, 17<sup>th</sup> Oct and 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013.

They are held at the vicarage, 1 Vicarage Road, Twickenham Green (next to Holy Trinity church), at 8pm.

### I can't make any of these dates – can I make a separate appointment with the vicar?

Because baptisms are so very popular at Holy Trinity we are unfortunately unable to offer separate appointments. We do find that the majority of parents can usually make arrangements to be at one of these sessions.

### Do both parents have to attend the sessions?

The sessions are for parents and we would like both parents to attend, as it is both parents who will make the promises for their children at the baptism service. The parents can use the sessions to find out more about the promises the godparents will need to make, so that they can discuss this with the prospective godparents to make sure they are making the right choices together.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

I am no longer with my husband/wife, but would like to get my child baptised. Is this possible?

Yes. Please come along to Holy Trinity to find out more about our church family. If it looks like the right church for you, please attend one of our monthly sessions to find out more.

Can I have my child baptised in a separate service?

This is not something we offer at Holy Trinity because Baptism symbolises a child or an adult becoming a part of the wider Christian Family and this is problematic if they are not present.

How much does the baptism service cost?

Baptisms at Holy Trinity during the service are free. We regard them as a celebration of our Christian family and look forward to welcoming new members.

However, if you would like an optional Baptism Certificate we are obliged to charge you £15. A contribution towards the flowers for the day would be lovely too!

Also donations are critical to our ability to continue to offer ministry in the community and therefore we would ask you to consider making as generous a donation as you can towards this work. We quite understand if this is not possible for you.

My baby is very sick, and I would like them baptised quickly. Is that possible at Holy Trinity?

Please contact our vicar Tim Garrett to discuss your situation with him. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.

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# HOLY TRINITY TWICKENHAM

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