



arden
marches
CHURCHES



**BAPTISM OF INFANTS
(Christening)**

Baptism of Infants

The baptism of an infant is a very special occasion not only for you and your family but also for the church community, so we are very pleased that you wish to have your child baptised. Before we make any arrangements, we would like to explain a little about what it means.



This booklet explains what baptism is, what options we offer, and the process for arranging a service at one of the Arden Marches churches.

What is baptism?

The baptism of infants is what is also known as 'christening'. Jesus was baptised when he was an adult, so baptism is for all ages, and not just for infants. However, whether someone is being baptised as a baby, child, or adult, two important things apply.

1. Baptism is about God's unconditional love for all of us and beginning a journey of knowing God's love in our lives.
2. In baptism, we respond to God's love by saying to God 'I believe and trust in you, and I want to put you first in my life.' (The exact wording of these responses is in the *Decision* section later in this leaflet.)

We are never too young to experience God's love, but when the person being baptised is an infant, they are too young to make a response for themselves, so parents and godparents stand alongside them and make a public response on the child's behalf. In Baptism, parents and godparents also promise to bring up their children in the Christian faith by their words and example.

When these children grow up, they can decide to follow Jesus for themselves in a service we call 'Confirmation'.

What is a Thanksgiving Service?

If you are not yet ready to make the promises and make a public decision to follow Christ yet want to express your gratitude to God for the birth of your child, this act of thanksgiving might be best for you.



It is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the safe arrival of your child. The service can be arranged at quite short notice and you might feel that this service would be more appropriate for you and your child than a baptism service. It can be a naming and thanksgiving service, which can take place as part of a regular morning service.

The Baptism Declarations

During the Baptism service, as parents and godparents, you will be asked to declare your own faith and your intention to encourage and guide your [god]child to grow up in the Christian faith by your support, prayers and example.

These are the words you will hear in the service:

Presentation of the Candidates

God knows each of us by name and we are his.
Parents and godparents, you speak for this child today.
Will you pray for them, and help them to follow Jesus?
We will.

The Decision

We all wander far from God and lose our way:
Christ comes to find us and welcomes us home.
In baptism we respond to his call.

Therefore I ask:

Do you turn away from sin?

I do.

Do you reject evil?

I do.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I do.

Do you trust in him as Lord?

I do.



*I baptize you in the name
of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit*

The minister leading the service will make sure you know when you have to say your parts. During the service, prayers will be said for you and your [god]child.

Being a Godparent

Perhaps you have been asked to be a godparent and are wondering what it entails, or as parents, you are thinking about who to approach to be godparents.

Help, I've been asked to be a Godparent!

The essence of being a godparent is that it is your job, alongside the parents, to encourage and guide your godchild to grow in understanding of and practice of the Christian faith through your support, prayers and example. We think that is a rewarding and responsible task, and we pray that God will bless you as you undertake this role.

Help, we don't know who to ask to be a Godparent!

- A Godparent **must** have been baptised, and ideally, also confirmed. A Godparent's baptism does not need to have taken place in a Church of England church.
- It is good to choose someone who is a practising Christian, and who is likely to be able to develop and maintain a relationship with your child as they grow up to adulthood.

- There should be at least 3 (2 same sex as child, 1 opposite sex). Please discuss with Baptism Lead as needed.

NOTES: Godparents cannot be changed after baptism. Parents can be Godparents, if they are baptised. No required minimum age but consider maturity and ability to perform Godparent duties. We do not recommend more than four Godparents.

Arranging a Baptism Service

Where will the service take place?

Ideally you should either live in the parish where you wish the baptism to take place or regularly attend that church. However if you do not meet these conditions, but feel there are good reasons why you would like to have your child baptised in one of the Arden Marches churches, please contact Rachel Nicholas, the church administrator (parish@ardenmarches.co.uk 07894 444351) to discuss this.

We are able to hold Baptisms on 1st, 2nd or 4th Sundays at 12pm following the 10am morning service.

What do we do next?

1. Meet the Baptism lead of the church where you would like the baptism to take place. At this meeting:
 - a. You will be able to talk in greater depth about what baptism is.
 - b. You can arrange a provisional service date.
 - c. You will be given an application form and offered help to complete it. When completed it needs to be returned to Rachel, the church administrator.

2. Rachel will be in touch to confirm both the date of the baptism and the date you plan to bring your child/children to be introduced to the church.
3. Attend a morning worship service so your child/children can be introduced to the congregation prior to their baptism. This may also help you get to know the church – both the people and the building.

You are very welcome to join us at any of our activities or services in the church and/or the parish centre, prior to and following your child's baptism.

Thank you for your enquiry and we look forward to supporting you in this important step of Christian faith in requesting a service of baptism for your child

If you would like to find out more about baptism please visit the Life Events - Baptisms page on our website <https://www.ardenmarches.co.uk/> There you will find further information, including links to the Church of England's guidance and a short video series, 'We Welcome You', which explains what to expect in a baptism service. These resources offer clear and reassuring insight as you prepare for this important step of faith.

Some Frequently Asked Questions:

Do I have to be baptised in order to have my children baptised?

Parents do not need to have been baptised themselves but godparents **must** be.

Can a member of another faith be a godparent?

Members of other Christian churches (Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist etc.) can be godparents as long as they have been baptised.

Members of other faiths cannot, because they will not have been baptised. Your friends of other faiths may wish to support you in the decision you have made; all are welcome to attend the service.

Do we have to be married before our child can be baptised?

No. Baptism is about your child. However, you are promising to bring up your child in the Christian faith and Christians hold marriage to be the ideal relationship in which to bring up children. If you are considering marriage, why not discuss this with one of the churchwardens?

Can I have my child baptised without my partner's agreement?

It would not be wise to go ahead with a baptism if it were likely to cause friction within your family. Religious faith is a deeply personal matter and can be the source of hurt within a relationship when partners do not agree. Please discuss this with the Baptism lead.

What does it cost?

God's love is freely given and therefore there is no charge for a baptism service. You may, however, like to make a voluntary donation towards the ongoing costs of the church where the baptism will take place.