

St. Paul's Church,
Norton Lees



Thank you for enquiring about Baptism!

Thank you for getting in touch with us about the possibility of your child being baptised into the Christian faith. We think that baptism is so important that we would like you to take a little while thinking about its meaning and what would be the best for you and your child.

Here are some questions that you might be asking, with brief answers. We will be able to say more when you come to our preparation evening.

What should we do for the best?

In every family the birth of a child is a wonderful event for which we want to thank God. There is something natural about wanting to come to church to do this.

We also quickly feel responsible, and want to do what is best for our children, though there are usually plenty of people around wanting to give us advice and tell us what we ought to be doing!

As with all important decisions you will need to weigh up what you are wanting. Sometimes parents can be pressurised by other family members to take their young children to church for baptism (or christening as it is often called). They then find themselves making promises that they don't fully understand but go through with the service to avoid feeling guilty!

What is baptism?

It is a ceremony which Jesus began, for people who wanted to become his followers. Ever since, the Church has used it as a service for new members. It symbolises being washed clean by God's forgiveness, and his loving offer that everyone can become a part of his family, the Church, when they put their trust in him.

What does it cost?

The service of baptism does not cost money, (unless it is out of our usual Sunday Service when there will be a £30.00 fee for our musicians) but it does require commitment. Parents and godparents make promises that commit them to bringing up the child as a member of the Church.

Isn't everyone supposed to be baptised?

There is no legal requirement to be baptised. Delaying baptism until your child is old enough to decide for her or him self will not keep them back from any involvement with this church.

Some people feel that just by have their children baptised they have done their bit and that this will somehow have a magical effect on the way the children grow up. Sadly this is not true. The motivation for baptism should be wanting your child to grow up loving and serving God and being a full member of his church.

Have you thought that making promises that you may not be able to keep might actually be a bad example to your children?

Can we have a service without making promises?

There is an alternative 'Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing for the Birth of a Child' that we are happy to talk over with you. This service gives you an opportunity to bring your child to church to give thanks to God. It does not involve making promises of bringing your child to church as he or she grows up, nor is it a service of baptism. If you are interested please tick the box on the enquiry form and let us know.

Does it matter where we live?

Yes! It is the policy of the Diocese of Sheffield that baptism should take place in the church of the parish in which you live, unless the family are members of another church.

If you live in another parish, you should have your child baptised at the parish church. In exceptional circumstances the clergy of your parish may give their permission for your child to be baptised in another parish, but this is for the parents to arrange.

If we want to take the next step, what should we do?

Having read this leaflet, if you want to go on to the next step fill in the enclosed (Baptism Application Form) and return it to:

Cathy Lee (Baptisms administrator)
St. Paul's Church and Centre
Norton Lees Lane
Sheffield
S8 9BD

Once you have returned the Baptism Application Form, Cathy will phone to make a provisional booking for a baptism service with you, so that you know the date and can get on with your plans! It will be quite all right if you later decide against baptism at this time.

This provisional booking is dependent on your attendance at the preparation evening and at least one regular church service, which you have agreed to attend by completing the Baptism Application Form

If you find that you are unable to attend either of these for any reason please contact the vicar.

What happens next?

The Preparation Evening

The evening will usually be on a Wednesday, in church. We will explain a bit more about the options open to you, so that you can make the decision that is best for you and your child.

We realise that you will be busy so we keep the preparation time as short as possible! It will begin at 7.30 pm, with tea coffee and squash for older children served from 7.25, and finishing by about 8.15.

So that your prospective godparents can understand the promises that they will be making it would be good if you could invite them to the preparation evening as well.

At the Preparation Evening you will be given a Baptism Registration Form that you can fill in to give us full details for your child's baptism. We would like you to return this at a Sunday church service. The best service to attend is Family Worship which is nearly always on the third Sunday in the month at 10.00 am.

The Baptism Service

In the service parents and godparents will be asked to stand at the front of church and affirm that they will help their child to grow up as a Christian as part of the church family.

We try to make these lively and meaningful services, reflecting the importance of the occasion. However, you will need to make sure that those you invite feel happy about taking a full part in a Christian service of worship.

When are they held?

Baptisms usually take place during our main service on Sunday morning at 10.00 am every month or so, usually on the first Sunday in the month.

Numbers of people at the Baptism Service

We restrict the number of children being baptised to two per service but even so the church can get rather full! We realise that there will probably be a party after the service, perhaps you could restrict those you invite to the church service to closer family members and those for whom Christian commitment is important.

Could you let us know approximate numbers so that we can reserve seats for people with a good view of the font.

It is important that people should be seated in church by about five minutes before the service.

There will be the usual collection which is taken during the service.

Photography and video

We are sorry that for a number of reasons photography and use of video cameras is not possible during the service, apart from when we gather around the font. If you would like the minister to be in a photo after the service just let us know.

Keeping the promises of baptism

We realise that you may find it difficult to bring your child to all of our church services, so we have a special Family Service which is usually on the third Sunday of each month at 10.00 am, to which all the family will be welcome. It is a short lively service that lasts about forty five minutes, and we really won't mind a bit if your child makes lots of noise!

On the other Sundays your children will be able to attend Seekers, our Sunday Club, when they are a little older. This also begins at 10.00 am. There is also Messy Church occasionally on a Saturday morning for all the family with art and craft activities, a short worship time and a light lunch.

If you would like us to explain anything further, do e-mail us or give us a ring!

Revd Murray Brown, Vicar of Norton Lees,
Phone 255 1945 E-mail: murray.stpauls@btinternet.com

or

Mrs Cathy Lee Cathy Lee (Baptisms administrator)
Phone 255 0144 E-mail: cathy.stpauls@btinternet.com