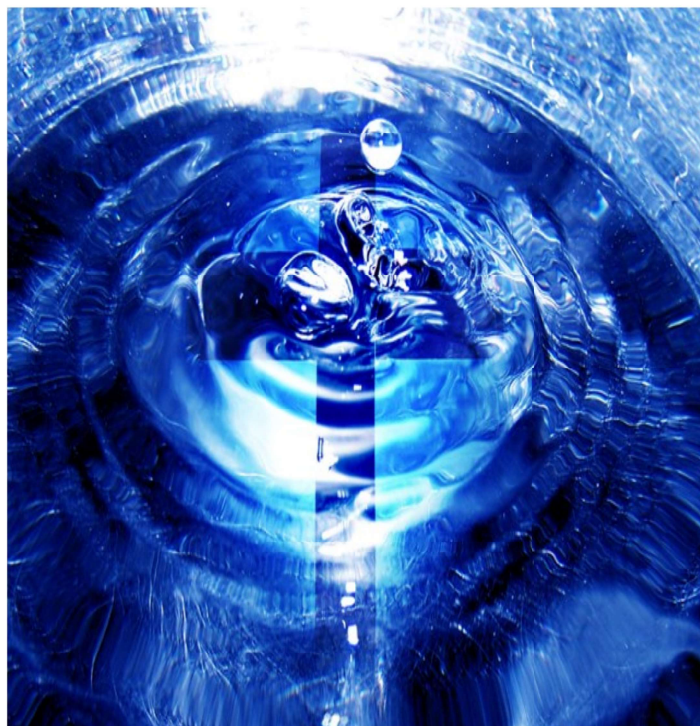




BROCKENHURST
PARISH CHURCHES
Sharing the love and life of Jesus



Christening

All that you need to know about Christenings
in Brockenhurst Parish

Hello and welcome to Brockenhurst Parish!

We're so glad that you're thinking about having a child Christened in one of our churches. This booklet is designed to help you and the Godparents as together you approach the day. We hope you find it helpful, and assure you of our prayers for you during your preparations.

The Rev'd Simon Newham
Vicar of Brockenhurst



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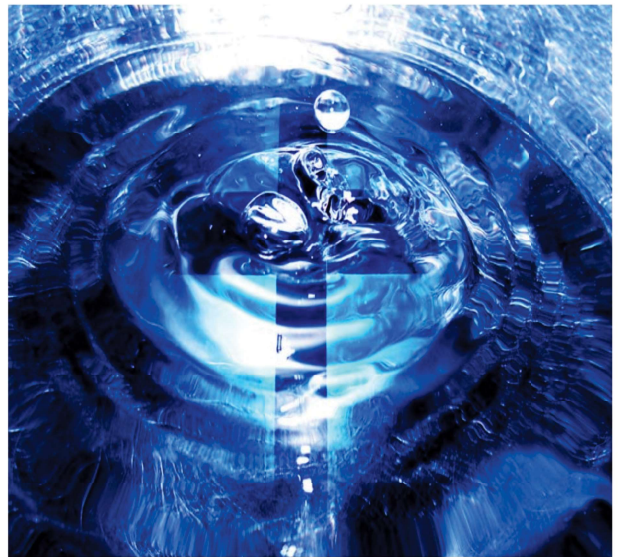
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What you need to know...

Your decision to have your child Christened is important and we will do all we can to ensure that you understand its significance and that the occasion will be a joyful one.

We ask two things of you:

1. That parents, and where possible the Godparents, attend preparation classes.
2. That the family attends two Sunday Services before the Christening takes place.

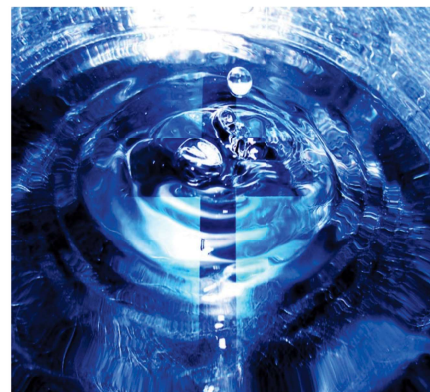
Honouring these commitments will help us in our journey together.

If you are unable to meet the above requirements without good reason, we may have to postpone the Christening.

If you need further clarification, please contact the church office. For contact details, please see back page.

Christening? Baptism?

What's it all about?



We live in an amazing world where advances in science and technology have helped us to control disease, increase our life span, improve the comfort of our homes, ease travel and entertain us in countless ways. And yet it's also a very confusing and frightening world where there is increasing violence, destruction of our natural resources, mental illness, breakdown of family relationships, absence of values, and sense of meaninglessness.

Christians believe that Jesus Christ came to bring the answer to such a confusing and frightening world. His life and teaching, his death and resurrection have captured the hearts and minds of millions all over the world during the past two thousand years, and today a third of the world's population claim to follow him. We follow him because we believe that each one of us is so immensely valuable to God that Jesus came to show us what God is like and to call for our commitment. We believe that as we give ourselves to God in love and commitment, we discover what life is all about and what human beings were really made for – to live in relationship with him and to enjoy him forever.

At a **Christening** your child is **Baptised**. Baptism is the beginning of this exciting, fulfilling and wonderful journey. We call it a 'sacrament' because it is an act that Jesus commanded us to do and one which has a special 'sacred' or holy meaning. The water we use in Baptism signifies, in a very dramatic way, dying with Jesus and being raised to new life with him – the life we were meant to live. We welcome to Baptism people of any age and if you would like to know more about it please do ask a member of our ministry team or get in contact with our church office (for contact details see back page).



The Christening Service

Making promises

When your child is baptised, parents and Godparents are asked to make promises before God and the Church about how they will bring up the child in a Christian way. In the Christening service these promises are as follows:

Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me. Do not stop them'.

We thank God for *N and N* who *have* come to be baptized today. Christ loves *them* and welcomes *them* into his Church.

So I ask you all:

Will you support *these children* as *they begin their* journey of faith?

All We will.

Will you help *them* to live and grow within God's family?

All We will.

God knows each of us by name and we are his. Parents and godparents, you speak for *N and N* today. Will you pray for *them*, and help *them* to follow Christ?

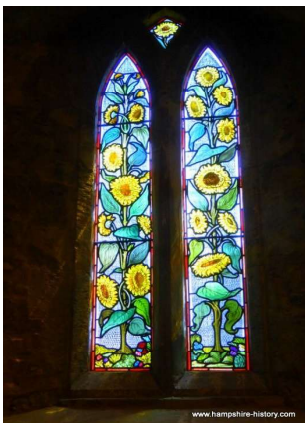
All We will.

A service of thanksgiving for the birth of a child

Parents who are not ready to make the promises of Baptism but want to thank God publicly for a safe delivery and the gift of a baby could ask for a 'Service of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child'. Whatever you choose it is important that you take time to discuss it within the family, and pray and be comfortable with your decision. If you wish for advice, the ministry team are here to help you.



Why go to church?



In church we are fed with God's word and with the other main sacrament of the Church, the Holy Communion. Our children are taught about the love of God and like us, children are taught to love life and people, to honour their parents, and to trust in God. Children grow up knowing that Jesus is their friend.

Sunday Church attendance is one of the best ways of growing in faith and learning what it means to be a Christian. Before the Baptism, parents and Godparents are asked to attend at least two Sunday services in the parish. Come to one of our services in Brockenhurst Parish on Sundays, 10.30am at St Saviour's Church.

All About Godparents!

How do I choose Godparents?

What do Godparents do?

CHOOSING GODPARENTS



Choosing Godparents should not be taken lightly. Too often parents want to honour a special friend, repay a favour, or encourage a non-relative to have a closer relationship with their child. While all these motives are well intentioned, they are not enough.



Godparents have a special role. They represent the faith community that is the Church. Together with the parents, they help and guide the child on their spiritual journey. Godparents should be active and committed Christians, and **must** themselves have been baptised.

Being a Godparent is a ministry, and not simply an honour.

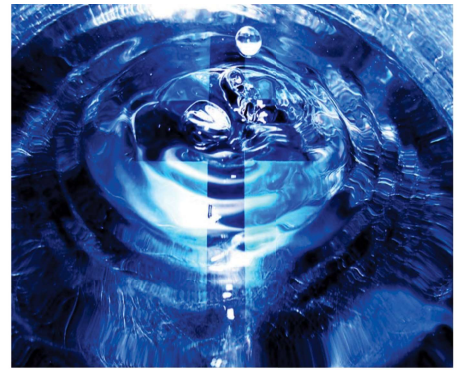
The responsibilities of Godparents are:

- To pray regularly for their Godchild
- To set an example of Christian living
- To help their Godchild grow in the faith of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- To give encouragement to follow Christ
- To help their Godchild look forward to Confirmation.

AM I READY TO BE A GODPARENT?

Do you have the *time*, the *will* and the *faith* to take on this important responsibility?

The parents are calling you to be something special: to set an example, help teach their child about the Christian faith and have a lifelong relationship of friendship, faith sharing and love. Before accepting this invitation, take some time to pray and reflect on your ability to do this. Ask yourself: 'Am I a Christian? Do I believe in the grace and love of God? Can I share my Christian faith unashamedly?'



Prepare with the parents. They will be required to attend Baptism preparation sessions to reflect on many of the things mentioned in this booklet. You should be there too! Your willingness to be with the parents now says a lot about your willingness to be present with your Godchild in the future.

Take seriously the profound yet beautiful words spoken to your Godchild: 'You have received the Light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life'. Hopefully you will always remember your Godchild's biological birthday, but don't forget this 'birthday' into the Body of Christ. Make a phone call or send a card each year. Better still, suggest having a get together to honour this day each year, and light the baptismal candle.

Pray with and for your Godchild. Keep your Godchild in your daily prayers. Go to church together whenever you can. Share the faith that's been shared with you. When your Godchild is young, introduce them to a children's edition of the Bible. Teach them about their church. Attend and offer encouragement at the child's first Communion or share your own faith story as your Godchild approaches Confirmation. Continue your lifelong relationship by participating in your Godchild's wedding.



Practicalities

- The first thing to do is to read this booklet carefully, and then fill in the enclosed form, returning it to the church office.
- You may also need to obtain 'permission' for baptism from your local Church of England Priest if have a genuine connection with us, but you do not live in the parish of Brockenhurst or worship regularly here with us. A form is enclosed for this.
- Once the paperwork has been returned to the church office one of the admin team will contact you regarding the date and time of your Christening service. The services are at 12:30pm at St Nicholas' on the first Sunday of each month, and at 12.30pm at St Saviour's on the second Sunday of the month.
- We do not do 'private' baptisms. Baptism is about joining the wider family of the church and therefore another family may also be present at the service your child is baptized in.
- There is NO CHARGE for a service of baptism, but there will be a collection to help support the running of the church.
- A baptism is a celebration; so make sure to invite anyone who you'd like to join us in church.

Frequently asked questions...

Deciding to have a child christened, or to be baptised yourself, is an exciting decision. It might make you ask some questions. Some common questions are answered below, but do feel free to ask any of the priests, or contact the church office if you have anything else to ask.

How many godparents should I have?

You can have as many as you wish, but every child should have at least three, two of the same sex and at least one of the opposite sex to the child. Parents may be godparents for their own children, providing they have at least one other godparent.

Can anyone have a christening service?

Yes, so long as they have not been baptised already. The Church of England welcomes all babies, children and families for christenings – whatever shape that family takes. You do not have to be married or have been a regular churchgoer – as a parent, you do not even have to have been baptised yourself – though you could be. Everyone is welcome!

How much does a christening service cost?

The good news is that a christening service is free. There may be costs for your family party afterwards, for gifts, or for christening robes, but the church service is free.

How old should my child be?

You can have your baby or child christened at any age. There is no upper age limit, but there will come a time when your child will be able to make the promises for themselves. Talk to one of the priests about baptizing an older child and how this might differ from a baby's christening service.



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For more info also visit: churchofenglandchristenings.org