

What's the difference between Baptism and Thanksgiving?

Thank you for your enquiry concerning a service for your child in the benefice of Stanton-by-Dale with Dale Abbey and Risley (SDR Churches).

Congratulations if you have had a recent addition to your family, but don't worry if your child is older. We hope that you and your family will find a warm welcome at our churches.



Baptism or Thanksgiving?

When we are given a gift, it is right to say 'thank you.' The Bible says, 'children are a gift from the Lord' and so we should thank him for them.

Traditionally, parents brought their children to church to give God thanks in a special service. Many parents assume that a Christening or Baptism is the only way that their child can be welcomed into the church. But there are two options! Baptism or Thanksgiving. This leaflet will explain the two!

Please note: 'Baptism' or 'Christening' are two different words which mean the same thing – in the rest of this leaflet we will use the word Baptism.

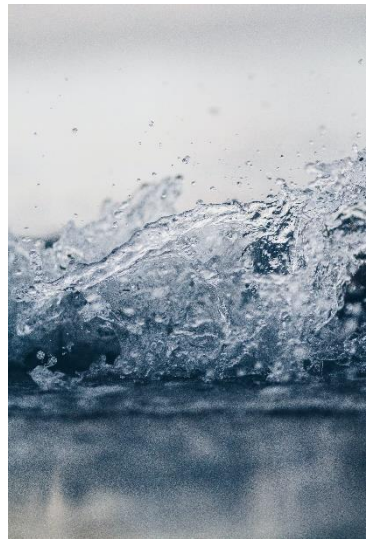
Baptism

What is Baptism?

Jesus taught his followers to make disciples of all nations and to baptise those who believed the message about Him. The evidence indicates that right from the beginning disciples of Christ have baptised their children trusting that the promises of God apply to our children and longing that they should grow up to trust in Jesus for themselves.

Baptism is an outward sign of what goes on the life of a Christian. It symbolises four things, which all begin with B! Burial, Bath, Birth and Belonging:

1. The decision to turn from living for self (sin) to living for God (Like a Burial – dying to sin)
2. The washing away of sin (Bath – washing clean)
3. The start of a new life with Jesus as Lord (Birthday – a new start)
4. That those who are baptised now belong to God and they are now members of his global body – the worldwide Church (Belonging – we now belong to Him)



Baptisms at SDR Churches

We welcome those who wish to have their children baptised at SDR Churches. Baptism at SDR Churches is available to anyone who:

- a. is resident in the Benefice – e.g. in the parishes of either Stanton by Dale with Dale Abbey, or Risley.
- b. is on the electoral roll for either parish.
- c. has been in regular attendance of worship at one of our 3 churches for a period of at least twice a month for three months.
- d. those who have a previous connection to one of the churches because they, or their parents, were married in the church, or they worshipped in one of the churches regularly for a period of time.

Coming along to Church

In particular, we require that if you are not already worshipping members of SDR Churches then you attend public worship at the church at least twice a month for three months. We realise that for those who are not familiar with church this may be a bit daunting but we try to be welcoming at all 3 of our churches! Our services are not dull or dusty, and ***children are always very welcome!*** We take the Christian faith seriously, and want our worship to be joyful, full of truth and honouring to God.



Baptisms take place as part of a usual Sunday Service

Unless a child is dangerously ill Baptism always takes place during one of our main Sunday services. The service lasts just over an hour and in addition to the baptism itself includes songs of worship, reading of the Bible, teaching from the Bible and prayers led from the front. You are very welcome to hang around for refreshments after the service and chat to people.

Baptism Promises

In a Baptism Service, some very serious promises are made on behalf of the child, by both the parents and Godparents. These promises are very important. In the service, as a godparent, you are asked to confirm that you will pray for the child, set them a godly example, and help them to take their place as part of Christ's Church – this includes a commitment to regular churchgoing as an example to your child. Then, you are asked 3 things which you are turning away from (in red), and three things you are turning to (in blue).

*Parent(s) and godparents, the Church receives [child's name] with joy.
Today we are trusting God for his / her growth in faith.*

Will you pray for his / her, draw [child's name] by your example into the community of faith and walk with him / her in the way of Christ?

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

In baptism [child's name] begins his / her journey in faith.

You speak for him / her today. Will you care for him / her, and help him / her to take his / her place within the life and worship of Christ's Church?

A: *With the help of God, we will*

The Decision

The minister then says to the candidates directly, or through their parents and godparents.

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?

A: I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

A: I renounce them.

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

A: I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

A: I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

A: I submit to Christ.

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

A: I come to Christ.

Baptism Preparation

In accordance with the practice of the Church of England, and due to the seriousness of the promises made in Baptism, we require parents to attend a Baptism preparation course led by one or two members from the Church. These may be held with other parents or on your own depending upon the circumstances.

Godparents

Children will normally have three godparents (of whom two should usually be of the same sex of the child to be baptized and one of whom may be a parent of the child to be baptized). A child should have no less than two godparents, one male and one female. Godparents will make the same promises as those of the parents, and so need to be chosen carefully.

Baptism Summary:

The promises made at Baptism are a declaration that you are a committed follower of Jesus Christ yourself. You may not feel ready to do this, or at this time this might not be appropriate for you. There is another option! Read on about Thanksgiving Services!

What is a Thanksgiving Service?

Thanksgiving and Baptism services are always part of our main Sunday services and follow a set pattern outlined by the Church of England. An example of the wording for the Thanksgiving Service follows.



This service looks, in many ways, very similar to an infant Baptism service; the baby is brought to the front of church, family and friends gather around, and the child's name is often included in the blessing. However, there is no water and parents are not asked to make promises that many find difficult or even impossible to make or keep.

The Thanksgiving Service



1. The minister says:

Let us thank God that in his goodness he has given you *this son/daughter*.

God our Father, maker of all that is living, we praise you for the wonder and joy of creation. We thank you from our hearts for the life of this child, for a safe delivery, and for the privilege of parenthood. Accept our thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. The parents may say together:

Lord God, in giving us this child you have shown us your love. Help us to be trustworthy parents. Make us patient and understanding, that our child may always be sure of our love and grow up to be happy and responsible; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

3. The congregation may say a psalm.

4. Mark 10.13-16 may be read:

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

5. The minister gives the parents a copy of one of the gospels, and a children’s bible saying:

This book contains the Good News of God’s love. Read it, for it tells you

how you and your family can share in eternal life, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

6. The minister says this prayer:

Almighty God, you give us all we need for life and godliness. Look with favour on this child; grant that, being nourished with all your goodness, he /she may grow in grace and Christian commitment until he/she comes to know you for himself through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

7. The congregation say this prayer together:

Father in heaven, bless these parents, that they may cherish their child; make them wise and understanding, to help him as he grows, and surround this family with the light of your truth and the warmth of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

What now?

There's lots to think about! Let us help you! The best next step is to discuss with the Rector, Phil Selby, the best way forward.



To get in touch contact:

The Church Office: admin@sdrchurches.org.uk Phone: 0115 9440609

Website: www.sdrchurches.org.uk

One last thing – **we love to welcome children and families at SDR Churches** – find out more about what's going on for children and families here: <https://sdrchurches.org.uk/children-and-youth/>