

Useful information for those considering their child's baptism.

All Age (Family) Services are on the first Sunday of each month. The *Xplore Service* is another opportunity for the whole family to be together in a service. It usually takes place on the third Sunday of each month.

In2Mission, our Sunday groups for children and young people, is held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. It's members join with the whole congregation at the start of the service before going across the road to Church House in their groups for a while. They then rejoin their families for the rest of the service. The groups are led by Louise Clark (493276) and Karen Williamson (494179 evenings) who can supply more details as required.

Little Fishes provides a weekly opportunity for babies, toddlers and all pre-school children, plus their parents/carers, to meet together for singing, play and a chat over tea. The group meets in church every Friday from 2-3pm. For further information, contact Pat Burdock (493069).

Thanksgivings take place on the first available Sunday that you can come to church with your child, though where we can plan in advance, we try not to have them on more than one Sunday a month. As previously mentioned, they within the main morning service.

Baptisms are also held once a month, as part of the main Sunday morning service. They do not take place in the afternoons.

The Cost of Baptism There is no charge for a Baptism Service. Strictly, there is a Church Commissioners' fee of £12 (payable to the Vicar) for the issue of a Baptism Certificate, but you may like to simply include this as part of a gift to St Peter's. There is an offering plate at the back of Church during Services.

Baptism does not affect whether a child is buried in a churchyard, being married in church, or the state of their eternal salvation.

St. Peter's, Henfield

WELCOMING CHILDREN INTO THE CHURCH

THANK YOU!

We are delighted that you want to come to say *thank you* to God for the gift of your child. For many people the birth of their children is awe inspiring - and an emotion that is not easily forgotten. In the birth of children, we are sharing with God in His work of creation. That is a tremendous privilege - and responsibility!

In our benefice, incorporating the parishes of Shermanbury & Woodmancote, and especially at St. Peter's Henfield, apart from the adult congregation, we welcome children ranging in age from their earliest weeks through to the late teens. So many of us, therefore, as parents, share with you that joy; and that anxiety.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

We like to get to know the new youngsters in the community, so we invite all new children for a service of Thanksgiving. This is a brief section included in the main morning service. There is a prayer that the minister says; followed by one that the parents say together:

*God our Father, 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.*



Then a book is presented to the family, and after a few more short prayers, the minister says a prayer of Blessing for the child. Parents do not have to make any promises in this service. You may of course have friends and family with you too.

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BAPTISM



You may wish to move on at a later stage to have your child baptised (or to use the parallel term, christened). Baptism is open to any who live in the Henfield Benefice, and also to any who are regular members of the congregations of our churches. There is information on the Enquirers Sessions later.

Baptism is however a step that is taken after careful consideration by the parents. It is part of a covenant relationship bringing parents together with God. In this covenant, parents make declarations about their own

faith, and make promises about the way they will bring their child up within the family of the church. God's part of the covenant is that the child becomes a part of God's family.

The Baptism service says of children ... *'As they grow up, they will need the help and encouragement of the Christian community, so that they may learn to know God in public worship, and private prayer, follow Jesus Christ in the life of faith, serve their neighbour, after the example of Christ, and in due course come to confirmation.'*

The minister, expecting an answer, asks the parents and godparents during the service: 'Parents and godparents, the Church receives this child with joy. Today we are trusting God for their growth in faith. Will you pray for him/her, draw him/her by your example into the community of faith and walk with them in the way of Christ?'

Parents and Godparents make important vows in the service: about

*...rejecting the devil and all rebellion against God,
...renouncing the deceit and corruption of evil, and
...repenting of our sins.*

They also say:

*I turn to Christ,
I submit to Christ,
I come to Christ.*

And:

*I believe and trust...
...in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven & earth...
...in his Son Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...
...in the Holy Spirit...*

FELLOW DISCIPLES

The child, the parents and godparents, and Church members are all fellow disciples. We are all learning together what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and we can often learn from one another's experience.

In Henfield we want to baptize children and to see them grow up as disciples of Jesus, as promised in the Baptism Service. We aim to provide the opportunities for children to learn about Jesus from the earliest age. **Books and quiet toys** can be found at the back of church and during the Sunday morning Services. We have **Little Fishes**, a praise & play session on Friday afternoons in church, then on through **In2Mission** our Sunday School for each of the various age groups up to 18. There is of course the **All Age Worship** (Family) Service on (usually) the first Sunday each month, and our **Xplore** service on the third Sunday of the month.

We also have close links with St Peter's Church of England Primary School.

It is our aim to give children a variety of activities they enjoy, and within the building of social skills and making friends try to help children to get to know Jesus as well. We know that learning does not stop at the end of the teen-age years, and have a number of learning opportunities for adults too - sometimes in informal home groups; or sometimes around a particular interest group. Specifically, we have Preparation/Enquirers help sessions for those preparing for Baptism and Weddings, and occasionally for Parents.

As your child grows older we shall want to keep in touch with you and it won't be long before we shall be encouraging you to bring them to In2Mission, our Sunday School! Our aim in all of this is that your family should really feel itself to be part of the family of God here in Henfield.

WHAT NEXT?

Baptism Enquirers is organised by Pat Burdock (493069). Your first step is to contact her direct, or ask one of the clergy team to put her in touch with you. Because of the church's ongoing activities, it is not always possible to give families their first choice of dates for the Baptism. One Sunday a month is usually set-aside for Baptisms. The baptisms usually take place in our main morning services, when the church family are gathered. Pat confirms dates for baptisms in writing. **Godparents** are also encouraged to join the parents for the Baptism Enquirers session. Church law states that godparents should be Baptised *and* Confirmed - Baptism is a minimum requirement for Godparents.