

We wouldn't be surprised if you were a bit taken back – maybe horrified! However, we are certain that if you do decide to have a Baptism with all that involves, you will never regret it but discover the richness of living the Christian faith, and sharing regularly in Christian worship.

ONCE YOU'VE READ THIS, IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO PROCEED TO BAPTISM, REMEMBER THAT THE THANKSGIVING OF A BABY IS VERY SIGNIFICANT. WE WOULD MUCH RATHER HAVE HONESTY AND THE CHILD IS CERTAINLY NO LESS PRECIOUS TO US - OR TO GOD. REMEMBER YOU CAN ALWAYS CHANGE YOUR MIND, FOR OR AGAINST A BAPTISM LATER

PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT DAVID IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE SOME CLARIFICATION BEFORE DECIDING.



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# Belonging

## Your Child's Thanksgiving and Baptism at St Mary's



**Mission Statement:**  
To be the Presence  
of Christ in  
Beeston

Congratulations on the birth or adoption of your baby. And, even if the baby is now older – even a teenager perhaps – well, still, many congratulations! We are delighted you have got in touch with us.

**This leaflet helps you make decisions  
about what happens next**

At St Mary's, we want to offer you a warm welcome to our church.

For this reason, before we start to prepare for the Baptism, after we've met up, we ask you to bring your child to St Mary's to thank God for new life and to receive a Blessing. For some people, that is really what they are seeking – an opportunity to say 'Thank You' and for the child to be Blessed by God in the church.

(We automatically accept any request for this service of Thanksgiving and Blessing, never refusing.)

Others, perhaps yourself included, will want to move on to Baptism.

If you choose to do this we shall be delighted and will do our best to make it a very memorable occasion. There are some things we ask of you too.

We call this leaflet 'Belonging' because that is what Baptism is about. Jesus belonged to God and God to him. And Christians belong to Jesus. This is celebrated in Baptism, as the child starts to belong to the church community and the church community belongs to the child. In Baptism we imagine that the child is put into the water and brought out again just as Jesus died and rose again. Because it is all about belonging we ask that you take very seriously the promise to bring the child up in this church community.

That means that to go from the Thanksgiving and Blessing to the Baptism is to want to join St Mary's as a family – in practice, this may mean that just one parent takes the initiative and we understand that. It certainly does not matter whether or not you are church members now and we know that, like everyone else, you will have your doubts and difficulties. We shall try to help you think through these as much as possible. It is an opportunity for everyone involved to experience a fresh start with God. Baptism is not about the past but the future.



This might help you to understand that we can fix a date for the Thanksgiving but perhaps not yet for the Baptism. We ask for your patience because we believe this is very important and that when we do come to the Baptism, it will mean so much more.

The way we do it is like this:

You meet with the Parish Priest, and have an informal chat, talking a bit about dates and arranging the Thanksgiving and Blessing.

You will hear about how to experience more and learn more of the Christian faith. This will, initially, be with David but may involve other people and be in a group.

In other words, preparation for Baptism if we are taking it seriously, would not be complete without regularly belonging to the worshiping congregation of St Mary's.

If there are problems with this - illness, work and so on - it is really important that you contact David about it to avoid misunderstanding. We do try to be understanding and flexible



There are especially appropriate times for Baptism: Easter during the Vigil Service – which is at Midnight. The recent Easter Baptism of a six-year-old was unforgettable as we also celebrated Christ's rising from the dead – with Fire and Lights and worship which was full of life.



Another time is at All Saints – the Sunday after November 1st. This is when we celebrate all those who are called saints because of the way they lived out their Baptism and, in some cases, died in anti Christian persecutions. Yet another is Epiphany – the 'Wise Men' coming to see the Child Jesus.

At this time we also remember Jesus's own Baptism. Because this is not always easy, we are happy to Baptise at other times. We would just like you to think about these special occasions