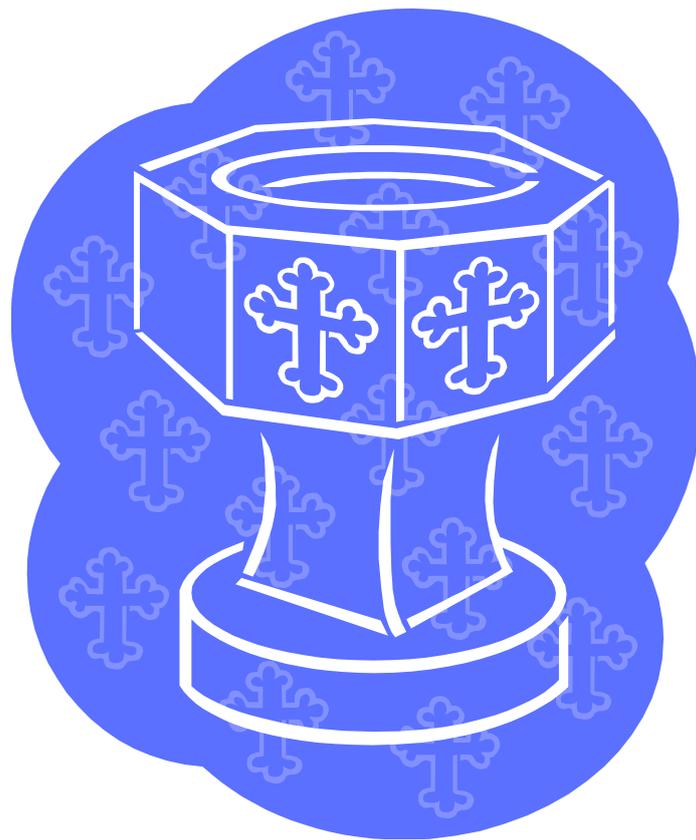


St John's

**So, you're coming
to a baptism?**



**A brief guide for parents,
godparents, family and friends**

Welcome

We're delighted that you are going to be joining us for worship at St John's. This very brief guide will give you an idea of what to expect during the service and what part you will play in it.

When you arrive

It's good to arrive 10 minutes or so before the service begins. There are people at St John's who will be in the porch as you arrive, they will greet you and give you a copy of the day's service sheet. There will be special seats reserved for you near the front of the church so that you can sit together and see what is going on. Don't worry about knowing what to do (when to sit or stand, when to join in etc) as this is all explained in the service sheet – it has in it everything that you will need to be able to join in the service. Please do remember to turn off your mobile phone when you are in the church – having to find it and switch it off if it rings during the service can be a little embarrassing!

Once the service begins

We've already mentioned that everything you need is printed in the service sheet so do your best to simply follow what's written. If you're not familiar with being in church then don't worry about being a little unsure of things – the service is very straightforward, and if you do 'get something wrong' then no-one will mind. The main focus of the service is our worship together of God – so try to engage with what is going on as much as you can. There are times for singing, times for listening, time to reflect quietly, time to join in with spoken words – all of these are designed to help us reflect on the life of Jesus, how it relates to our own living and to worship God together.

The baptism

Of course the main reason that you're coming is for the baptism. This takes place towards the beginning of the service and parents, godparents and any children present will be invited to gather up at the very front when it is taking place. This helps everybody else to see what is going on. An important part of the baptism is the promises that the parents and godparents make in agreeing to care for the spiritual wellbeing of the child being baptised but everybody present also makes a promise to help them to do that – so it's important that they can see who they're promising to help! At the end of this part of the service the child will be welcomed as a new member of the church family. Please do not take photographs during the service itself – there will be plenty of time to do so afterwards and the person doing the baptism will be very pleased to join you for them if you wish.

Holy Communion

Baptisms at St John's almost always take place during our Sung Eucharist. Eucharist is a Greek word meaning 'thanksgiving' and is used to describe the whole service in which we thank God for the gifts of bread and wine that represent all that Jesus did, and does, for us. All are welcome to receive the gifts of bread and wine at the appropriate point in the service, but if you prefer not to then that's okay as well. If you'd like to receive a blessing instead then simply join everyone else at the communion rail but keep your palms face down on the rail when the person bringing the bread comes past you – this will indicate to them that you do not wish to receive bread and wine, but would like to receive a blessing. There are people on duty who will show you where to go at this point in the service.

At the end of the service

The service finishes with some notices, prayers and a final hymn, after which the organ plays the 'voluntary'. You are then invited to join with the rest of the church family for some refreshments in the church hall – please do stay for this if you are able.

Children

We are delighted to have children with us in our worship, but there are a few pointers that will help you and them to enjoy the service if it's something you're not used to:

- Do make use of our special area for children, near the front of the church. You may think that your child will be okay sitting with you in a pew, but experience tells us that this is not usually the case and there is little worse than being stuck in the middle of a pew with a wriggly restless child. Much better for you, your child (and those around you) if you make use of the space provided!
- Sitting through a sermon and long prayers can be very difficult (and quite boring) for children so if your child is old enough then do encourage them to join in with the activities that are specially prepared for them during the service. These happen in the hall and our Sunday School Room and children make their way out together as indicated in the service sheet – if they'd like you to come out with them then you're welcome to do so. Children come back into the service in time for communion or a blessing.
- If you have very young children then do make use of the crèche, which is in the hall and is intended for children to enjoy with an adult. You are encouraged to pop out to the hall, or the toilet, if ever your child becomes restless so that you can settle them without worrying about distracting others. The door to the hall is right next to our children's area so it's very easy to slip out and back in again.

The basic rule of thumb is to make sure that you, your child and those around you can all enjoy being at church together. We look forward to welcoming you!

If you would like to be in touch with us to ask any questions then please feel free to do so. You'll find contact details on the back of this leaflet.

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