

St Michael's Church
Church Road
Boldmere
Sutton Coldfield
B73 5RX
July 10th 2016

Dear Elle,

Firstly let us welcome you here to St Michael's, you, your family and friends are very welcome, and we are all excited to share with you this very special day.

This is not the first special day that you have had. In fact the most special day you have had was the day that you were born on the 15th December 2015, the day you entered into this most amazing world: the day you met your parents Robbie and Rachelle. It was an amazing day for you all, the day that you became part of a family. We are told in Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 5: That God said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart".

But on that most special day you met Robbie and Rachelle who had waited nine months to gaze upon your face and to meet the most special addition to their family. Since then you have met so many new people: Grand- parents, Aunts, Uncles, family and friends. There is so much to take in from the moment you entered this world.

Today is special for you, as today you are baptised into a whole new family, the family of the church. We, here at St Michael's are excited to welcome you into our church. But today, Elle, you are welcomed into the world wide church. Around the world at this time there are other babies, children and adults being baptised and welcomed into the worldwide church. There are also millions of people worshipping God in churches both big and small, just as we are. One thing to remember, Elle, is that you are not alone, your new family stretches around the world and to all of us you are precious.

You are baptised today just as Jesus was baptised 2,000 years ago. He was baptised in the River Jordan and today you have been baptised with water, just as he was, but also with water from the River Jordan. Jesus was baptised and at his baptism filled with the Holy Spirit, a gift from God, that brings us all closer

to God, and you will have received that gift today. A gift that is so precious it can never be taken from you. It links you to us all and to your Father in Heaven. It fills you with love that will be with you always. I found out from your Mum that you are a water baby and so the water this morning should hold no fears for you. I have seen photos of you swimming and you certainly look like you enjoy it. It is never too early to learn something new and exciting. I am sure that swimming will stay with you your whole life through.

You will be signed with the sign of the cross. Another sign that reminds you of the new family you are now a part of. God's son, Jesus lived here on earth, he lived with his mother Mary and his family, he learnt what it was like to be human and he knew that it was not easy. You too will have many things to learn during your time on earth, and sometimes it will not be easy, but with the Holy Spirit and Jesus walking beside you, you will have nothing to fear.

Jesus gave his life for you and for us all on the cross, so that all our sins could be forgiven and that we can look forward to eternal life. Elle what a baptism gift to be given, and no one has had to buy it, it has been given freely for you and for us all.

The candle, Elle, another gift is to remind you and your family of the importance of today. We believe that Jesus is the Light of the World and the lighted candle shows that to you. A light in the darkness, a light to comfort you, a light that will lead you on the path from a baby, to toddler, to child, to teenager, to adult. That light will always be there for you to follow.

Jesus loved children; in fact he loves all of us here now celebrating your baptism. In Luke's gospel we are told that people were bringing their babies and children to Jesus to have him touch them and be blessed. He wants us all to be child-like, prepared to listen to his words, to be like him and treat one another with love, as we would want to be treated. I have met you and your Mum at Little Lights, a mother and toddler group where you have enjoyed fun with other young children, mothers and toys. It has also been a great place to begin to learn about Jesus and his love for us all, through stories and songs. We are all so lucky to share that special time on a Thursday with one another. You also have been coming to here to church on a Sunday morning, so you already know some of the new family you are now a part of.

Today Elle you have extra parents, your God parents Michele, Harriet and Matthew. They are special people your own parents have chosen. They have an important job; they are to help your parents to bring you up in a caring and loving way. They have made some special promises today, saying that they will help to support you and your parents as you grow up. We at St Michael's will pray for them and your parents so that the path to bringing you up runs smoothly. We all know that bringing up children can be difficult, that there is no correct way and there are no right and wrong answers. Parenthood and God parenthood is hard, but with God's love and support it can be easier. To know that there is someone walking beside you and being there for you can make many things seem easier.

Elle, you are fortunate as all of us here will support you, your parents, God parents and family. Earlier I said that you are now part of a new and larger family and we have made promises to help and support you through your life. We do not say these words lightly, for they are important for you and for us.

Today we heard the story of the Good Samaritan, a man prepared to help someone who had been attacked and left on the road. We are shown how to be a good neighbour by that example - who is our neighbour- well everyone. You Elle are our neighbour, as are your parents, godparents, family and friends. Let us be your neighbour, so that we can show support and love to one another. We have been asked to Love your neighbour - do something kind today. You are our perfect excuse to do something kind today and always.

Elle we hope that today is memorable for your parents, Godparents, grandparents, family and friends. As you grow you will have many memorable days, and today is just the start.

We pray that you will have a happy, flourishing and helpful life. We pray that Jesus will walk beside you, so that you can shine as a light to others, to show his love and support to all.

Have a happy Baptism Day and an extremely happy and loved life.

With love

Your new extended family, the congregation of St Michael's.