

We are delighted that you have chosen to celebrate your child's baptism with us. The arrival of a child is a special gift and we are prepared to do all in our power to make your child's baptism, and the celebration of their birth, an event you will cherish for many years.

Eligibility

Anyone may be baptised in either of our churches who has not been baptised already in a Trinitarian Christian denomination. However unless the person to be baptised lives in the parish, the Vicar is obliged to seek the goodwill of the priest of the parish in which the person lives. We ask that those being baptised, or the parents of young children, conform to any requirements their parish priest would normally make had they applied to him or her for baptism in their parish church. This is to avoid undermining your home parish's baptism policy. We also ask that if you do not live in our parish that you attend a service in your parish and introduce yourselves to the minister. If you are not sure which is your parish church you can find out here:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

Godparents

Your son or daughter can have as many or as few godparents as you like. As the principle role of godparents is to bring their godchild to their confirmation then it is a legal requirement that all godparents must be baptised themselves and ideally confirmed. A godparent can be as young as 11 as that is the minimum age of confirmation. Children who are old enough to have a say in who should be chosen as their godparents should be

allowed to do so. It can be a wonderful opportunity to strengthen a relationship with an important adult in their lives. Parents can of course be godparents to their own children as long as they have themselves been baptised and ideally confirmed, and they are not the only godparent.

Children over 11, teenagers and adults who are being baptised and confirmed do not have godparents but can choose sponsors for themselves. Sponsors must be confirmed themselves.

Supporting Friends

It may be that you have a friend or relative whom you would very much like to be a godparent but are themselves not baptised. If this is the case such a person may be included in a service called *Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child*. The supporting friends stand with the parents at the Thanksgiving and Blessing in this service and respond with them. This allows for parents to appoint, in a public service, those who are not godparents, but who will have a key role in supporting them as they bring up their children. The *Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child* can be held either on a separate occasion or together with the christening which acknowledges the support given by the Supporting Friends who cannot make dedications of faith.

In order to keep things clear Supporting Friends who make this public commitment are not recorded in the Baptism Register as godparents (though a marginal note in the register will acknowledge their role). You will still need to choose a sufficient number of baptised persons as actual godparents. But, the friends will (like the

godparents) be given a card to remind them of the undertaking they have made.

Times and dates

Infants and young children (that is under 7 years old) are christened at one of our baptism services held twice each month at 12.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. (We do not hold baptisms during the seasons of Lent or Advent.) Families are invited to attend our main 10.45am service on the 4th Sunday of that month for the Welcome and Giving of a Lighted Candle which complete the rite of baptism. Certificates are issued then. In this way, the baptism of young children is made as easy as possible, whilst also keeping a connection with the church family who welcomes the newly baptised into the faith. We normally keep each service to a maximum of two families.

Older children aged between 7 and 10 are baptised at our 10.45am services by arrangement.

Children over 11, teenagers and adults are baptised and confirmed at the same time. This is at either a Sunday morning service or at a Deanery service held in our local area, usually on a weekday evening.

When you fill in the baptism form please indicate a preference for a date and we will do our best to meet it.

Clergy

One of our parish priests will normally officiate at the baptism. However, the Vicar welcomes family and friends who are clergy of any Christian denomination to assist in your child's ceremony. If you wish to suggest clergy, please discuss with the Vicar.

Preparation

Once we have confirmed a date you will be visited by a member or two of our Mother's Union. They will explain some of the practicalities of the service and how you can prepare for it. They will also be a friendly face at the baptism service whom you will know.

We will also invite you to a baptism preparation evening which are held regularly and attended by several sets of parents who are bringing their children for baptism. The Vicar will explain the meaning of baptism and hopefully make the service itself all the more significant. Baptism is a deep and powerful mystery, rooted in the faith of the Church. The service is rich in symbolism and to have this explained can be helpful.

Photography

There will be a chance to take photographs at the font after the service. The minister will happily pose if you wish!

Parking

There is plenty of street parking in the village of Hellingly.

Practicalities

Once we have received your completed baptism form we will:

- ✿ seek the goodwill of your parish priest if you live outside the parish.

Then you will:

- ✿ be given a confirmed date and time for your child's christening as arranged between you and our Parish Office, both for the main part of

the service and the subsequent 4th Sunday Welcome and Giving of a Lighted Candle.

- ✿ received an invitation to a baptism preparation evening.
- ✿ receive a visit from a member or two of our Mothers Union.

Baptisms in the Church of England are free and there is no charge for the service. A baptism certificate is issued at the 4th Sunday service free of charge but there is a £12 fee for a duplicate made at a later date.

Advent Party

Every year we invite all those who have been baptised to a tea party on Advent Sunday (fourth Sunday before Christmas). It is entirely optional of course but a lovely way to catch up and meet others. To this end we ask that we may keep your data on our files for this purpose. If you would prefer us not to keep your information you can indicate that preference on the baptism form.

Further information

Please contact either the Vicar or the Parish Office if you have questions.

The Church of England website on Christenings is also very helpful:

<https://churchofenglandchristenings.org>

BAPTISM



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