

# Adult Baptism

Many people grow up in the Church because they have been baptised as babies and brought up in a Christian family. That is not always the case. Increasing numbers of older people - from teenagers to great grandparents - are making their own decision to join the Church.

For some people this comes as a sudden conversion. For others, a curiosity about God or about the person of Jesus grows into a gradual awareness of his presence and an increasing conviction that he demands some sort of personal commitment. They feel the need to express that commitment by joining a worshipping community of the Church.

Some people follow a slightly different path. They get involved with their friends or their children in the social activities of their local church without having much interest in what the Church is really for. They enjoy the friendship of Christian people and get interested in the Church for its own sake. Gradually, they, too, want to belong.

If you find yourself in this position, what should you do?

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## The first steps

Talk to your Christian friends or to Christians you know and trust. Go to church - with a friend perhaps - and come along to one of our main services. We often serve tea and coffee afterwards and you'd be very welcome. You will find details of our services in each church porch and on this website. This is a chance to meet other members of the congregation and to introduce yourself informally to our Rector, Alice.

There is no shortage of books to read about the Christian faith and the Church. We sell some of these at our church centre, 'Twelve', at 15, High Street, Fulbourn. Do ask if there is something particular you would like to read about. Or you can order books on the Internet.

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## Were you baptised?

Many people were baptised (christened) as a baby but have had little contact with the Church since. Baptism is, nevertheless, permanent and cannot be cancelled or repeated. So, if you were baptised as a baby, in whatever church that took place, you are still baptised and you cannot be baptised again.

Some people do not know whether they have been baptised or not. It is important to find out from parents or older relatives and to discover where it took place, because you may need to obtain a baptismal certificate.

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## From another denomination

If you are a Christian from another denomination and feel drawn towards joining the Church of England, the way this is done will depend partly on your present denomination. If you have been baptised, and confirmed by a bishop, in another denomination then, after a period of preparation, you will be received into the Church of England, probably by a bishop during a confirmation service. If you have not been confirmed, or even baptised, then you will be prepared for this along with other candidates.

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## Christian Initiation

If you have not been baptised, that is the place to start.

In the early days of the Church, new Christians were often baptised at Easter. After a course of instruction in the faith, they publicly entered into a new life. They repented of their sins, were assured of God's forgiveness and were baptised, often in a river. This was a symbol that they had died to their old life and, born again, been given a share in the Holy Spirit who came on Jesus at his baptism and, after his resurrection, was given to his disciples.

Generally, in the early Christian centuries, those who joined the Church were not only baptised with water: the bishop also laid his hands on them in blessing, a rite which later developed into what we know as confirmation. Admission to the Church was completed by their receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

Baptism, confirmation and first communion still form the pattern today though it is now possible for a child, under certain circumstances, to receive Communion long before they are confirmed. Do ask if you would like to know more about this.

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## Adult Baptism

If you begin to feel you want to be received into the Church, do ring our Rector, Alice, on 01223 880337. She may suggest that you be prepared for baptism and confirmation at the same time and that you join a confirmation class. If there is an Alpha group running, joining that is often a good preparation. We also run an informal course for confirmation candidates from time to time. Do ask.

You will normally be confirmed at the same service in which you are baptised. This may take place in the Cathedral or in one of the churches in our deanery where there is an annual confirmation service.

You will be asked to make the promises of baptism, repenting of your sins and turning to Christ. You must declare before God that you accept the Christian faith. The priest who baptises you will call you by your name and then use the words based on Holy Scripture: 'I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

The baptism of adults is normally followed immediately by confirmation and first communion.