

**The United Benefice of
Bletchingley and Nutfield**
Incorporating
St. Mary The Virgin St. Peter and St. Paul
Bletchingley Nutfield

Come discover God



www.bletchingleyparishchurch.org.uk

www.nutfieldparishchurch.org.uk

Baptism: A turning point in life

You have recently had a baby, and you are thinking of having him or her baptised. Congratulations! The birth of a baby is a good reason to think about the mystery of life. Or maybe your children are a little older, and you are only now thinking about what faith is all about. Perhaps you are thinking of being baptised yourself and making a commitment to Christ and the Church. Whatever your reason for thinking about baptism, you are welcome at our services within the parish.

(By the way, Baptism and Christening are the same thing! Christening is an old English word and reminds us that by being christened, we receive Jesus Christ's presence. Baptism is the word used in the New Testament and reminds us that in baptism, we are washed to begin a new life.)

Baptism: A turning point in the Community

The decision for baptism is never just a private relationship between God and you. It is a decision about joining the worldwide Christian family. When you are baptised, you will be declaring your intention to grow as a member of the Church. You cannot be a baptised Christian and not belong to a Church, and we hope that you will feel welcome and able to grow within our church community here in the parish.

But the Christian community is not simply another club. There are lots of other associations which provide a social life and support. The church offers something else, something which you cannot find elsewhere.

We are a diverse and varied local community which believes that life should be centred on God, and we come together to learn and feed our souls. We are a community committed to praying for those who are its members and those who are not, and the church is open for prayer most days of the week as well as on Sundays!

Christianity is a religion that demands that our faith be put into action to create a better world. Not only should we love others as individuals, but we should work together to change society so that it is a better place in which to live. We have a desire to change the world and make it more like the one we believe God intended. You are welcome to join us in this task.

Who can be baptised within this parish?

We are always delighted to carry out baptisms for regular worshippers of our congregation and for people who live within our parish boundaries. If you live outside the parish boundaries, you are welcome to attend St Mary the Virgin, or St. Peter and St. Paul churches and, after you have settled down and started to take an active part in church life, we are happy to baptise you or your child. This will take a minimum of 6 months of regular worship. Alternatively, we are happy to direct you to your local parish church where the baptism can take place.

When do baptisms happen?

Except in very special circumstances, baptisms happen on certain dates during the main Sunday morning service:

09:30 a.m. in St Mary the Virgin or,

11:00 a.m. in St. Peter and St. Paul.

This is for two reasons. First, to emphasise that becoming a Christian is never just a private arrangement but always involves the wider community and the new Christian family. Secondly, it gives your family, friends and other guests an opportunity to experience normal Sunday worship at our churches.

Because having a baptism significantly changes the shape of the Sunday service for the whole congregation, we tend to have baptisms only once a month, and we try to limit the numbers so that no more than three people are ever baptised at one service. Our priest serves the villages of Bletchingley and Nutfield. This means that baptisms can take place only on specific dates throughout the year.

Important notes:

1. We advise you to check the date as soon as possible to make sure that there are still places available on your chosen date.
2. The baptism is only arranged when we receive the completed application form.
3. We cannot guarantee which member of the clergy team will actually do the baptism. Generally, however, we will try to make sure that the person doing the preparation will be the one doing the baptism.

What about Godparents?

All children who are being baptised will need to have at least one godfather and one godmother. We would encourage you to have a maximum of three godparents.

It is a requirement that **all** godparents have been baptised, and it is recommended that godparents should also be confirmed. They can belong to any mainstream Christian Church (Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Greek Orthodox, etc.), but they have to be happy to support the child being brought us as a member of the Church of England.

We recognise that families often have friends of other world faiths or who do not believe, and who would not be comfortable or able to make Christian vows. While they cannot be godparents, we are happy to discuss how best to acknowledge the role you are wanting them to play.

Please encourage the godparents to look at

<https://churchofenglandchristenings.org/godparents/role-godparent> for

more general information about being a godparent in the Church of England.

What about preparation?

Baptism preparation takes place in our churches on an arranged date during the previous four weeks in which the baptism is taking place. Parents and godparents are invited to the baptism preparation session. We will talk about the promises that you will make and the meaning of different parts of the service. We will also try to answer any more general questions you may have about Christianity, faith or the church.

Please look at <https://churchofenglandchristenings.org/> for more general information about the meaning of baptism in the Church of England; take time to look at the promises you will be asked to make.

How much does a baptism cost?

There is no charge for a baptism. However, as a church which encourages regular giving on behalf of all its baptised members, we ask those who are wanting to bring up their children in the life of this parish to consider becoming regular givers themselves.

When should I book a venue for my baptismal party?

We strongly advise that you get a confirmation date from the priest before you book anything. We offer baptism on certain Sundays throughout the year. This is because our priest works in two villages

