

# BAPTISM POLICY



The CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
The Diocese of Peterborough



Whitefriars Church,  
Boughton Drive,  
Rushden, NN10 9HX



THIS POLICY was first produced in January 2016. It was last reviewed in March 2023.

This policy will be reviewed every two years. It will be reviewed again in March 2025.

Signed: *MDHunter*

Office: PCC Secretary

## Background

- 1) The New Testament model for baptism is that it is carried out for believers soon after professing faith and turning to God in repentance to receive His grace.
- 2) In Scripture, baptism seems to be the means of being incorporated into the Body of Christ, the church.
- 3) Therefore, there is the sense in Scripture that baptism is about believing and belonging.
- 4) The Church of England encompasses both perspectives and the incumbent is required to baptise children of parents living in the parish on request, after *reasonable preparation* – see below.

## Aim of the Baptism Policy

- 1) To help us to be a welcoming community for those who live in the Parish and want to give thanks to God for their children through a thanksgiving service, or become part of the Body of Christ through baptism.
- 2) To offer believer's baptism for those who come to faith and if requested for the children of believing parents, using font, baptistery or other suitable water as the candidate or their parents choose.
- 3) To provide adequate preparation for those considering bringing their children for baptism. To present a thanksgiving service as an equally valid option for those parents who:
  - feel they cannot make the vows the baptism service requires of them, with integrity
  - for those believing parents who want to wait for their children to be mature enough to make their own promises

## Key Points

- 1) Whitefriars PCC considers *reasonable preparation* for families bringing children for baptism to be:
  - a) an initial discussion with the vicar;
  - b) church attendance for a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks as a family;
  - c) during which time the family will have support from the children and families minister and;
  - d) will go through appropriate materials and discuss it with them.
- 2) Thanksgiving will always be presented as a positive alternative option to those not of faith.

## **BAPTISM POLICY**

### **Process**

- 1) On initial request, the family will be invited to attend a church service to meet the vicar and make an appointment with him.
- 2) A discussion with the vicar will follow.
- 3) A letter will subsequently be sent to the family outlining the next steps (specimen attached).
- 4) The children and families minister (with or without support of other suitable church members) will support the family and start to build a relationship with them, and work through suitable preparatory materials with them.
- 5) A date for baptism or thanksgiving will be set after 6 to 8 weeks of church attendance.

## BAPTISM POLICY

The Parish of Whitefriars Church, Rushden

Revd. Chris Youngman  
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Date as postmark / email

Dear

### **Baptism/Christening Policy for the Parish of Whitefriars**

(NB for the purpose of this letter, Baptism and Christening are used to mean the same thing)

Firstly, thank you for your enquiry regarding the Baptism of your child. It was good to talk to you and we set out now in detail the church's current policy on the Baptism of children:

- 1) We begin by encouraging you to come along to church to see what we are about. You can attend the 10:15am service on a Sunday morning at Whitefriars Primary School (Junior School Hall) on all but the second Sunday in each month (when we meet in smaller, Stepping Out communities). When you come to church, we will introduce your family to our Children and Families Minister, who will help you to feel a part of the church.
- 2) We then anticipate that you will continue to attend church for between six and eight weeks. The idea behind this is to give parents a chance to get to know the service and some of the church family. This helps you to then reflect on your commitment (as explained in the Baptism Service) regarding nurturing your child within the Christian faith community. We then arrange a further meeting at your home.
- 3) At this meeting we:
  - a) work through some suitable materials about the principles of Christian baptism;
  - b) go through the baptism service and the Christian commitment of the parents to bring the child up within the family of the church;
  - c) and also look at the option of a Thanksgiving Service;
  - d) some parents, at this stage, decide they need more time to think and reflect on the issues;
  - e) some others make a decision there and then, and a date is agreed.

NB – please note that if you decide on a Baptism, then the Godparents must have been baptised in order to participate.

I do hope this has been helpful to you in understanding our current practice. Thank you once again for your contact, and we look forward to meeting you very soon.

Yours sincerely



Revd. Chris Youngman  
Vicar of the Parish of Whitefriars

*Please note: we only baptise children outside of the parish in exceptional circumstances and with the permission of your local vicar.*