



Billingham Parish Office
St Aidan's Church
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Charity Number 1158588

Baptism Policy

Overview and procedure

This policy for Baptism sets out the legal requirements that must be undertaken and gives an explanation of some of the procedure. However, the important things first. How do I go about arranging a Baptism? The Christian church takes seriously the sacrament of Baptism and therefore have set out a criteria which must be adhered to before Baptism.

The procedure is that you need to come to a service to begin with, to pick up a form. You then attend a second service to return the completed form. Once you've done that, we'll invite you to a baptism preparation session with other families, and at the end of that session, we look at dates with everyone.

We hope that through following this procedure you will understand that Baptism is the beginning of a faith journey for all concerned and you will therefore continue to attend the services beyond the Baptism.

Some legal stuff

1. As a parent you should ask yourself:
 - ☐ Are you prepared to the best of your ability to give your child a Christian upbringing within the family of the Church?
 - ☐ Will you help your child to be regular in public worship and private prayer, not only by your teaching but also by your example and your prayers?
 - ☐ Will you encourage your child in due time to come to Confirmation and Communion?
2. It is usual to have three Godparents - two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex - but this is purely customary. It is sufficient to have one Godparent, and it is permissible to have more than three Godparents. **We allow up to five.**

Parents may be Godparents to their own children, provided there is at least one other Godparent.

Church law requires that Godparents should be over 16, and baptized and preferably confirmed, although the requirement for *confirmation* can be relaxed in certain cases.

Those who are under 16 or unbaptized can act as *sponsors* at the service.

3. Your child should normally be baptized only in the parish in which you live or where you usually worship. If there are strong connections with another parish then it may be possible, with the agreement of your own parish priest and the priest of the parish in which you want the baptism to take place, to administer baptism there.
4. This parish affirms the historic teaching about baptism of the Church of England, as part of Church of God, namely that it is a sacrament (outward sign of God's grace) that marks the beginning of our life of faith.
5. We also affirm that baptism is not always appropriate for, or desired by, everyone. We are committed to offering alternative provision to mark the beginnings of a journey of faith, including a service of thanksgiving for a new child.

6. In celebrating Baptism we affirm the following principles:

- a. we welcome anyone who wishes to be baptised, and we will do all we can to ensure they are baptised in one of our churches
- b. our churches will continually strive, through our worship, our hospitality and ongoing pastoral care, to welcome those being baptised and their families at their baptism and thereafter as members of our church, so that we might nurture their faith and encourage them to become faithful Christians;
- c. we will ensure those preparing for baptism, and in the case of children their parents, are nurtured in their faith
- d. those baptised are welcomed into their new found faith by the regular worshipping congregation.

7. Baptism in one of the churches of the parish is available to

- a. anyone resident in Billingham Team Parish
- b. those on the Electoral Roll of the parish
- c. those who regularly attend worship in one of the churches of the parish
- d. those who have a previous connection to one of the churches because they, or their parents, were married in the church, or they worshipped in one of the churches regularly for a period of time.

8. The PCC delegates to the clergy the discretionary right to baptise anyone who cannot fulfil the above criteria who can demonstrate strong reasons why they should be baptised in this parish.

9. Permission to baptise under paragraph 3 and 7 will require the consent of the incumbent of the parish where the candidate resides (Canon B22).

10. Baptisms will normally take place at 1pm on a Sunday in one of the churches, this will be discussed and booked at the Baptism preparation event.

11. For the baptism of a child:

- a. the officiating cleric will ensure that the parents of the candidate (or child if they are able to understand) receive sufficient teaching about baptism to help them to be able to make the baptismal promises with integrity (Canon B22)
- b. godparents are to be chosen according to Canon B23, ensuring they are baptised. Where someone is not able or willing to be a godparent, they can be a supporting friend to a candidate.

12. For the baptism of an adult:

a. sufficient teaching of the faith will be given to prepare the candidate for this step of faith (Canon B24)

b. sponsors, who are themselves at least baptised, may be chosen.

13. No part of this policy replaces any requirements on the parish or clergy made under Canon Law.

Appendix 1

Recognised church services

Sunday

9am Communion Service at St. Cuthbert's in Old Billingham

9am Communion Service at St. Peter's in Wolviston

11am Communion Service at St. Aidan's on Tintern Avenue

11am Communion Service at St. Luke's in Low Grange

11am Communion Service at St. Mary Magdalene's in Wolviston
Court Estate

4pm 2nd Sunday@4 All Age service at St. Peter's in Wolviston
(Please note this service is only on the 2nd Sunday of the month)

6.30pm Evening Prayer at St. Peter's in Wolviston