



St Mary's Church, Thorpe

Church Approach, Egham, Surrey, TW20 8TQ

Vicar: The Revd. Damian Stewart Harrison-Miles, BTh
Charity: 1176929. www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk



July 2020

Baptisms at St Mary's Church, Thorpe 2020

St Mary's welcomes the baptism of infants, children and adults and is committed to providing a safe place of welcome and hospitality in which all can explore and grow in the Christian faith and remain faithful to their baptismal promises.

In baptism, we thank God for his gift of life and publicly acknowledge his love. In the Anglican Church (Church of England) it is common to baptise young children; this is sometimes known as christening (to "christen" means to "give a name to") and baptism is one of the sacraments of the Church; a holy ritual to symbolise grace, that is to say a visible sign of something God does in our hearts. In the Christian tradition baptism can be traced back to Jesus himself being baptized in the river Jordan, by John. Baptism involves naming a person and marking them with holy oil as God's child; they are then washed by water (poured over the head three times) in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

When do services of baptism take place? **COVID-19 Keeping everyone safe ***

During this time of social distancing we have made changes to this policy in order that everyone can be kept safe. Therefore:

- Baptisms can only take place at 12noon on the 2nd-5th Sunday of the month.
- Strictly, only 30 can be present for the service including the children/family and guests.
- One family / household per baptism service (multiple children from the same household can be baptised in the same service). No singing/hymn is possible at this time.
- All must follow our entrance procedures: arrive in good time, wash hands, sign in giving their full name and phone number on the form provided and remain socially distanced during the service, only sitting in the available NAVE seating.
- All must adhere to the set one-way system in place around the church buildings.
- The Government (and Church of England) now require the use of face masks during all services including baptisms. This covers all those attending a place of worship including ministers, worshippers, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors.
- It is requested that baptism families distribute yellow gift-aid envelopes among family in advance of the service for their donations. These can be left in the large glass jar on entry to the church, at the time of sign-in. (We cannot handle change at this time).

What St Mary's Church ask of Parents / Adults wishing to be baptised

1. Parent(s)/Adults should attend worship at St Mary's (or online) to ensure that they are comfortable with the service and happy to make St Mary's a spiritual home.
2. Parent(s)/Adults need to complete a Baptism Application Form and include the relevant fee which covers the cost of the certificate (for 2020 this is £14).
3. Parents (and where possible, Godparents) are encouraged to participate in at least 2 Family Services (via Zoom/Facebook Live – 1st Sunday monthly at 11.30am). These services will give a basic grasp of the life and worship of the Christian community and help all to feel part of St Mary's Church.

Legal requirements to be baptized in the CofE

There are certain legal requirements that must be met, but these should not be an obstacle to baptism.

1. Parent(s)/Adults must either be resident in the Parish of Thorpe or a member of St Mary's

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Thorpe Church Electoral Roll, or in attendance at Thorpe Church of England Primary School, Thorpe Pre-school Nursery or TESIS England. (You can find out which is your Parish Church, by going to <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/parishmap.php> and entering your postcode. It is also possible to have a child/be baptized at St Mary's if you have a qualifying connection to the Parish. The Ministry Team can advise you of this.

2. Where parents are bringing a child to baptism, at least one parent must be baptized. If one parent is not baptized, they may like to consider baptism for themselves.

The cost of baptism and donations

Other than the Fee (£14) which covers the cost of the candle and certificate, there is no charge for a service of Baptism. However, as we are a charity, we do ask each family to consider a donation of at least £10 as a contribution towards the costs involved. Where possible, this should be Gift Aided: see the website or ask for a yellow envelope.

Preparation for baptism

In baptism, God pours out his Grace upon those who come to be baptized. To prepare for this special moment, the Ministry Team would like to meet with the parents/children/individual to talk through the service and think about what it means to be a Christian and part of the church family. They will also be given a copy of the order of service so that it will be familiar to them. (Copies for Godparents can be downloaded from the Church website.)

We recognise that many people who want a baptism for their child may not be regular Church goers. Since the service of Baptism requires promises on the part of the parent(s) and godparents to bring their child up as a worshipping member of the Church and to instruct their child in the Christian faith, it is hoped that the family will join in the worshipping life of St Mary's Church, as much as possible and at least up until the date of Baptism.

Godparents

It is usual for there to be between three and five godparents and traditionally, for girls to have 2 godmothers and 1 godfather and for boys to have 2 godfathers and 1 godmother. (This is merely a guideline). The role of the Godparent is to pray for their godchild and to help them find their place in the life of the Church. It is a requirement (of Church Law) that godparents are baptized. This is because they will be expected to make promises before God to bring children up in the faith. It is also expected they will be present for the service. If a chosen godparent is not baptized and they are committed to their role as godparent, it is possible for them to be baptized prior to your child's baptism. They will require some teaching beforehand and this can be tailored to meet their needs. For more information, please speak to the Ministry Team.

Baptizing Adults

At St Mary's we baptize adults too - these are joyful and wonderful occasions*. Baptism preparation for adults is tailored to meet the needs of the individual and is usually followed by Confirmation at which a Bishop presides (within a few months and a church somewhere in the Diocese of Guildford). We use the Faith Confirmed programme to prepare young people and adults for Confirmation.

* During the present Covid-19 pandemic, services of baptism may only take place on a Sunday 2nd – 5th monthly, at 12noon, with one family present up to 30 people maximum.

Yours faithfully, Rev'd Damian Stewart Harrison-Miles.

Updated July 2020.