

We ask you to think carefully about which of these options is most appropriate for you. Do remember that it is very possible to have a service of Thanksgiving and Blessing, and follow it at a later date - when you feel ready - with a baptism. A service of Thanksgiving and Blessing is not in any way less important or less special.

There is no charge for either service. We ask that you may like to give a donation towards the upkeep and work of the church. A guideline is £30 - 40.

Please ask any questions that you have - our phone numbers are below. Before your service we will arrange a time to visit you at home, chat further and make all the arrangements.

Revd Helen Sammon 543738 vicar@stbarnabasgloucester.org.uk

Lynda Leslie 412895 lynda_leslie@yahoo.co.uk

Church Office 524173 office@stbarnabasgloucester.org.uk

Vestry Time, for bookings and enquiries : every Thursday 6 - 6.30pm

Church Office open Tues and Thurs 10am - 12 noon

www.stbarnabasgloucester.org.uk

A SPECIAL SERVICE for your child at St Barnabas

Thank you for enquiring about a christening service for your child. It is always a joy to welcome children and their families.

I invite you to read this leaflet so that you can make a careful choice about what sort of service will be most suitable for you, your child and your family.



A Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing.

Many parents we meet say that the important thing about a christening is to say to thank you to God for the gift of their child, and to ask God's blessing at the start of the child's life. It is also an important occasion to celebrate with your family and friends.

The church can offer a special service to express exactly this. We call it a service of Thanksgiving and Blessing. It is a very personal service for your child and your family, and the vicar will chat to you about what you would like to include. Many families like to write or say their own prayers, choose readings and poems, and involve any older children.

There will be prayers of thanks for the gift of your child for you to join in, the "god-parents" will be welcomed, the vicar will hold your child and say a special prayer of blessing, and your child will be given a lighted candle to remind them of the love of God that shines in their lives. There will be songs to join in if you wish, and a short Bible story especially for any older children who come. The service usually lasts about 20 - 25 minutes.

This service is NOT a baptism service, and therefore enables your child to make their own choice about becoming a baptised Christian later in life when they can understand and decide for themselves. A service of Thanksgiving and Blessing can also be a good idea if you wish to have a celebration for your family, so that at a later date, more quietly, you can come to church for your child to be baptised.

A service of Thanksgiving and Blessing can be held at a time that suits you and your family (as long as it fits in with the vicar and the church). It does not have to be on a Sunday, and it does not even have to be held in church - though most people want it to be. You are not asked to make promises about the Christian faith, nor promise to bring your child regularly to church as you would be in a baptism service. The "god parents" you choose are called "Supporting Parents". They play an important part in the service but, unlike baptism, they do not have to be baptised themselves.

(It is worth knowing that these days it is not necessary to be baptised in order to be married in church.)

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A Service of Baptism.

In Baptism a child (or an adult) becomes a member of the church, and from that day onwards will be known as a Christian. When a young child is baptised the parents and the godparents make promises on behalf of the child. Firstly they promise to bring the child regularly to church, teach them about the Christian faith, and pray for them. The parents and godparents are then asked to make the promises of the Christian faith, in believing and following Jesus Christ. The child is signed with the sign of the cross, is baptised with the water poured over their heads (as a sign of God's forgiveness) and is given a special lighted candle. The child is welcomed as a member of the church - both locally and throughout the world.

The service is very beautiful and meaningful, and is especially suitable for families who are already regular church goers. Like a service of thanksgiving it is personal, includes prayers of thanks, and there is the opportunity for members of the family to say a prayer, or reading of their own.

Because of the nature of the promises, and the welcome the child is given into the church, a baptism service is always held in church on a Sunday. It may be held within the main parish service, or later on Sunday morning. The godparents must be baptised themselves.

If you would like a baptism service for your child, we ask that you start coming to church as regularly as you can before the service is booked, as you will be promising to bring the child to church afterwards. At St Barnabas we have some very special and suitable services for young families and children, including monthly "Family Praise" on Sundays and "Little Church" on Friday mornings. We will also ask you to attend a Baptism preparation session, at a time that suits you, to more fully understand the Christian promises you will be making.

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P.T.O.