

## Some FAQs

### How much do these services cost?

Both Thanksgiving and Naming Ceremonies and Services of Baptism are free, but we are always happy to receive donations to support the work and upkeep of the church.

### We're not married. Does that matter?

No. But we'd be delighted to talk to you about getting married too. The Bible describes being married as the best environment in which to bring up children and if you are serious about your faith, we strongly encourage you to get married. You might even be able to combine the two celebrations into one!

### Does it matter where we live?

Anyone can give thanks to God for their child, and we want to thank him with you. If a Baptism service is right for you and we are not your local church, you will also need to contact your local vicar for permission—although this is almost always a formality.

### Can anyone be Godparents?

A Formal Naming & Thanksgiving Ceremony has no restrictions on who can be named as supporters. However, Godparents at a Baptism do need to be Baptised themselves. Since they will make the same solemn promises as parents they should really understand the Christian faith and be committed Christians so they can encourage your child in their faith. That's why we encourage Godparents to come on the Baptism preparation course too.

## FAQs continued...

### How many Godparents can my child have?

There is no limit, but traditionally each child has two of the same sex and one of the opposite sex to the child. It is a good idea for potential Godparents to attend the preparation course.

### At what age can a child be baptised?

Children can be Baptised from birth and there is no upper age limit! However, once a child is old enough to understand the Christian faith for themselves, they really need to choose to be Baptised. So for older children, we will talk things through with them too, usually after the parents have completed their preparation course, to make sure they understand the promises too.

### I'm not baptised myself. Does that matter?

Technically it doesn't matter, but it doesn't really make sense because the promises you make as parents are the same ones you would make when being Baptised yourself! So if you fall into that category, we'd encourage you to think about Baptism for yourself too, and to come on one of our regular adult preparation courses.

In the mean time, why not read **some of the Bible?** We'd suggest you start with Mark's Gospel which talks about Jesus' life, and you can pick up a free copy in church.

**Check out our website**—There are some great links there! [www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](http://www.saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

# THANKING GOD FOR THE GIFT OF YOUR CHILD



A brief guide  
for parents thinking about  
a Baptism or Thanksgiving Service

**ST NICHOLAS STEVENAGE  
AND MARY'S GRAVELEY**

# CONGRATULATIONS!

We are thrilled that you want to thank God for the gift of your child. The Bible tells us that all good things come from God- including our children. So the right response is to enjoy them and thank Him for them.

At St Nicholas and St Mary's, we want to give you a warm welcome, and we will do all we can to welcome you and celebrate with you. That's why we have two special ways to give thanks to God for the gift of a child and to ask for God's blessing and his help in bringing them up.

## A Thanksgiving & Naming Ceremony

A new child is always a reason to celebrate, and for centuries people have brought their children to church to say thank you to God for their safe arrival and to ask for his blessing on them. The child's name is announced and parents choose a few close friends or family who promise to take on a special supportive role in the bringing up of the child.

We make it easy and quick to book this special service. Simply come along to church and speak to the Rector! We conduct these short ceremonies within our normal Sunday services and simply need to meet with you once to sort out arrangements after we have fixed a date.

## A Service of Christian Baptism

For those who have become part of our church family and are committed to bring their children up to know and follow Jesus for themselves we also offer services of Baptism.

In some ways, Baptisms are much like our Thanksgiving and Naming Ceremonies but in a Baptism service solemn promises are made to God by the adults concerned regarding their own faith and the way they intend to bring up their child.

Because we believe that making vows and promises to anyone is a serious business—and even more so when those promises are made to God—we want to ensure that both parents and Godparents not only understand the Christian faith, but are committed to keeping the promises they make. That's where our Baptism preparation comes in!

## Preparations for Baptism

Whilst anyone can book a Thanksgiving & Naming Ceremony, if you think that a Baptism service is right for you and your child we have 2 stages of preparation.

Firstly you'll need to **come to church regularly**, at least twice a month, for at least 3 months. We do this so that we can get to know you better; so you can get to know us better and so you can start to become part of the church family. This is important because at a Baptism you make a commitment to bring your child up within a local church family, and in turn the church has responsibilities to you too. It will also help you understand more about the Christian faith.

After that we will invite you to come to one of our 3-week **preparation courses** where you can think through the decision carefully. The courses run at intervals throughout the year, usually from 7:30pm -9pm on Tuesday evenings .

The aim of the course is to delve deeper into the Christian faith and give you an opportunity to ask any questions. The course will also help you understand more deeply the significance and implications of Christian Baptism, and to give you a further chance to explore which option would be best for you and your family. If, at the end of the course, you want to book a Baptism we'll be happy to arrange a date.

## So what should you do now...?

If you're interested in a Thanksgiving & Naming Ceremony just come along one Sunday and meet us and we'll get the ball rolling. If you'd really like your child to be Baptised then just start coming to church.

Our main Sunday services are at 9.30am at St Nicholas Church Stevenage and 11.30am at St Mary's Graveley The style of service varies each week but children are always welcome. Most weeks, St Nicholas Church offers 'Sunday School' groups for children aged between 3 and 14- but your children can sit with you through the service if you prefer. So, why not come along and see what we do?

## Any questions?

Answers to some FAQs are on the back, but if you have any other questions please come along and have a chat with us or send us an email. Our email address is [enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saintnicholaschurch.org.uk)

May God bless you and your family.

*Revd Edward Keene*

Rector, St Nicholas + St Mary's