



CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

ST MARGARET • ST PETER • ST JOHN

Baptism policy

1. 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.
2. 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. This service will take place usually during the main Sunday morning act of worship.
3. 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 either in one of our churches or their own parish church;
 - 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 by ensuring adequate resources are budgeted for annually for this task;
 - d. those baptised are welcomed into their new found faith by the regular worshipping congregation.
4. Baptism in one of the churches of the parish is available to
 - a. anyone resident in the parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham;
 - 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.
5. 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.

6. Permission to baptise under paragraph 4d and 5 will require the consent of the incumbent of the parish where the candidate resides (Canon B22).
7. Baptisms will normally take place during the main Sunday morning worship in each of our churches (Canon B21), according to the following rules:
 - a. each church will designate one Sunday per month to be the regular Sunday for baptisms (ensuring that each church of the parish designates a different Sunday to the other churches of the parish) and this will be widely advertised;
 - b. any forthcoming baptisms will be advertised to the congregation at least one week in advance (Canons B22, B24);
 - c. each church will agree the maximum number of candidates (or families with candidates) they will allow at any one service;
 - d. the minister with pastoral charge of the church has authority to agree to any baptism taking place outside of the main Sunday morning worship at a time to be agreed with the candidate or their family.
8. All baptisms are to be booked initially through the parish office and the Rector will agree who is to officiate at the baptism.
9. 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.
10. For the baptism of an adult:
 - a. baptism will normally take place at the same service as confirmation. Where this is not possible and the candidate is baptised separately from confirmation, the officiating minister will give notice of the baptism to the Bishop (Canon B24);
 - b. sufficient teaching of the faith will be given to prepare the candidate for this step of faith (Canon B24);
 - c. sponsors, who are themselves at least baptised, may be chosen.
11. No part of this policy replace any requirements on the parish or clergy made under Canon Law.

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