

‘Baptism of a child’ and ‘Thanksgivings’ Policy (Rev 2 Sept 2023)

At MPC we offer a warm welcome to all children and families. Jesus said: *“¹⁴Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”* ¹⁵ *When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.”* (Matthew 19)

At MPC we offer two services to mark the birth of a child: a service of Thanksgiving and a Baptism of a Child.

If a family approaches the Church to request a ceremony to mark the birth of a child and they are not confessing Christians or are not regular attenders of the MPC, then we will strongly recommend that they choose a Thanksgiving service. We would also encourage them, following the Thanksgiving service, to follow a course of Christian instruction in the hope that a baptism can be performed later. We are happy to arrange a thanksgiving service at short notice and outside a usual Sunday service.

During a baptism ceremony parents and godparents make important statements about their own Christian faith and their commitment to the church. They also make promises to, with the help of God, “keep God’s will and commandments,” in other words living their lives in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the Bible. Additionally they make a promise to bring their child up in the Christian faith. It is implied by this that they will also endeavour to bring their child to Church on a regular basis.

Accordingly we believe that it is very important to prepare people so they understand the seriousness and significance of the promises they are making, and can say them with integrity. Church law provides clergy with discretion to insist on preparation for baptism depending on a couple’s previous church experience. This may involve attending a series of sessions introducing the Christian faith. At MPC we will only arrange a date for a baptism when preparation (if required) has been completed. Agreeing to a date will also be dependent upon attending church for a minimum of 6 times (following the initial enquiry).

Policy agreed at PCC dated September 2023