

To Parents:

We're delighted that you're thinking of baptism for your child. Your child is precious to you and precious to God. At baptism parents and godparents promise to raise your child to know God loves them, and to help them to follow Jesus as a member of his Church. We are always pleased when parents approach us to baptise their children. For adults wishing to be baptised, we would encourage you to consider a course of preparation, possibly in conjunction with confirmation.

In the Church of England, people are encouraged to approach their own parish church for the service of baptism. If you are in any doubt as to which parish you live in, the parish office at All Saints can advise you. However, we recognise that sometimes people may have a connection with All Saints even if they do not live in the parish. If this is the case, we would be happy to discuss this with you. For those living outside the parish who have a connection with this church, we would expect you to seek the agreement of your own Vicar for the baptism to take place here.

What is baptism?

Christians believe that we are spiritual as well as physical beings; we are created body and soul by God and it is Jesus who shows us most clearly and uniquely who God is. Baptism is a token of God's great love for us, a love which holds us eternally in his care. Baptism is the sign that Jesus gave us which unites us with his own baptism and with him in his death and resurrection. Baptism is the beginning of our life of faith. In baptism we join God's family; it is therefore never repeated but we need support and encouragement for our baptism to make a difference in the way we live. The Holy Spirit remains with us always, inviting us into a deeper relationship with God in Jesus as we grow in faith.

Baptism is a sacrament – an outward physical sign (being sprinkled with or immersed in water, anointed with oil, signed with the cross, receiving a lighted candle) of what's happening inside us spiritually, in our soul. The promises which parents and godparents make on a child's behalf include turning to Christ and away from all that is evil. In baptism your child becomes part of

the local and worldwide Christian community. Sharing in the worship and fellowship of the family of the Church will help your child to experience relationship with Jesus for themselves as they grow. *All Saints Maldon* is a warm and welcoming church community who will support and encourage you as you work in creative partnership with God to care for your child.

Your child may decide to take on the baptismal promises for her/his self at confirmation, where the Bishop lays hands on each candidate and blesses the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Preparation for confirmation involves learning together with others about the essentials of Christian belief and practice. Older children or adults participate in preparation sessions appropriate to their age group.

Baptism is, of course, not restricted to infants. Many people who were not baptised as a child find God in later life and are therefore able to be baptised and confirmed at the same service. Please see our opening paragraph and contact us for more details.

Visit our Parish Office at the church on the first or third Wednesday evening of any month between 7.0 and 8.0 pm if you wish to arrange a Baptism. If you wish to save time, you can prepare by going to the "Baptisms" section on our "Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals" link on this site, clicking on the "form" link and supplying answers to some of the questions which need to be answered. The form should be taken when you attend the Parish Office.