



## At St Peter's Church

*Including  
Frequently Asked Questions*

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**ST. PETER'S  
Conisbrough**

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<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

*Matthew 28:16-20*

## Congratulations on the birth of your child

We love Baptising infants, toddlers, children or adults and consider it a huge privilege to be part of the formal welcoming of any child into the Church family.

Baptism is a joyful, but also very serious celebration. On behalf of the baptised child, you, godparents and the Church family will make the commitment before God to bring your child up as a Christian within the family of the Church.

To help you to make these commitments we would like to explore with you what the Christian faith is about and what it means to know and follow Jesus. This will involve meeting up for a number of 1 hour sessions as well as joining us on a regular basis for our Sunday all-age services at 10.30am in Church, where you will also be able to meet many of the other young families.

Once you have had the chance to explore the Christian faith, have joined us for at least 12 Sunday services, and are able make the Baptism commitments on behalf of your child, we will book a date for the Baptism, which normally takes place on the third Sunday of the month within our 10.30am service.

If you are unable to make the commitments on behalf of your child, you can still have a special Thanksgiving service, which is also a wonderful celebration, but without the water or the commitments. You can then always come back for a Baptism once you feel ready and are more part of the Church family.

We look forward to welcoming you at St Peter's Church.

Revd Martijn Mugge

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**There are all sorts of myths and legends surrounding Baptism or Christening. We hope the following FAQs will provide more clarity.**

### [What is the difference between Baptism and Christening?](#)

As far as the Church is concerned, there is no difference.

### [What is the difference between a Baptism and Thanksgiving?](#)

We offer two services to parents.

**Baptism** is initiation into the Christian community (those committed to living for Jesus) and involves water as a symbol of a new life in Jesus Christ. The Christian parents who are members of this family make vows or promises on behalf of the baby who cannot speak for him or herself. The godparents also agree to pray for and encourage the child in their walk with Jesus.

**Thanksgiving** is for parents who are not members of the Christian community, but who want to thank God for their child. The minister asks for God to bless the child. The parents and friends do not make vows (such as declaring a commitment to Jesus Christ) but they are encouraged to bring up the child with Christian values and pray that the child may one day choose to follow Jesus.

### [Isn't Baptism just a welcome into the Church?](#)

That very much depends on what you mean by Church! If you mean, being welcomed into a social group, then no. But if you mean initiation into a group of people who believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and who are committed to living for Him, then yes!

### [Is a Baptism or Christening the same thing as a naming service?](#)

The short answer is, no. In some cultures, a person would be

'Christened' with a new Christian name from the Bible, and in the past, because of infant mortality, babies were often Baptised soon after birth, which coincided with naming. However, in England, naming is a completely separate thing from Baptism.

### **Do I have to be a Christian to have my child Baptised?**

Yes – absolutely. It would be very odd to make promises on behalf of a baby that you yourself do not intend to keep, or to initiate a baby into a community to which you do not belong. However, you do not have to be a Christian to have a service of Thanksgiving for a child.

### **If I do not have my baby baptised will he or she go to limbo, purgatory or hell?**

Absolutely not! This is a terrible superstition and God would never do such a thing. Sadly, there are still people who believe this superstition. It is not a reason to have a child baptised.

### **Do you need to be baptised to get married in the church?**

No! Not at all. Every person living in a parish has the right to be married in their parish church, whether they are baptised or not. In the same way, everyone who dies in a parish is entitled to a Christian funeral.

### **How come the Church christened my other children and never told me what baptism was all about?**

It has been common practice in the Church of England to offer baptism as a right with little or no preparation. However, in view of the importance of Baptism, we think it is essential that the person being baptised and/or their parents understand what Baptism is and what it means to follow Jesus.

### **Does the church do private Baptism or Thanksgiving services?**

The baptism or thanksgiving service will always take place within a

Church service unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is because Baptism and Thanksgiving takes place within the community of the Church in which the community also has to make certain promises.

### **Can you be baptised more than once?**

No – baptism is once and for life. But saying that, different Christian Churches view baptism differently. Some, for example, do not recognise baby Baptism as valid, as a baby cannot choose Christ for him or herself.

### **Will the vicar say “no” to letting my baby be Christened?**

No. We will never say no, but we may say 'not yet'. We will expect you to act with integrity. The service of Baptism will require you (and godparents) to publicly affirm your faith in Jesus Christ, and make promises before a congregation and before God on behalf of your child.

### **What is the role of a godparent or sponsor?**

Contrary to popular belief, godparents have no legal guardianship over the child. In a Baptism, a godparent is a Christian who undertakes to support the parents in bringing up the child in the Christian faith as followers of Jesus Christ. Because of this, it is expected that godparents will also be Christians and have an active and real faith in Jesus Christ. In a Thanksgiving service, the sponsor is someone who promises to support the family.

### **Do I have to live in the Conisbrough Parish to have a Baptism or Thanksgiving at St Peter's or Clifton Church?**

Yes. Unless you are already part of the Church family at St Peter's or Clifton you will be expected to live within the Parish to have a service of Thanksgiving or Baptism for your baby.

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**If you would like to discuss a Thanksgiving or Baptism  
for your child then please get in touch.**

**We would love to hear from you.**

**(or meet me at our Sunday Service)**

**Revd Martijn Mugge**

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THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND