

Charity Number: 1134595

Jesus said, "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15.16

We seek to make Jesus known in our community, through our joyful, loving service and worship

Parish Baptism Policy

Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God's love. For all involved, particularly the candidates but also parents, godparents and sponsors, it is a joyful moment when we rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ, making serious promises and declaring the faith. The wider community of the local church and friends welcome the new Christian, promising support and prayer for the future. Hearing and doing these things provides an opportunity to remember our own baptism and reflect on the progress made on that journey, which is now to be shared with this new member of the Church.

The service paints many vivid pictures of what happens on the Christian way. There is the sign of the cross, the badge of faith in the Christian journey, which reminds us of Christ's death for us. Our 'drowning' in the water of baptism, where we believe we die to sin and are raised to new life, unites us to Christ's dying and rising, a picture that can be brought home vividly by the way the baptism is administered. Water is also a sign of new life, as we are born again by water and the Spirit. This reminds us of Jesus' baptism. And as a sign of that new life, there may be a lighted candle, a picture of the light of Christ conquering the darkness of evil. Everyone who is baptized walks in that light for the rest of their lives.

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10.10), and "I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." (John 15.16)

St John Baptist Parish, Broughton welcomes, supports and encourages family life within the parish. Part of this is to welcome people of all ages into the life of faith and into the family of the Church through Baptism. We believe that Baptism is an essential step an individual's faith journey and we will do all we can within the parish to support and make this journey possible, fruitful, life-giving and lasting.

As part of the candidate's journey the support of the family, friends and local community will be necessary for the person to come, eventually, to Confirmation and the Eucharist, establishing their own independent and ongoing journey of faith in Jesus. Our Diocesan Vision 2026 emphasises the need to be witness and disciples of Jesus, and highlights the need for baptism preparation and growth of disciples. This is supported by Canon Law (Canon B22.4), which recognises the need for support and preparation in the parish prior to baptism. St John Baptist PCC recognises the need for provision of a robust baptism policy, and within it to offer support for all concerned throughout the process so that informed decisions can be made that will be appropriate for candidate's needs, and those who are supporting the candidate.

Therefore the PCC has adopted the following Parish Baptismal Policy:

- Baptism is available for all who live in the ecclesiastical parish, and for those who regularly worship in the parish, making the parish their faith community.
- Families who live outside the parish and have no recognisable connection to the parish will be redirected to their local parish. Should the family wish to establish a link with Broughton parish they must attend worship regularly in one of the parish worship centres. The minimum requirement (in line with the eligibility requirements for the Church Electoral Roll) is attending worship in the parish at least once a month for a period of six months. Once such a connection is established, the baptism enquiry procedures may follow.

- We recognise that there may be occasions where a family has moved away from the parish and requests baptism within this parish due to strong historic links, or existing strong links with close family members who live and worship in the parish. There remains a responsibility for appropriate baptism preparation and support to be offered to the family that may well be more easily undertaken in their home parish. So, in the first instance the family will be asked to contact their local parish to discuss this with their vicar, to seek consent to have the baptism in this parish, and to arrange for baptism preparation in their home parish prior to the baptism service. Our parish clergy will liaise with the family's home parish to enable the right outcomes for them.
- Enquiries for Baptism in Broughton Parish should be made via the Parish Office, after which a Baptism Enquiry Pack will be sent out to the family.
- Once the Enquiry Form has been completed in full by the family and returned to the Parish Office, parents, along with godparents and any other supporters, will be asked to attend a Baptism Preparation Session in church (in line with Vision 2026 and Canon B22.4). Preparation Sessions will take place on the second Thursday of the month from 6.45pm-7.45pm. Families should arrange to attend a session via the Parish Office.
- Only after the Baptism Preparation Session has been attended will discussions begin with the parents regarding dates for the baptism service.
- The Baptism Preparation Sessions will be delivered by the Parish Baptism Team, which made up of clergy and lay people. Every effort will be made to engage with enquiring families to ensure they are made fully aware of the faith promises, commitments, responsibilities and consequences that they are asking to make on behalf of their children; that their needs are being met; and to assess, if any ongoing support might be needed.
- Holding the Baptism Preparation Session in church will allow families to meet with other families, form greater attachments to the church community, and make new friends. Meeting in church is also protective of the members of the parish baptism team, being mindful of parish health & safety and safeguarding procedures.
- Following the Preparation Session members of the Preparation Team will visit the families in their homes to discuss the next steps eg. Baptism or Thanksgiving, suitable dates etc. These visits by team members must be made in pairs, being mindful of parish health & safety and safeguarding procedures.
- Should baptism prove not be the right option for a family, a Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child may be offered, together with appropriate ongoing support, that will allow the family to consider Baptism at a future date.
- Baptism will ordinarily, be celebrated on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month at 1pm in the Parish Church. Baptism and Thanksgiving Services will not take place during the season of Lent. Families should speak to the vicar if they would like the Baptism service to take place during Sunday Eucharist.
- Arrangements for a Service of Thanksgiving is made via the vicar.
- Regular follow-ups and invitations to parish services and events throughout the year will be sent out to families from the Parish Office.
- We make a commitment to make our worship as inclusive as possible, using the resources that are available in the parish. This includes exploring fresh expressions of worship eg. Messy Church, Little Fishes, that may be more appropriate to families who would appreciate a more gentle introduction to worship.

Reviewed and adopted by PCC on: 8th May 2017

Signed: *Shaun Baldwin*
Rev'd Shaun Baldwin, Vicar of Broughton & Chairman of PCC

Date: 8th May 2017