

Infant Baptism in St Laurence Parish, Petersfield



Members of the church are encouraged to see that their children are baptised as soon as possible after birth. Simply fill in the form using the link at the bottom of this page and submit it to the parish office. A meeting with the priest will be arranged to prepare for the baptism of your child. You can easily make the arrangements before the child is born. These notes may be of some help to you.

You may not have been to mass for years or have fallen out with the church for some reason - if you really want your child to be baptised and have the opportunity of growing in the faith - please get in touch and we will take it from there.

CANDIDATES

The children of those who live within the parish area are welcome for baptism - Buriton, Sheet, Steep, Liss, Rake, Hawkley, Empshott Green, Froxfield, Monkwood, Privett, West Meon, East Meon, Langrish, Ramsdean, Stroud, Warnford, Colemore, Langley. Others, who do not live within the parish may also be baptised here, for a good reason and with the agreement of their Parish Priest.

DATE OF BAPTISM

Baptisms can take place during Sunday mass and the congregation can welcome children into membership of the church. However, this may not be possible because our churches are not able to accommodate large numbers. Please suggest the date you would prefer but wait until you meet the priest to confirm it.

YOUR COMMITMENT

Please consider, at the baptism the priest will say to you.

“You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God’s commandments by loving God and neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”

You will be asked to say a sincere ‘Yes’ to this question because it is so important. Many people can help parents to guide their children in the ways of faith but nobody can really replace parents in this task. The promise is to bring up your children in the faith by the example of your own life: your prayer, your worship and your attitude to others.

If you do not feel ready to make this promise, tell the priest so that he can offer help. It may be better to postpone the baptism for a while until you feel ready.

FOR THE PARENT WHO IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

You are very welcome to share in the ceremony of baptism in so far as you feel able. For the future, please bear in mind the Christian commitment made on his/her behalf as you guide your child through life.

GODPARENTS

are to be 16 years or older and members of the Catholic Church who have been Confirmed and received Holy Communion. One Godparent is sufficient but there are often two or more. Their task is to present the child for baptism alongside the parents, to keep in touch and find ways of supporting the Christian upbringing of their Godchild.

Other baptised Christians, who are not members of the Catholic Church, may also 'stand' for your child. They are called 'witnesses to Christian baptism'. They will be recorded on the baptism certificate as 'Godparents' in the wider sense of the word.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN CHURCH?

Do not be anxious about the ceremonies. There are several questions to answer during the service, but the replies are obvious. The priest will be ready to guide you where necessary.

If the baptism takes place during mass a pew will be reserved for parents and godparents.



Parents and Godparents will be asked to gather by the church entrance or outside in the sunshine shortly before the service/mass begins. The priest will come to meet you. After naming the child, you formally commit yourself to bring him/her up in the faith. The priest will then trace a cross on your child's forehead and invite parents and godparents to do the same. Then he will lead you to your place in the congregation.

At mass the Liturgy of the Word proceeds as usual other wise there is a single gospel reading followed by the homily.

After the homily the priest blesses the water of baptism and then invites parents and godparents to proclaim the Christian Faith ("I do... I do... I do..."); the faith in which your child will be baptised. He may invite all those present to join with you in this profession of faith.

Parents, godparents and 'witnesses' gather at the font. The child is supported over the water and it is poured to the words: "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

A 'walking' child may find it more comfortable to hold his/her head over a bowl of water held at knee height rather than be lifted up to the font.

Oil of Chrism is then rubbed on the child's forehead and a prayer is said invoking the Holy Spirit and membership of the kingdom of heaven.

At mass the Eucharistic Prayer and Holy Communion follow.



Then the priest will wrap a white garment (shawl/blanket) around the child - the “outward sign of Christian dignity”. Please bring such a garment with you, though we have some available that you can borrow. This part of the ceremony may not be right for the older child and will be adapted appropriately.

A candle is lit from the Easter candle and presented. We pray that the newly baptised child will “shine with the light of Christ”. The candle is provided by the parish, you do not need to buy one.

The occasion ends with a special prayer of blessing upon the newly baptised and the family.

THE COST

There is no charge for baptism. It is the custom to make an offering such as you can afford. This can be placed in an envelope and handed to the priest.

BAPTISM CERTIFICATE

Details of baptism will be entered in the parish register. After a few days a beautiful certificate will be sent to you. Please check that the details are correct; let us know if there are any mistakes and they will be put right and a new certificate sent.

OTHER POINTS

You are welcome to use photography during the baptism. It would be most appropriate to have a good record to show your child in later years.

Please do not feel uncomfortable if your child cries - babies cry! However if a member of the family would like to slip away with the child for a short while they may use the sacristy, which is warm during the Winter.

If your child has already been baptised in hospital we are happy to celebrate the ‘ceremonies’ in church even though the baptism itself is excluded (having taken place in hospital).

Please use this link, complete the form and submit it to the parish office and we will get in touch with you.

<https://tally.so/r/3ELBdl>

Many thanks

Fr Peter Hollins

St Laurence Parish, Petersfield