

CHRISTENINGS

Being baptised at the Churches of the Lark Valley & North Bury Benefice



First steps on an amazing journey

www.churchofenglandchristenings.org

We are delighted that you are thinking about arranging a Christening. It's a very special thing and so we want your day to be special for you. Look through this leaflet then get in touch.

"We are children of the same Heavenly Father, we welcome you!"

The Reverend Val Gagen,
Team Vicar
01284 361963
valgagen@hotmail.com



Lark Valley &
North Bury Team
Ministry
northburychurches.org.uk

Who can have a Christening at the Churches of the Lark Valley & North Bury Benefice?

Anyone who has not already been baptised, adults as well as children, who feels ready to take this important step in the Christian life can be baptised.

To have a christening at one of our team churches you either need to live in our parishes or have a connection to the church. If you're not sure whether you do, get in touch and we'll help you.

What happens at a Christening?

At a christening your child will be baptised with water. This is the heart of your child's christening, although there are several special moments in the service:

- The vicar will **pray** for your child and for all those who will support them in their path of faith.
- You and the godparents will make some important **promises** for your child in the service. You will promise to pray regularly for your child and to bring them up knowing that God loves them and learning about Jesus.
- Holy oil will be used to make the **sign of the cross** on your child's forehead. This is like an invisible badge, there forever, to show that child belongs to God.
- Water, which is blessed in the church's font, will be poured over your child's head by the vicar. This is the moment of **baptism**.
- Everyone promises to **continue supporting** your child from this moment.
- A candle will be given to you as a reminder of **Jesus the Light of the World**, who goes with you and is with you always.

The role of godparents



In the service, the godparents make promises to share the amazing journey of the Christian faith, to pray for your child and to show them ways to grow in faith and love.

It is important, therefore, that the people you chose as godparents are Christians themselves and are happy to do those things. It is normal to have **three godparents**, although there is a bit of flexibility with this.

Because of the special role they have in supporting your child's faith journey, **godparents must be christened themselves**. Other important people can also have a role as 'supporting friends'.

When do Christenings take place?

In our team churches, Christenings usually take place on a **Sunday**.

If you and most of your guests are used to going to church regularly then you might prefer to have the Christening within our main Sunday worship. The service lasts about an hour and a quarter and may include a celebration of Holy Communion. Some of the team churches have **Family Services** without communion. A service on a **Sunday afternoon** is available by arrangement.

Who should be there?

Parents and godparents all need to be present, as does the person being baptised. In addition, it's nice to invite family and friends to join you on this special day; children are welcome and don't worry about them making a bit of noise or struggling to sit still!

If the child's parents are no longer together, it is possible for just one to be present although, unless there are exceptional circumstances, consent is needed from both parents. If you are concerned about this, please don't worry. It is helpful if you can talk to us honestly and openly about the situation (there will be no judgement) and we will do our best to help you make the necessary arrangements.

What happens next?



If you'd like to go ahead and arrange a christening, **get in touch** with Julie Hooton on nbtlvb@outlook.com for a Baptism form or if you have further questions contact Rev Val, team Vicar, and she will happily meet with you to talk a bit more about what it all means, and to help you plan your special day.

If you don't feel ready for baptism but would like to do something in church for your child, it is also possible to have a **thanksgiving**. Get in touch to find out more about this.

It is also a good idea to **come to church!** Please see our website for details of the services:

northburychurches.org.uk

Please don't worry about not knowing what to do, or about whether your child might make some noise. You will be made very **welcome**.

Very best wishes,

Rev Val

St George's Vicarage, 16A Anselm Ave.
Bury St Edmunds. IP32 6JY