



ST MARY'S BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION POLICY

Introduction

St Mary's welcomes all those who want to be baptised. Baptism (often called Christening) is the rite of initiation into the church. We understand baptism to be the beginning of a person's Christian journey and children are baptised on the understanding that their parents will bring them up to be Christians. This includes bringing them to church regularly and encouraging them to participate in worship.

Baptism and confirmation are the rites by which new people join the church. Originally this was one rite and to reflect this we offer communion to all those who have been baptised. We encourage adults who have not been confirmed to be confirmed and we would normally arrange for adults seeking baptism to be confirmed at the same service at which they are baptised.

Baptism in the Church of England is a matter covered by Church Law and this policy has been drafted to ensure that we comply with the law.

As a parish we want to encourage people to take the commitments they make in baptism seriously so this means that:

- We respect church law and seek to apply it appropriately
- We offer preparation to all those who come to be baptised or confirmed.
- We encourage those who do not worship with us to start attending St Mary's.
- We provide opportunities for Worship and growth in discipleship suitable for people of all ages.

Families who would like a blessing for a baby, rather than making a commitment to the Church in Baptism, might prefer to have a Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child. Please get in touch with the Rector if you would like to arrange this.

How to arrange a Baptism

We welcome people of all ages and delight to offer the sacrament of Baptism to those who live in our parish or worship regularly at St Mary's*. Anyone seeking a baptism at St Mary's should first join ChurchSuite, our parish administration system via our Website www.stmaryswimbleton.org . Families who are new to ChurchSuite can indicate when they join that they are interested in organising a baptism. People who are already members of ChurchSuite should email baptisms@stmaryswimbleton.org to say that they want to

organise a baptism. Parents who would like their children to be baptised should enter their children's details into ChurchSuite before the application for baptism is made. We now use ChurchSuite to organise baptisms so those who would like to arrange a baptism need to allow the church to send them general emails in their privacy settings.

People who live in the parish, but in an area served by one of the other churches in the Team will be advised of this at the surgery and given the option of a referral to that church, but they are still welcome to have the baptism at St Mary's.

Qualifications for Baptism

Anyone who lives in the Parish of Wimbledon or who worships regularly* at any of our services is qualified to be baptised at St Mary's.

There are two pathways for those who do not live in the parish and do not come regularly to St Mary's

If the family has a qualifying connection with St Mary's they can either:

- start attending services regularly* or
- seek the permission of the priest of their home parish for the baptism to take place at St Mary's.

These are the qualifying connections:

- Either of the parents of the child were baptised and/or confirmed at St Mary's.
- Either of the parents of the child have lived in the Parish of Wimbledon for at least six months at any time during their lives
- either of the parents have attended worship at St Mary's for at least six months in the past
- any of the grandparents of the child live or have lived in the Parish of Wimbledon or worshipped at St Mary's during their lifetime.
- the parents or grandparents of the child were married in St Mary's.
- the siblings of the child have already been baptised at St Mary's.

If the family does not have a qualifying connection with St Mary's then they need to start attending weekly services regularly* for six months. After four months attendance they can make a booking for a baptism after the six months has been completed. Attending services online is not sufficient to qualify for baptism except in exceptional circumstances.

In an emergency these rules can be waived in accordance with canon law.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there any age limit for Baptism?

There is no age limit for baptism, however for children between 7 and 12 years of age we would normally baptise them and admit them to communion at the same time once they have participated in the annual preparation session for admission of children to communion.

Anyone coming for baptism over 12 years of age would normally be baptised and confirmed by a Bishop at our annual Team Confirmation service following a course of preparation. We would not baptise someone over 12 without their also being confirmed, usually at the same service.

How many children or families are baptised during the same service?

This can vary depending on how many families have booked for a particular service, however we would not have more than three families, or five candidates, whichever is fewer, in one service.

Which services can we have a baptism in?

We set aside one service a month at 11.15 and one at 12.30pm for Baptisms, except in December. Usually these are on different Sundays to give as much choice as possible.

Baptisms take place during the regular service at 11.15. The 12.30 service is about 20 minutes long and is just a baptism. There are no hymns at this service.

Regular members of the 9.30am service can request a baptism at this service. The date will be arranged for a mutually convenient service, with the Rector.

Can I have a baptism on a Saturday?

We do not offer baptisms on a Saturday.

Can I have a private Baptism?

We do not offer private baptisms. As Baptism is the rite of entry into the church, it is important that the wider church is present to welcome the candidate into the church and to pray for them.

I was married at St Mary's, can I have my child baptised there?

Yes. You can have your child baptised at St Mary's but if you do not live in the parish or worship here regularly*, you will need to ask the consent of the vicar of the parish where you live.

My older children were baptised here, does that qualify my new baby?

Yes you can have your child baptised at St Mary's but if you do not live in the parish or worship here regularly*, you will need to ask the consent of the vicar of the parish where you live.

I live overseas but I would like to get my child baptised at St Mary's.

If you currently live overseas but have previously lived in the parish or worshipped here regularly* or have another qualifying connection we can usually accommodate you for a baptism. Please get in touch with the Rector for further details.

What arrangements are there for parking for the service?

There is plenty of parking in the roads around St Mary's which is free on Sundays. For safety reasons, we ask that only people with Blue Disabled Parking Badges drive into the churchyard for the service.

Photographs and Filming

We do not allow photographs or filming with phones or cameras during the service, however you are welcome to take photographs before and after the service. The clergy would be happy to be in your photographs if you ask them.

Streaming your Baptism

From 1st January 2024 we offer the option of having your service streamed. We charge xxx for streaming your service. You can also have your service recorded. We can only stream and record a service if all the families involved consent. If you would like your service streamed please contact the parish office who will send you an invoice and organise it. Please note that we use domestic wifi so we cannot guarantee that the service will be streamed, but we have never had any problems with streaming. We are able to keep our prices down because we do not have a commercial contract. Please ask us for further details if you are concerned about it.

How will I know what to do during the service?

There are monthly Baptism rehearsals in church on a Saturday morning at 11.30am. You will be asked to book in for a rehearsal when you book the service. Please bring your child/children and older siblings with you. Godparents don't need to attend but they are very welcome.

Godparents

Your child will need three godparents who have all been baptised. Usually this would be two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. If you have someone you would like to be a godparent who is not baptised, as long as you have three that are, they can be an

honorary godparent and can join in with as much or as little of the service as they like. This can be a good option for close friends from other faiths who you would like to be formally involved in your child's life.

If a godparent cannot be present at the Baptism they can be represented by a proxy, usually one of the other Godparents. .

Parents and Grandparents should not be Godparents.

*regular worship means coming at least twice a month for the last six months.

Thanksgiving and Blessing

The parents, the child, siblings and supporting friends come forward together.

X and Y are here today to give thanks for *these children*, with *their* family and friends, and to support *their* parents in their responsibilities with prayer and love. God became one of us in Jesus, and understands all that surrounds the arrival and upbringing of children. It is God's purpose that children should know love within the stability of their home, grow in faith, and come at last to the eternal city where his love reigns supreme.

Do you receive *these children* as a gift from God?

We do.

Do you wish to give thanks to God and seek his blessing?

We do.

The minister says

God our creator,

we thank you for the wonder of new life
and for the mystery of human love.

We thank you for all whose support and skill
surround and sustain the beginning of life.

We thank you that we are known to you by name
and loved by you from all eternity.

We thank you for Jesus Christ,
who has opened to us the way of love.

We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The minister may say for each child

What name have you given this child?

A parent or supporting friend replies

His/her name is *N*.

The minister may take the child.

The minister says

As Jesus took children in his arms and blessed them,
so now we ask God's blessing on *N*.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for *his/her* birth;

surround *him/her* with your blessing

that *he/she* may know your love,

be protected from evil,

and know your goodness all *his/her* days.

When all the children have been prayed for

All **May *they* learn to love all that is true,
grow in wisdom and strength
and, in due time, come through faith and baptism
to the fullness of your grace;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.**

The minister prays for the parents

May God the Father of all bless *these parents*
and give *them* grace to love and care for *their children*.

May God give *them* wisdom, patience and faith,

help *them* to provide for the *children's* needs

and, by *their* example,

reveal the love and truth that are in Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

Agreed by St Mary's Church Committee