

Baptism Policy



1. This plurality affirms and upholds the historic teaching of the Church of England, as part of universal Church of God, that Baptism is a sacrament (an outward sign of God's inward activity in our lives) whereby God works in us the forgiveness of our sins, the gift of new life in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit and membership of the Church, which is understood to be the Body of Christ on earth.
2. As a church, we place a high value on the importance of Baptism and on the commitment required by it of being an active part of the life and worship of the church community. As such, we recognise that Baptism is not appropriate for everyone and we are committed to offering those who wish to mark the gift of a child or the start of a journey in the Christian faith an alternative means of doing so, such as a service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child. This service will also take place during the main Sunday morning act of worship.
3. In celebrating Baptism we affirm the following principles:
 - a. we welcome anyone who wishes to be baptised, and we will do all we can to ensure they are baptised in one of our churches.
 - b. our churches will continually strive, through our worship, our hospitality and ongoing pastoral care, to welcome those being baptised and their families at their baptism and thereafter as members of our church, so that we might nurture their faith and encourage them to become faithful Christians
 - c. we will ensure those preparing for baptism, and in the case of children their parents, are nurtured in their faith by ensuring adequate resources are budgeted for annually for this task;
 - d. those baptised are welcomed into their new found faith by the regular worshipping congregation.
4. Baptism in one of the churches in the plurality is available to
 - a. anyone resident in the parish of All Saints, Higher Walton or Holy Trinity, Hoghton;
 - b. those on the Electoral Roll of either parish;
 - c. those who regularly attend worship in one of the churches of the parish;
 - d. those who have a previous connection to one of the churches because they, or their parents, were married in the church, or they worshipped in one of the churches regularly for a period of time.

5. The PCC delegates to the clergy the discretionary right to baptise anyone who cannot fulfil the above criteria who can demonstrate strong reasons why they should be baptised in this plurality.

6. Baptisms will normally take place during the main Sunday morning worship in each of our churches, or during our 4forAll service in an afternoon. Each congregation will designate one Sunday per month to be the regular Sunday for baptisms (ensuring that each congregation designates a different Sunday to the other congregations)

7. All baptisms are to be booked through the incumbent and they will agree who is to officiate at the baptism. A date for baptism will only be confirmed once a family has attended a worship service. All families will be invited, and it is expected that they will attend worship at least once a month prior to the baptism.

8. For the baptism of a child:

a. the officiating cleric will ensure that the parents of the candidate (or child if they are able to understand) receive sufficient teaching about baptism to help them to be able to make the baptismal promises with integrity (Canon B22);

b. godparents are to be chosen according to Canon B23, ensuring they are baptised. Where someone is not able or willing to be a godparent, they can be a supporting friend to a candidate.

9. For the baptism of an adult:

a. baptism will normally take place at the same service as confirmation. Where this is not possible and the candidate is baptised separately from confirmation, the officiating minister will give notice of the baptism to the Bishop (Canon B24);

b. sufficient teaching of the faith will be given to prepare the candidate for this step of faith (Canon B24);

c. sponsors, who are themselves at least baptised, may be chosen