



St Andrew's Church, Oxshott - PCC Policy Document

Baptism and Thanksgiving Policy

Custodian	Version Number	Date Approved by PCC	Issue Date	Review Date
Marianne Francis	2	September 2018	October 2018	September 2021

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Andrew's Church ('St Andrew's' or 'the Church') offers and welcomes both services of Baptism and Thanksgiving.

These take place within our regular Sunday morning services as follows: Oxshott Family Praise services on 1st Sundays at 11.15am; 3rd Sundays at 09.30am. During the summer schedule, services of Baptism or Thanksgiving take place during 10am Oxshott Praise services.

Scope

In scope

This policy is for children and their parents who wish to have a Baptism (sometimes called a Christening) or a Service of Thanksgiving for the child.

Out of scope

Baptism is for adults too - anyone can be welcomed into God's family, whatever their age - but this policy does not address adult baptisms, which the Vicar will be pleased to deal with on an individual basis.

General statement of policy

Our aims are:

- To make each child and their family feel welcome.
- To foster a sense of belonging and encourage ongoing involvement in the life of St Andrew's.
- To clearly explain God's love for them in Jesus Christ and encourage personal relationship with him.
- To help parents and godparents to understand any promises they make and to choose the right service.
- To maintain ongoing contact and support for children and families.

We offer two types of services:

1. Thanksgiving services can be held for any child who lives locally. Parents do not need to have a Christian faith and do not need to be regular members of St Andrew's Church. As the local church, we are pleased to be able to offer such services.
2. Baptisms (sometimes called Christenings) are held for infants whose parents either have or are seriously exploring Christian faith, and are willing to commit themselves to bringing their child up as a member of the 'community of faith' at St Andrew's church. This involves attending church regularly and encouraging children to come to age-appropriate teaching activities.

Organisation and responsibilities

1. The PCC is responsible for agreeing the policy, and monitoring its overall effectiveness.
2. The Pastoral Assistant for Baptisms is Marianne Francis, and, together with the Vicar, has day-to-day responsibility for implementing the policy.

The Pastoral Assistant for Baptisms, as 'custodian' of the policy, is also expected to bring the attention of the PCC to any necessary changes to it that may arise (for example practical improvements, changes in legislation, etc.) and to seek renewal of the policy on the due date.

Arrangements

We will use various processes and initiatives to support this policy, and to best ensure we are supportive of those involved:

The Process

1. Initial contact will usually be made via the Parish Office staff who will record information (name, address, phone number, the name and ages of any child or children, and any special circumstances).
2. A standard (personalised) letter will then be sent from the Vicar to the parent(s) within three days of the initial enquiry. This will include elements of the policy, invite parents to attend the next Baptism/Thanksgiving Preparation evening and suggest strongly that they come to church for a period of time before deciding if St Andrew's is the church where they would like their child to grow in faith, and to experience the types of services in which we hold Baptisms and Thanksgivings.
3. If they have not previously attended St Andrew's, parents will also be asked to introduce themselves to the Vicar at church.
4. Once parents have attended the Preparation evening, either the vicar or Marianne Francis (Pastoral Assistant for Baptisms) will visit them in their home to find out which kind of service they would like for their child and to set a provisional date.

Baptism and Thanksgiving Preparation Evenings

These evenings will be run by the Vicar and Marianne Francis, and will be held on a regular evening each month when required. The aim of these evenings is:

- To make parents feel that they are valued and welcomed by St Andrew's.
- To outline the difference between a Thanksgiving and a Baptism service.
- To enable parents to ask questions.
- To set out the next available dates for either service to be held.

Our Promise to Parents

To fulfil our promises to care for these children as a Church we:

- Invest in children and families work including children's groups on Sundays.
- Provide events and services for families to attend together and worship together.
- Offer Church 'God-parents' who maintain caring personal links.
- Hold an annual gathering and social event for all children and their families, whether they have a Baptism or a Thanksgiving.
- With permission, write to the children on the anniversary of their Baptism or Thanksgiving, pray for them by name on the following Sunday, and send them birthday cards for the first five years.
- With permission, routinely invite children and their families to suitable events and activities (for example, StAks; Oxshott Family Praise; events and services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter; Mothering Sunday and Fathers' Day services; social events and relevant courses).

Further information

- Further guidance and information is available within the Church of England 'Guide to Christenings' at www.churchofenglandchristenings.org/

Policy agreement

This policy was adopted by the PCC at its meeting on 18 September 2018.

(signed) F A Trickey (Vicar)

(The original signed document is retained as part of the formal PCC minutes.)

Policy monitoring

1. The PCC is responsible for monitoring the overall effectiveness of this policy.

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2. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or more frequently if required in line with any Diocesan guidance or other changes, etc. This review will be carried out by the Vicar, the Pastoral Assistant for Baptisms and the PCC.

PCC of St Andrew's Church, Oxshott

Charity Registration Number 1128379