

St Peter de Beauvoir Town

A GUIDE TO BAPTISM (CHRISTENING) AT ST PETER'S



This Guide is for anyone who wants to know more about baptism, either for yourself or your child.



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About St Peter's

St Peter's is the Church of England (Anglican) parish church for De Beauvoir Town, serving an area of West Hackney stretching from Balls Pond Road in the North to the Regent's Canal in the South, and the Kingsland Road in the East to Southgate Road in the West.

St Peter's is home to a community touched by God. We strive for a more peaceful, just and sustainable world, by providing a place for *creativity* and *refreshment*.

One important way we do this is by *welcoming* people of all ages and backgrounds to God's family through *baptism*.

What is baptism?

Baptism, or christening, is the way people become members of God's family, the church: the worldwide Christian community.

The word *baptism* comes from the Greek word for *washing*. When we are baptised, we are washed with water '*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*'. In other words, it is *God* (not the Vicar!) who washes us and gives us a new start.

God wants everyone to have loving relationships with Him and one another. Growing into those relationships is a lifelong journey for all Christians. Baptism is a public statement by God, the candidate, their supporters and the church that the candidate has joined the rest of the worldwide Christian community on that journey.

What do you need to do for you or your child to qualify to be baptised at St Peter's?

The basic rule in the Church of England is that if you want to be baptised yourself or to have your child baptised, the right place to do it is in your local parish church. But there is an exception if you belong to another church (anybody can attend any church they like).

This means that if you don't live in the parish, we won't normally baptise your child at St Peter's unless you have been coming to services here regularly over a period of time. Otherwise you should approach the local parish church where you live. If you don't know which church that is, we may be able to help you find out.

If you do live in St Peter's parish, we will be delighted to baptise you or your child here. All we ask is that you undergo preparation and meet the requirements about godparents and sponsors which are explained later on. (Having said that, because baptism is about identifying with

the Christian community, we'd like to think you would want to get to know us and join in our worship.)

What preparation will there be?

To prepare for any baptism, one of the ministers here will need to meet you to discuss what will happen in the service and what it means. This meeting usually takes no more than an hour. It can happen in your home, but we recommend it takes place in the church, as this makes preparation easier for everybody.

For the christening of a baby or young child this meeting is the only preparation you will need. For adults, and some older children, who are candidates for baptism, it is also helpful to explore whether it would be right for them to be confirmed as well as being baptised. Confirmations happen once a year, in preparation for which candidates from St Peter's attend weekly sessions spread over several weeks.

What are the rules about godparents and sponsors?

Children who are baptised in the Church of England traditionally have at least 3 godparents, at least 2 of whom should be the same sex as the child. However, the rules do say that 'when three cannot conveniently be had', one godfather and one godmother will do.

Godparents are usually family members or friends, but parents can be godparents too.

Adult baptism candidates have sponsors rather than godparents. Each candidate should have at least 2 sponsors. Their role in the service is to present the candidate for baptism.

Godparents and sponsors have an important role in supporting the baptised on their journey into the loving relationships with God and neighbour which God created them for. Because of this, the rules require them to have been baptised themselves, and preferably confirmed as well.

When do baptism services take place?

All baptisms at St Peter's happen during our main Sunday service, which starts at *10 o'clock*. There are 3 reasons for this:

- For anyone, child or adult, becoming part of God's family is a public event.
- So that the rest of the congregation can welcome those who are baptised, pray for them and support them.
- It also helps remind the rest of the congregation about the promises God made to us, and we made to God, at our own baptisms.

There is more to explain about this, but we do that in the preparation session.

We hope this leaflet has been helpful. If you would like to discuss baptism for yourself or your child or you have any other questions arising from this leaflet, please speak to one of the clergy after our Sunday service or telephone the Vicar Rev'd Julia Porter on 020 7254 5670 or e-mail juliap@freeuk.com