**Baptism/Christening/Thanksgiving Enquiry form**

*For those living within the parishes of Aikton, Burgh-by-Sands, Great Orton, Kirkandrews with Beaumont & Grinsdale, and Kirkbampton [[1]](#footnote-2)*

We are delighted that you are interested in exploring a Thanksgiving or Baptism into the Christian faith (also known as Christening) for yourself or your child(ren). We look forward to welcoming you into our church community to help you explore what this means.

Our churches aim is *‘Helping everyone enjoy life in all its fullness through being disciples of Jesus’.* Andit is this aim that shapes how we explore with you what it means to be baptized and live as followers of Jesus.

**If you live in the parish, here is what to do next and what to expect:**

1. As you are exploring, **come to your church** and continue getting to know the church family (who in a baptism service will be making promises with you, and to you).
2. **Fill in Sections 1-2 of this form** and return them to the minister, either in person at the next service at your church, or by email/post *(see page 2)*. Read through the rest of the form, noting down questions etc.
3. **Your minister will meet you** (normally 3 times) to help you understand the blessings & commitments of Thanksgivings and Baptisms, and help you consider the right next step for you (see Section 3). So don’t worry if you don’t understand everything as you read through this document!
4. **You can then choose** if you would like either a Thanksgiving Service or a Baptism (the different options will be talked over during your meeting) and **an appropriate date can be arranged**.
5. Section 4 should be filled in **after** meeting the minister, and returned no later than 2 weeks prior to the service, so that the appropriate communication and paperwork can be done in good time.

Name of the Church/Parish where you might like a Baptism/Thanksgiving:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 1: Information about the candidate (child or adult)**

Full name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_ \_\_ /\_\_ \_\_/\_ \_ \_ \_

Address Gender: Male / Female

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 Postcode\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*For adult candidates only:*

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2: Information about those bringing a child for baptism (e.g. parents/guardians)**

**Person 1**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male / Female

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the child named above \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship with person 2 (where applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Landline number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above)

**Person 2 (where applicable)**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male / Female

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to the child named above \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship with person 1 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Landline number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above)

Please fill in and return this form to Rev Tudor Boddam-Whetham

The Rectory, Burgh-by-Sands, Carlisle CA5 6AW

 01228 576324**Section 3: What is the best next step for you?**

**Exploring the meaning and commitments of the Thanksgiving and Baptism Services**

A Thanksgiving Service gives us a great opportunity to recognize your child(ren) as a precious gift from God, to give thanks to Him, and ask for His blessing. This is what is said at the heart of the service:

*The Minister addresses the Parents:*

 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.**

 God our creator,

 We thank you for the wonder of new life and for the gift of human love.

 We thank you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and known to you by name.

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

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

 **Amen.**

*The Parents face the Congregation and pray:*

 **God our Father,**

 **maker of all that is living, we praise you for the wonder and joy of creation.**

 **We thank you from our hearts for the lives of *[names of children]*,**

 **and for the privilege of parenthood.**

 **Accept our thanks and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord,**

 **Amen.**

*The Minister addresses the Parents:*

 What names have you given *these children*?

 ***Their names* are *[names of children]*.**

 As Jesus took children in his arms and blessed them,

 so now we ask God’s blessing on *[names of children].*

 Heavenly Father, we praise you for their birth and lives;

 surround them with your blessing that they may know your love,

 be protected from evil, and know your goodness all their days.

 **May *[names of children]* 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.**

 May God the Ruler of all bless *[names of parents]*

and give them grace to love and care for *[names of children]*.

 May God give them wisdom, patience and faith,

 help them to provide for *[names of children]’s* needs

 and, by their example, demonstrate the love and truth that are in Jesus Christ.

 **Amen.**

*The Minister addresses the Sponsors/Congregation:*

 Will you do all that you can to help and support *[names of parents]* in the bringing up of

 *[names of children]?*

 **With the help of God, we will.**

A Baptism Service gives us the opportunity to enjoy declaring and (re)committing ourselves to following the Lord Jesus. The Baptism service may be more familiar to you, however some of the language used in the baptism service is not used much outside of Church, and so often needs explaining in other words.

The good news it contains is the best in the world, and the promises made will have a real impact on your lives, so need carefully exploring before you decide whether to commit to them before God. This is what we will do together when we meet up. Here are the promises that are made during a baptism service:

*The service leader addresses the whole congregation:*

Faith is the gift of God to his people.

In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling.

People of God, will you welcome *these children/candidates* and uphold *them* in their new life in

Christ?

**All With the help of God, we will.**

*At the baptism of children, the service leader then says to the parents and godparents:*

Parents and godparents, the Church receives *these children* with joy.

Today we are trusting God for *their* growth in faith.

Will you pray for *them*, draw *them* by your example into the community of faith and walk with *them*

in the way of Christ?

**With the help of God, we will.**

In baptism *these children* begin their journey in faith.

You speak for *them* today. Will you care for *them*, and help *them* to take their place within the life

and worship of Christ’s Church?

**With the help of God, we will.**

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

**I come to Christ.**

These promises show that Baptism is a commitment to a way of life, rather than just an event. It is an outward sign of an inward truth. Only God knows what happens in our hearts, but what is in our hearts will show in our lives.

When you meet up, the Minister will chat with you about what keeping these promises will look like in your life. Because the Christian life is a journey of transformation, these may involve changes for good from how you have been living, as you make plans to keep the promises you will be making for yourselves (and on behalf of your child) with God’s help and with His family.

As a reminder of what is being promised, at a baptism service the parent(s)/guardian(s) and godparents will be given a bookmark (example shown below), stating in more straightforward words than the official promises what they are committing to.

On [date] at

St X’s Church,

[Village name]

I, **[your name]**, promised before God to be

**God[father/mother]**

to

**[name of person baptised]**

by

1. Praying for [her/him] regularly
2. Growing in my Christian faith within a local church family
3. Being involved in caring for [her/him]
4. Sharing my Christian faith with [her/him] by my example
5. Helping [her/him] worship Jesus as part of a local church family

**--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

**What do you think?**

* As you look over the extracts from these services, think about whether you understand the words and phrases in the promises, and which other words you might use if someone asked you to explain them differently.
* Note down any questions you may have about any of these to ask the Minister.
* What might each of these promises look like in your daily life?
* Personal Prayer -
* Growing your own faith –
* Worshipping in a local church family -
* Consider how you feel about making these promises and committing to them for the rest of your life.

*N.B. Remember, you are not promising to be perfect (none of us are!), but declaring, before God and the people at the service, the intentions and directions you are taking in your own life and in the life of your child. This is why the response in these promises is ‘With the help of God, we will'.*

**Thanksgiving or Baptism?**

After exploring the options, the decision will be yours to decide whether a Thanksgiving or Baptism better fits you (and your family and friends).

Thanksgiving services can be held at any time, whilst Baptisms will need to fit with the pattern of worship of the church family you will be making promises with.

Please ask the Minister for more details and to discuss what you would like to do next.

**Final thought**

As with anything that is seriously good, Thanksgivings and Baptisms are to be received reverently and with careful thought, because they are engaging with the wonderful love of God himself.

We’re delighted to be involved in enabling you to get what is best for you and your family, and look forward to helping you all grow deeper in enjoying life in all its fullness, through following Jesus.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

**I live outside the parish. Does this make a difference?**

Possibly. The Church of England operates a geographical parish system, recognizing that God calls every Christian to be an active part of a local church family, and so providing worship and pastoral care locally for everyone in the country. This means that your first point of call when enquiring about a christening/baptism/thanksgiving should be the parish you live within, unless you regularly worship at another church, in which case it is appropriate to have the baptism/thanksgiving there. The baptism service assumes you regularly worship there, and includes a promise made by the congregation, which they cannot keep unless you regularly worship with them.

Baptism is about being an active part of the family of God now, so it is the local church family which is more important than the church building your relatives may have (had) strong links with. This means that unless you worship regularly as part of one of our congregations, or begin to do so, then the most appropriate setting for a baptism is a church family local to you that you can (continue to) be part of. Joint arrangements are possible between a church here, and one near you – please do ask.

If however you would like a Thanksgiving service, which does not include the same promises, then we would be delighted to arrange one for you, wherever you live.

**Can my child be baptized if I have not been baptized?**

Godparents making the promises at a baptism service need themselves to have been baptized in the Christian faith, and preferably Confirmed. This is because they are promising to help bring your child up as a Christian, and cannot keep those promises if you do not have faith in Jesus yourself. As parents make the same promises at the baptism, it is unusual for a parent not to be baptized, so we would be delighted to prepare and baptize you in advance of yours and your child’s baptism.

**Can our child be baptized if one of us feels unable to make the promises at this stage?**

Yes. If just one parent is happy to make the baptism promises and wants to bring your child up as a Christian then your child can be baptized. The parent currently unable to make the promises in conscience should nevertheless be supportive, if possible.

**Can our child be baptized if I/we are not married?**

Yes. Marriage is not a qualification for baptism.

However God has given marriage as the best state for committed relationships, and where marriage is possible it should be pursued out of obedience to God and for the good of your relationship and your child(ren). For single parents this is not possible, but those parents living together and not yet married need to ask if they can promise to follow Jesus as Lord, whilst publically choosing not to obey him in their relationship. You may not have fully realized your situation before reading this, but God’s love and forgiveness are wonderfully available to us all, and a joint marriage and baptism service (simple or with all the trimmings) is a truly joyous event.

Of course, relationships can be tricky, and if one parent wishes to marry, but their partner refuses, then the first parent can still in good conscience have their child baptized.

**Section 4: Information about proposed sponsors/godparents**

The Church of England lays out certain qualifications to be a Godparents who themselves (along with the candidates/parents/guardians) make serious and wonderful promises, so your minister will discuss with you who is eligible and appropriate to be a Godparent. It is wise to discuss this with the minister BEFORE asking someone to be a godparent, just in case. You need to be confident that they could, in good conscience, make the commitments outlined in the bookmark whose details are shown in Section 3.

The minimum number of godparents is three (two of the same gender as the baptism candidate, one different) and these can include the parent(s)/guardian(s). There is no maximum … but a baptism register only has room for about five ! There are no limits to the number of Sponsors at a Thanksgiving Services.

**Sponsor 1 / Godparent 1 (same gender as the candidate)**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male / Female

Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of church they regularly attend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Sponsor 2 / Godparent 2 (same gender as the candidate)**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male / Female

Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of church they regularly attend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Sponsor 3 / Godparent 3 (opposite gender as the candidate)**

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male / Female

Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of church they regularly attend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Additional Sponsors / Godparent(s) (OPTIONAL - either gender)**

Full Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male / Female

Date of baptism \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of church they regularly attend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Or worship regularly as members of our church family. See FAQs at the end of Section 3 for further details. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)