

## What happens next?

**Initial Contact:** someone from The Ascension will contact you and arrange to meet with you. This will give you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

**Thanksgiving:** We will arrange a service of Thanksgiving for your child on a Sunday very soon that is convenient for you.

**Preparation for Baptism:** If you would like to proceed with a Baptism service for your child we will arrange for a number of follow-on meetings. These are designed to support you as you seek to raise your child as a Christian within the life of the church. It will also be an opportunity to for you as parents to grow in your own understanding of God and the Christian faith.

**Attending the Ascension:** If you haven't yet attended a service at The Ascension, then please come along on a Sunday morning and find out what we're like! We welcome families and young children at our 10.30 a.m. service, and provide activities for children from ages 3-11. Our occasional **All Age Service** is for the whole family and has many interactive elements for children. You may also be interested in "**Tiny Tots**", for small children, parents and carers, which meets on Wednesday mornings. (Please ask for details).

## Finally

Thanks for reading this information. We hope it is of help as you consider the Church's role in the life of your child.

Please don't worry if you have lots of questions. We hope we can support you as you think through your child's future and the role that the Christian faith will play in their life.

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**Baptism**  
at the ascension westdene

**Ascension**church  
westdene

**Thank you** for enquiring about baptism (also known as ‘christening’) at The Ascension. We want to be as much help to you as possible as you think about your child’s spiritual welfare, so please read through this leaflet carefully. It is designed to help answer some of the questions you may have, and also help you to think through some of the issues involved.

At The Ascension, we offer two services to mark the birth of your child, and seek God’s blessing, both of which take place in our 10.30 a.m. Sunday morning service.

### **Thanksgiving Service**

A Thanksgiving, or Dedication service, provides an opportunity to mark the birth of your child. In the service, we pray for you and your child, thanking God, and asking for his blessing and help in the years to come.

### **Baptism Service**

Baptism is a celebration of Christian faith. In the Bible, baptism is linked with:

1. Recognising that our life is not ours to do with as we please, but that it belongs to Jesus Christ. Coming to terms with this is what the Bible calls **REPENTANCE**. It involves, turning away from our way of doing things, and allowing Jesus Christ to rule every area of our life.
2. Trusting that we are forgiven and accepted by God through what Jesus has done for us by his death on the cross. (This is what the Bible means by **BELIEF**).

## **Answering your Questions**

### **Why is water used in baptism?**

The use of water in baptism symbolises:

1. **Cleansing.** Just as water is used in washing, so in baptism it reminds us that when we turn to Jesus Christ, God forgives us and makes us “clean” in his sight.
2. **Death.** Water can be very destructive. In baptism, it reminds us that a Christian is someone who has “died” to the old, self-centred way of life.
3. **Life.** Water is vital for life. In baptism, the use of water reminds us that God offers us spiritual life through Jesus.

### **Why are children baptised?**

In the Church of England, we believe it is appropriate for the children of Christian parents to be baptised.

- The baptism of a child is a sign that they are part of the Christian community – the Church.
- In having their child baptised, parents show that they acknowledge that their child belongs to Jesus.
- Baptism is a “symbol” of what is involved in being a Christian. In giving that symbol to a child, parents do so in the hope and expectation that as their children grow up, they will want to be followers of Jesus Christ themselves.

### **What does this mean for me as a parent?**

Parents are given a key role in the baptism service. This reflects how important they are in helping their child to understand the Christian faith for themselves. In particular, the baptism service highlights three important responsibilities of parents.

1. **Model the Christian life.**  
A child needs to see Christianity lived out in practice. This is why it is important that parents should have a living faith of their own. This is taken up in the baptism service, when parents are asked if they have “**Repented**” and “**Believed**” and promise “*by your example show him/her how to live for Christ.*”
2. **Teach.**  
Parents need to teach the Christian faith to their child. In the baptism service, parents commit themselves to “*pray*” for their child, and “*teach him/her to trust in Christ alone for salvation.*”
3. **Belong to the Church family**  
This means a commitment to meeting regularly with other Christians. Again, this is emphasised in the service, where parents promise that they will help their children to “*take their place within the life and worship of the church.*”