

Baptism Policy

1. St Oswald's Church 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.
3. In celebrating Baptism, we affirm the following principles:
 - a. We delight to receive and welcome all who wish to explore Baptism for themselves or for an infant.
 - b. We are committed to affirming, encouraging and nurturing all candidates to become confident and committed disciples of Jesus Christ through the hospitality, pastoral care and worshipping life of the church community.
 - c. We will ensure that candidates for Baptism are sufficiently prepared for the commitments they will be asked to make and are able to make their promises with understanding and integrity.
 - d. We believe that Baptism means being made members of the Church, therefore we want all baptismal candidates to feel comfortable and

at home at St Oswald's as their church family and the community who will support them in their journey of faith.

4. Baptism at St Oswald's is available to anyone who:
 - a. is resident in the parish of St Oswald, Coney Hill with St Aldate.
 - b. is on the electoral roll of St Oswald, Coney Hill with St Aldate.
 - c. has been in regular attendance of worship at St Oswald, Coney Hill with St Aldate for a period of at least three months.
 - d. does not meet these criteria, but is able to demonstrate to the clergy strong and exceptional reasons why they should be baptized at St Oswald, Coney Hill with St Aldate (given the consent of the incumbent in whose parish they are resident).
5. All Baptism enquiries should be made through the parish office.
6. The date on which a Baptism will take place is determined at the discretion of the clergy in consultation with candidates and/or parents during one of the main Sunday acts of worship and will be advertised at least one week in advance.
- 7. For the Baptism of an infant:**
 - a. Parents and godparents are expected to be both baptized and confirmed (though the officiating minister is able to waive the requirement of Confirmation at their discretion). Where one or both parents are not baptised, it is essential that all the child's godparents are both baptized and confirmed and regular worshippers at this or another church.
 - b. Children will normally have three godparents (of whom two should usually be of the same sex of the child to be baptized and one of

whom may be a parent of the child to be baptized), though a child should have no less than two godparents, one male and one female.

- c. It is the responsibility of the clergy to ensure that parents (and godparents,) receive sufficient teaching about Baptism to help them make the promises required of them with good understanding and intention.

8. For the Baptism of an adult:

- a. Candidates will be encouraged to consider Confirmation at the same time as their Baptism.
 - b. Candidates may nominate baptised sponsors to support and encourage them in their journey of faith.
 - c. Clergy will ensure that candidates receive sufficient instruction to prepare them for the step of faith they will make.
9. In accordance with the doctrine and practice of the Church of England, we will not re-baptise anyone who has already received a valid Baptism with water in the name of the St Oswald's, whether in the Church of England or a recognised ecumenical partner of the Church of England; however, in situations where it is unclear whether a person has already received a valid Baptism, it is possible to perform a Conditional Baptism.
10. This Baptism Policy is not in any way intended to replace or supersede the requirements incumbent upon the parish and clergy under the Canon Law of the Church of England; rather, this Policy is intended to clarify how the Canon Law of the Church of England is interpreted and applied in this parish.

Follow up.