

Making a decision on behalf of your child

Some people worry that they are imposing views on their child; but from the moment your baby is born you make decisions and choices which will influence them for the rest of their lives. You teach them to tell right from wrong and to be honest and truthful, in the hope that they will choose to be all these things when they are old enough to make up their own minds.

So it is right to give them spiritual nourishment and teach them about the love of God from an early age. You want them to be open to God and the wonder of his creation and to encourage them to care for others as well as themselves. When they are old enough they can then make their own decision based on experience and knowledge and may choose to be confirmed and make an adult Christian commitment.

Godparents

For every child to be baptised there should be at least three godparents, of whom at least two should be of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. If three Godparents cannot be chosen then one godfather and godmother will suffice. Parents may be godparents for their own children provided that the child will have at least one other godparent.



Please be aware that parents and Godparents should be baptised (and preferably confirmed) and agree to make the promises on behalf of the child being baptised and faithfully fulfil their responsibilities both by their care for the child and by the example of their own godly living.

If you have adults who wish to make the promises on behalf of your child but have not been baptised they can be a Sponsor and will come forward with yourselves and the Godparents.

Godparents and Sponsors are entrusted with a special role in the upbringing of a child; their job is to love and encourage, to pray for and with them, and to help them live and grow in God's way.



What next?

Baptism is a significant new beginning and we hope it will be a memorable and joyful occasion, marking the beginning of a long and happy association with our churches.

You and your children are always welcome at any of our services.

Sunday Services

8.30am, 10am and 6.30pm every Sunday at St Peter's Hale
11am every Sunday at St Elizabeth's Ashley

2nd Sunday of each month:

Toddler Service at 11.30am at St Peter's Hale

We also have a **Baby Group** for pregnant and new mums with babies under 12 months that meets in St Peter's House, 233 Ashley Road, Hale WA15 9SS 10.15am till 12noon every Monday (except Bank Holidays).

We also have a Toddler Group, run by parents for parents, that meets at St Peter's Assembly Rooms, 136 Cecil Road, Hale WA15 9NU Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays during school term time 10.15am till 12noon.

Regular additional **family events and activities** are run throughout the year—please see church notice boards or www.stpetershale.org.uk for more details.

Vicar: Revd Keith Addenbrooke **0161 928 4182**
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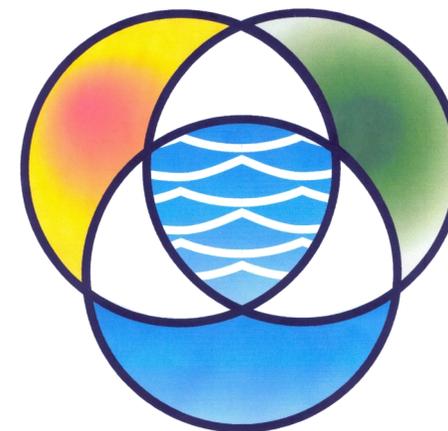
Parish Office: **0161 928 3374**
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www.stpetershale.org.uk
www.stelizabethsashley.org.uk
www.churchofengland.org



Holy Baptism

The Parish Church of
St Peter's Hale



The Parish Church of
St Elizabeth's, Ashley

Baptism in the Church of England



What is baptism?

Baptism marks the start of a journey of faith, which involves turning away from self-centredness, turning to Christ and becoming a member of the Christian family.

Baptism is a sacrament, a visible sign of God's love. In baptism we are thanking God for his gift of life and acknowledging that we need to turn away from all that is destructive and evil and to make a new start with God.

In baptism you as parents are deciding to start your child on this journey and asking for the Church's support.

When did baptism start?

Baptism has always been the way Christians have shown that they want to follow Jesus and belong to the Church.

At the start of his public ministry Jesus was baptised in the river Jordan and felt the special presence and power of the Holy Spirit come upon him. After the resurrection Jesus told his followers to baptise others as a sign of turning away from their old life and beginning a new life as Christ's disciples.

What happens in the baptism service?

When you arrive at church there will be someone there to welcome you and show you where to sit. During the service the priest will explain what to do and when to move to gather round the font.

The service will include:

- Readings from the Bible and prayers
- Declaring what we believe and making promises about that we will do
- Making the sign of the cross on your child's forehead
- Pouring water gently over your child's forehead
- Receiving a lit baptism candle
- Welcoming your child into the Church

As part of the service you are asked to declare on behalf of your child your own Christian faith and to promise that you will bring up your child to follow Jesus.

Parents and Godparents undertake to nurture the faith of those being baptised by your own example, by prayer, by teaching and by joining in regular public worship in Church.



The symbols of baptism



The sign of the cross

The priest will make the sign of the cross on your child's forehead, parents and godparents may be invited to do this also. The cross is a very important Christian symbol. It reminds us that, out of love for us, Jesus died on the cross to free us from the effect of sin. It is like wearing an invisible badge which your child will always carry, and remind us that each baptised person belongs to Jesus.



Water

The priest blesses the water in the font and pours water on your child's head saying 'I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. Water is a sign of birth and new life. Through baptism we are making a new start with Jesus. Water symbolises washing and being made clean. God promises that in Jesus our sins are washed away and we can make a new beginning with him.



The Candle

Jesus is called the light of the world because he represents all that is good. Early in the service, a large candle will be lit. This reminds us that Jesus is alive and with us today and your child's baptism is connected with the whole life of the Church. A lighted candle will also be given for your child to keep. This reminds us that we are sent out to be Christians in the world and to draw others to Jesus through our example.

More information about baptism services, symbols and actions used during the service, choosing Godparents and frequently asked questions can be found at the Church of England website www.churchofengland.org