

# THE BENEFICE OF BRIZE NORTON WITH CARTERTON AND BLACK BOURTON



BAPTISM GUIDE AND HELPFUL INFORMATION

## FROM THE TEAM RECTOR

I am of course very happy that you intend to have your child baptised within one of our churches in the Benefice of Brize Norton with Carterton and Black Bourton. This guide is to help you with planning for the baptism. Some people use the word “christening”. Baptism and christening essentially mean the same thing and the word is used interchangeably. Just as people are married at a wedding service, a person is baptised at a christening service. Mrs Rossie Sewell is the designated Baptism Co-ordinator for the benefice. She uses her experience, wisdom and gifts to do all the organising and arrange baptisms on my behalf. I always love to baptise people of any age, and this includes an increasing number of adults!

We look forward to hearing from you.

Revd Barry Hanson

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE BAPTISM CO-ORDINATOR FOR THE BENEFICE

Mrs Rossie Sewell  
01993 843418  
*rossie.sewell@gmail.com*

Please respond promptly to any requests from Rossie, as the baptism diary is very busy and other families may be seeking your preferred date.

Rossie will visit you at your home a few weeks before the baptism. She will gather information such as some personal details and the names of the intended godparents. She will guide you through the whole process, both practically and spiritually.

## THE BENEFICE

There are three parishes and churches in the benefice:

St Britius, Brize Norton  
St John the Evangelist, Carterton  
St Mary the Virgin, Black Bourton

Even though the churches are in a group, they operate semi-independently of each other. This means that the baptism generally can only happen in the parish in which you live, unless there are “qualifying connections”. If you are unsure which is your local parish church, visit [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com). Enter in your address and it will show you which is your church. Rossie will help you to decide on which church the baptism will take place.

## MAKING AN ENQUIRY AND BOOKING

If you wish your child to be baptised, then do liaise with Rossie, rather than the Rector please.

## CAN ANYBODY BE BAPTISED?

Yes. A person can only be baptised once, so if the person has been baptised in the name of the Trinity (The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) it cannot happen again, as it is a one-off life moment. This is also the case if the person was baptised in another mainstream church that was not the Church of England. A baptism is a significant moment in a person's life and the vows taken by parents and godparents on behalf of the child must not be taken lightly.

## OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULT BAPTISMS

Rev Barry baptises a lot of babies, but also an increasing number of children, aged around 10 years old, and also adults, which is also very exciting for all. If the person is old enough, they make the baptism vows for themselves. If they make the vows for themselves, they do not have godparents, but the name of the supporters changes to "sponsors" who support the person in their faith journey.

If the candidate for baptism is older, they will need to understand the baptism promises that they will make and, as such, may have a preparation session with the Rector or Rossie, so that they are sure that the person recognises the significance of the event and the journey they wish to undertake towards a greater relationship with God.

Soon after the baptism, the older person can put themselves forward for confirmation and then be able to receive Holy Communion.

## ABOUT THE GODPARENTS AND HOW MANY

It is usual to have at least three godparents and generally a maximum of five. They cannot be all the same gender. The godparents must be baptised themselves. It is also usual for the godparents to be confirmed, but this is at the Rector's discretion. A parent of the child can be a godparent too. If folks want to help in the raising of the child and are not baptised, they can be referred to as "supportive friends". For older people who wish to be baptised, the supporters are known as "sponsors".

## WHEN ARE THE BAPTISMS?

Rev Barry, the Rector, usually performs baptisms on Sunday afternoons, at 2.00 pm. Due to the large number of baptisms, it is not generally practical to hold them during the Sunday morning services; they are then conducted as "private family services". Each family has their own individual baptism service and which is not combined with other families. This adds to the special moment for the friends and families, and they have a great and relaxed time. The service lasts for approximately 30 minutes. If

there is a request for the baptism to happen in the usual Sunday service, then of course this can be accommodated. On occasion, Rev Barry may delegate the baptism to another priest within the ministry team or the deanery and you will be informed of this well in advance, should this be the need.

## DO THE PARENTS NEED TO BE BAPTISED?

Whilst it is preferable that the parents are baptised, it is not essential. It is not uncommon for one parent (if the other has been baptised) to be baptised in the service, just before the child, and that adds to the excitement. If a parent is not baptised, then as part of the process they reflect for themselves why they would not want to be baptised themselves.

## WHICH CHURCH CAN I BE BAPTISED IN?

The baptism generally occurs in the church where the family lives. It can also happen in the church where the family “habitually attends” worship services or if there is a link to another church in the benefice. Do ask.

## BAPTISM COSTS

All baptisms are free! We do give out “presents” for each person baptised, and these include a Bible, a candle, a wooden holding cross and certificates. The church has to fund the cost of these items and also the service itself. We really do appreciate any donation that those attending may give for the life and work of the church in the parish, as without any donations from anybody, the church would not be in the community, as it receives no government funding – many are surprised to learn this. Most folks donate in the region of £60-£100. It is great if you are having a gathering or party afterwards. Be mindful that the cost of the party might be quite a large amount of money, and for the local church to miss out on any donation might be a “bit of a disconnect” in the celebration.

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SERVICE

The person will be baptised according to the Rites of the Church of England and there are things that must be included in the liturgy. Rev Barry usually conducts the baptisms and really loves doing them!

A brief summary of the service follows. Do note the key words in **bold** that the parents and godparents will have to say as part of their baptism promises to the child.

*Welcome, introduction and greeting*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all:  
**and also with you.**

*Opening Prayers*

*The parents and the godparents/sponsors make declarations*

Parents and godparents,  
the Church receives this child/children with joy.  
Will you pray for him/her/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.**

Do you receive this child/ these children as a gift from God?  
**We do.**

Do you want to give thanks to God and seek God's blessing? **We do.**

(Godparents names), will you do all that you can to help and support  
(parents names) in the bringing up of this child?  
**With the help of God we will.**

*Bible reading*

*Reflection from Rev Barry about the importance of baptism.*

Parents and godparents:  
Will you support this child as he/she begins his/her journey of faith?  
**We will.**

Will you help him/her to live and grow within God's family?  
**We will.**

God knows each of us by name and we are his.  
Parents and godparents, you speak for this child today.  
Will you pray for him/her and help him/her to follow Christ?  
**We will.**

We all wander far from God and lose our way; Jesus comes to find us and welcomes  
us home. In baptism we respond to his call.

Therefore I ask:  
Do you turn to Christ?  
**I turn to Christ.**

Do you repent of your sins?  
**I repent of my sins.**

Do you renounce evil?  
**I renounce evil.**

*The priest makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the candidate using chrism oil, saying:*

Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross.

*The parents and godparents are invited to make the sign of the cross on the child*

Do not be ashamed of Jesus Christ.  
You are his forever.

*All say:*

**Stand bravely with him against the powers of evil,  
and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.**

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness,  
and lead you in the light and obedience of Jesus. **Amen.**

*We all gather around the baptismal font*

Praise God who made heaven and earth.  
**Who keeps his promise for ever.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

*The water in the font is blessed.*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?  
**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?  
**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known to the world?  
**I believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.  
**This is our faith.**  
**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

## *The Baptism*

### *Prayers including The Lord's Prayer*

**All say together:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

### *Invitation*

### *Blessing*

## BIBLE READINGS DURING THE SERVICE

The following two readings are generally within a service. Sometimes folks, such as a godparent, like to read them out to the congregation. The family may want to include other Bible readings too.

### The Acts of the Apostles 2:38-39

<sup>38</sup> Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

### The Gospel according to St Mark 10:13-16

<sup>13</sup> People were bringing children to him in order that he might touch them, and the disciples spoke sternly to them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." <sup>16</sup> And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

## CAN WE HAVE OTHER THINGS IN THE SERVICE?

Sure! Some folks like to sing songs or have hymns. Usually, the music is brought along on a CD as there would be cost to hire a church organist if one is wanted. Some folks, like to read poems and other things, and they can be discussed in advance of the service with Rossie, and need to be approved by her. Children at the service may like to help pour water into the font, give out Orders of Service and carry out other small tasks. Any included items must not be contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England.

## DECLARE ALL THINGS

The person will be baptised in good faith (in honesty with sincerity without any hidden motives). During the preparations and meeting with Rossie, you must disclose all relevant information, which adds to the loving transparency of the whole commitment. Rossie reserves the right to consult with The Rector, who in turn may request further information and seek guidance from Archdeacons and Bishops in the Diocese of Oxford.

## A PRAYER

Father God, our creator, redeemer and sustainer,  
We thank you for the gift of the life of our child (use their name) who is to be baptised.  
May your blessing of peace and joy be with both us and our child and protect us all of our days.  
Help this family to grow in all that is good and right.  
May our child grow in faith and trust in you.  
Bless the godparents as they commit to support our child throughout their journey through life.  
Help us all each day to become more like your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

A very useful website to read that accompanies this booklet is:  
*<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/christenings>*