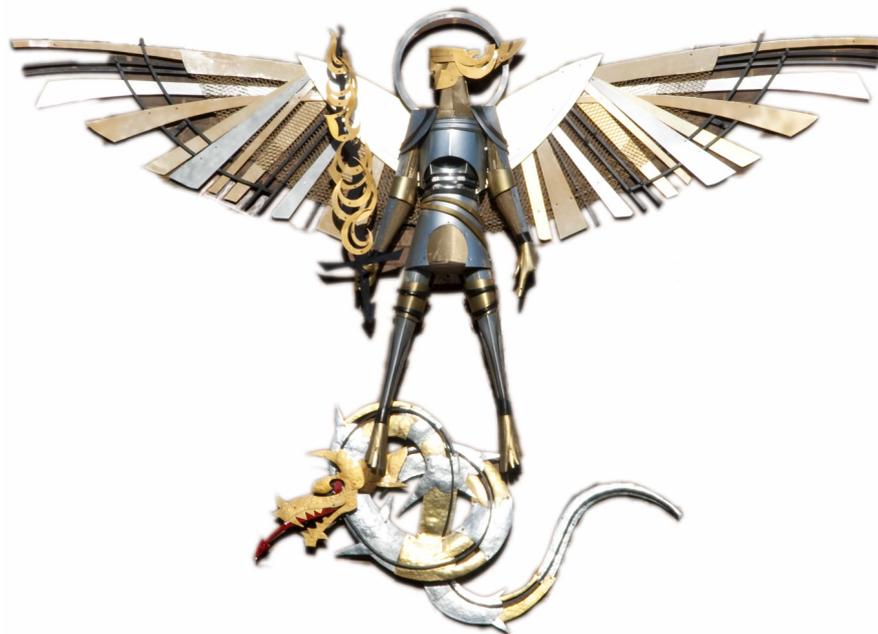


St Michael & All Angels London Fields

**A GUIDE TO BAPTISM
(CHRISTENING) AT ST MICHAEL'S**



Open to God, open to all

Parish website: www.stmichaelslondonfields.org.uk

Parish landline: 020 7249 2627

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*This Guide is for anyone who wants to know more about baptism,
either for yourself or your child.*

A GUIDE TO BAPTISM (CHRISTENING) AT ST MICHAEL'S

About St Michael & All Angels Church

St Michael & All Angels London Fields is the Church of England (Anglican) parish church for London Fields, serving an area of Hackney stretching from Wilton Way in the North to the Regent's Canal in the South, and Mare Street in the East to a zig-zag line in the West running along St Philip's Road, Malvern Road, Middleton Road and Queensbridge Road.

St Michael's is home to a community of Christians who seek to be ***open to God, open to all***.

One important way we do this is by *welcoming* people of all ages and backgrounds to God's family through *baptism*.

What is baptism?

Baptism, or christening, is the way people become members of God's family, the church: the worldwide Christian community. Baptism is a point of entry to the Christian faith – which is why the font is at the church entrance.

The word *baptism* comes from the Greek word for *washing*. When we are baptised, we are washed with water '*in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*'. In other words, it is *God* (not the minister) who washes us and gives us a new start.

God wants everyone to have loving relationships with Him and one another. Growing into those relationships is a lifelong journey for all Christians. Baptism is a public statement by God, the candidate, their supporters and the church that the candidate has joined the rest of the worldwide Christian community on that journey.

What's the difference between baptism and christening?

None. They are two words for the same thing.

Is there a right or wrong age to be baptised?

No. You or your child can be baptised at any age.

What do you need to do for you or your child to qualify to be baptised at St Michael's?

The basic rule in the Church of England is that if you want to be baptised yourself or to have your child baptised, the right place to do it is in your local parish

church. This means that if you don't live in the parish, we won't normally baptise you or your child at St Michael's unless you, or one of you, have been coming to services here regularly over a period of time. Otherwise you should approach the local parish church where you live. If you don't know which church that is, you can find out by entering your postcode on <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/> (we can help if you don't have access to the web).

If you do live in St Michael's parish, or you are a regular worshipping member of the congregation here, we will be delighted to baptise you or your child. All we ask is that you -

- Take part in baptism preparation
- Meet the requirements about godparents and sponsors which are explained later on
- In order for you to feel at home in the congregation, come to the main Sunday service for at least four Sundays before the baptism.

What preparation will there be?

To prepare for a baptism of a baby or young child, the Vicar or a colleague will need to meet you to discuss what will happen in the service and what it means. It is usually helpful to meet in your home first of all, followed shortly before the baptism service by a rehearsal in the church. The initial meeting usually takes no more than an hour, and the rehearsal half an hour.

For adults, and some older children, who are candidates for baptism, it is also helpful to explore whether it would be right for them to be confirmed as well as baptised.

What are the rules about godparents and sponsors?

Children who are baptised in the Church of England traditionally have at least 3 godparents, at least 2 of whom should be the same sex as the child. However, the rules do say that '*when three cannot conveniently be had*', one godfather and one godmother will do. Godparents are usually family members or friends, but parents can be godparents too. Godparents have an important role in helping the baptised to grow into the loving relationships with God and neighbour which God created them for. They promise to do this by prayer, example and teaching. Because of this, the rules require them to be baptised themselves, and preferably confirmed as well.

Adult baptism candidates have sponsors rather than godparents. Each candidate should have at least 2 sponsors. Their role in the service is to present the candidate for baptism.

When do baptism services take place?

All baptisms at St Michael's happen during our main Sunday service, which starts at 10 o'clock. There are 3 reasons for this:

- For anyone, child or adult, becoming part of God's family is a public event.
- So that the rest of the congregation can welcome those who are baptised, pray for them and support them.
- To remind the rest of the congregation about the promises God made to us, and we made to God, at our own baptisms.

How can babies make commitments and promises?

You will be asked to declare that you will bring your child up as a Christian. You will be asked to say, on their behalf, that you have decided to turn away from everything which is sinful, and to turn instead to Jesus Christ.

What if we feel we should wait until our child is ready to decide for him/herself?

Some do wait. However, baptism is not a matter of imposing our own view, but of ensuring children have a good environment for making their own decisions later. From birth, we make choices for our children - we give them food and clothing and a good home. In the same way, we want to provide a healthy emotional and spiritual environment. Baptism is one sign of our desire to do this. For people who want a Christian ceremony to celebrate their child's birth or adoption but don't feel baptism is the right step at this point in their life, the church offers a service of thanksgiving. The Vicar would be happy to discuss this with you.

Personal Data

If you decide to go ahead, we will need some personal information about you/your child, including for the records we are required to keep permanently in our Baptism and Confirmation Registers. When you give us this, we will give you our Data Privacy Notice, which explains your rights about any personal data you give us, and how we will use it. You can also find it online at <http://www.stmichaelslondonfields.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Data-Privacy-Notice-St-Michael%E2%80%99s.pdf>.

We hope this leaflet has been helpful.

If you would like to discuss baptism for yourself or your child or you have any other questions, please either speak to the Vicar after our Sunday service, phone him on 020 7249 2627 or e-mail him on vicar@stmichaelslondonfields.org.uk.