

First of all, we, the congregation of Farnham United Reformed Church, want to congratulate you on the birth of your baby. We share your joy and happiness on this wonderful event.

We warmly welcome the opportunity to share with you the celebration of your baby's birth and naming.

In common with all United Reformed Churches, there are two ways in which we can do this. Either by a *Service of Thanksgiving, Dedication, Naming and Blessing* or by a *Service of Baptism*.

Information about both of these services, about what commitments are asked, and about the implications and responsibilities in both instances, are explained inside this leaflet.

Both of these services normally take place during our morning service, which is at 10.30 am on Sundays, in order that the whole Church may take part.

Whichever service you choose will depend on the promises and commitment that you wish to make, not only for yourself, but on behalf of your child. The minister will be happy to explain further details, if you need them.

## Taking it further...

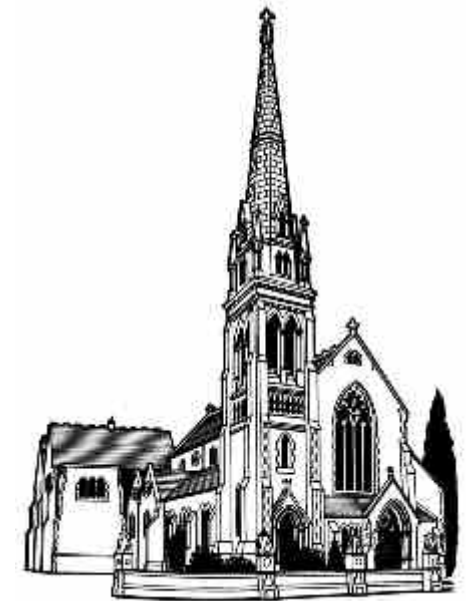
When you have decided what you would like to do, or that you would like further advice, please contact the Minister.

Both types of service have been outlined in some detail in order that you may consider the promises you will be making to God, for yourself and on behalf of your child.

If you would like either of these services for you and your child, please contact the Minister, who will arrange to meet you and discuss things more fully.

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Celebrating  
the birth  
and naming  
of your baby



## Service of Thanksgiving, Dedication, Naming and Blessing

In this service we give thanks to God for your baby's safe arrival, blessing her/him, as Jesus blessed the children that were brought to him. In response, you promise to try live your life such that you child will be surrounded by love and care. We as a Church promise to try help you in this task.

### **The promises are:**

The parent(s) promises

*Do you promise, by God's grace, so to live that your child will be surrounded by Christian love and goodness? I/We do*

The Minister then says

*May God give you the grace faithfully to carry out the promises you have made today: may God grant you joy and patience, love and peace.*

The congregation say

*We as a congregation, and on behalf of the whole church of Jesus Christ, undertake to provide for the instruction of this child in the Gospel of God's love, the example of Christian faith and character, and we offer to you the strong support of this family of God in prayer and friendship.*

The Minister then lays a hand on the child's head and says:

*N.....the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you now and always.*

This service allows your child to make up their own mind about Baptism at a later point in their life, and make a commitment to Christ when they wish to. There are no God-parents, and no water, in this service.

## Service of Baptism

In this service your child is welcomed as a full member of the Church (subject to confirmation by themselves at a later date). You have to make certain promises, including bringing her/him up within the fellowship of the Church, in turn we as a Church make promises to help you in this task.

### **The promises are:**

The Minister says

*N.....you have come for the baptism of your child in response to the call of Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Let us hear, then, in the presence of God, and before you as witnesses, that you confess your faith in Christ and promise to follow him. As a congregation we will also make our promises.*

The parent(s) promises

*Do you believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, maker of heaven and earth, giver of life, redeemer of the world? I/We do.*

*Do you promise to teach N the love of God and bring her/him up in the life and worship of the Church? I/We do.*

The sponsors or God parents (if any) promise:

*Do you promise to pray for N, and her/his home and family, and to support them as you are able as a minister of Christ's love? I/We do.*

The congregation promise:

*As a community of faith, representing the whole Church, do you welcome N and promise to try to share with her/him what you yourselves have received, the gift of God's love revealed in Christ? I/We do.*

The Minister places water on the child's head and says:

*N..... I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit.*

Baptism means that your baby is a baptised member of the Christian Church, who at some point may wish to re-affirm and confirm these promises made on her/ his behalf in this service. If at that stage in their life they wished to show this commitment to Christ, by being baptised as an adult, this would not be possible within the United Reformed Church, or most mainstream Churches, because Baptism can be administered only once.

### **Things common to both services**

- If only one parent is present, or only one parent feels able to make promises, this is fine.
- Certificates are presented in both services.

### **Things to consider**

The choice between a Baptism or a Blessing is not about 'getting into heaven', but about the level of commitment you wish to make on your child's behalf.

You are not being asked to choose between two tiers of service, both are equally valid alternatives.

The minister will be happy to help you further in your choice if you would like.