

**United Benefice of St Matthew's, Haslington
And St Michael & All Angels, Crewe Green**

Baptism Policy

This policy follows the Canons of the Church of England and was agreed by:

St Matthew's PCC on 21st May 2015

St Michael & All Angels PCC on 11th May 2015

(Further details about the Church of England Canons can be found here:
<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/canons.aspx>)

Child Baptism

- 1) Any parent residing in either parish can request Baptism or "christening" for their child at either St Matthew's or St Michael & All Angels.
- 2) Baptisms take place during the Sunday morning service (Canon B21) currently held at 9.30am at St Matthew's or 11am at St Michael and All Angels. This happens on the first Sunday in the month, with a maximum of two families. Baptism at other times is only possible if candidates are part of a regularly worshipping family in the Church, in line with criteria b) or c) below. Baptism in a separate service is not possible for candidates who are not part of a regularly worshipping family at church.
- 3) If parents live outside the parish, the Baptism can go ahead if they fulfil one of the following criteria:
 - a. They were married at either St Matthew's or St Michael & All Angels;
 - b. They have worshipped regularly at either St Matthew's or St Michael & All Angels for at least six months before the Baptism;
 - c. Their own parents (i.e. the grandparents of the child to be baptised) are regular worshippers at either St Matthew's or St Michael & All Angels
- 4) If the family lives outside the parish, but has some other connection with the parish they may be eligible, but this must be referred to the Vicar for a decision.
- 5) A family asking for Baptism living outside the parish and qualifying under the criteria set down above must inform the Vicar of their own parish, and should only proceed with her or his goodwill (Canon B22.5).

- 6) In the first instance, a family enquiring about Baptism will be asked to attend a Sunday service and speak to the service leader who will give them a Baptism Pack. Once they have completed and returned the Baptism application form to the Vicar, she/he or a lay representative will visit the family's home; explain the service and the on-going commitment Baptism entails. A date for the service can then be agreed. Baptism cannot take place without this preparation.

Adult Baptism

- 7) The Bishop of Chester wishes that all candidates for adult Baptism should be prepared for Confirmation at the same time. Ideally, Baptism and Confirmation should take place at the same Confirmation service.
- 8) Adult candidates should have a "sponsor" who replies as a parent or godparent in the Baptism service. The term "sponsor" describes a supporting person for an adult candidate for Baptism and Confirmation and should not be used in conjunction with a child candidate.

Godparents & Sponsors

- 9) Godparents must themselves be baptised. (Canon B.23)
- 10) There is no legal minimum age limit for Godparents but they must be able to understand what "faithfully fulfilling" their responsibilities entail. This will obviously differ with individuals but only in exceptional circumstances would a person aged under-16 be deemed eligible. The Vicar holds final discretion.
- 11) The name of a Godparent can still be entered in the Baptism Register if for good reason they cannot attend the service. A Godparent can, if desired, be represented by a "proxy" at the service if they are unable to attend.