

## Thanking God for Your Baby

The gift of a child is wonderful and is a cause for great celebration. Many families want to do this by having a church service, so that they may give thanks to God, as well as celebrate the event afterwards with family and friends. The Church of England offers you two ways in which you can do this. It is important that you consider both services carefully so that you understand the meaning of each of them, and choose the service which best reflects what it is that you want to express before God, the Church and your own family and friends.

Both services:

- are ways of giving thanks for your child
- involve making promises to God with the support of close friends
- take place in church
- offer the opportunity for a family celebration



The main difference is in the extent and depth of Christian commitment that each form of service expresses. Think carefully about the two options, to help you decide which one is more appropriate for you and your child.

### Option 1

As a family, you:

- want what Jesus did when people brought their children to him – he took the children in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them
- with your wider family and friends want to share a celebratory service of thanksgiving to say
  - Thank you God for the gift of this child
  - Please bless our child as he/she grows up
  - Please help us to be good parents
- prefer not to commit to becoming regular attenders at church services
- prefer not to undertake a course of preparation for your child's full church membership at present, but know you can do this at any time in the future, should you wish



### Option 2

In a service which welcomes your child as a regular member of the church family of the churches of the Parish of Bledlow with Saunderton & Horsenden you want to say publicly before God and the congregation:

- we are committed followers of Jesus ourselves
- we will bring our child up as a Christian
- we will bring our child to church with us regularly
- we will teach our child about Jesus
- we will pray for and with our child
- we will encourage our child to be confirmed when he/she is old enough to make these promises for him/herself

In addition:

- as parents, you want to undergo a preparation course to help you to consider ways of bringing your child up in the Christian faith

## Which Option?

If you think more of the points on Option 1 reflect what you want the service to say, then the service which is probably right for you is:

### ***The Naming Ceremony***

*(Thanksgiving Service for the Gift of your Child)*

If you think more of the points on Option 2 reflect what you want the service to say, then the service which is probably right for you is:

### ***The Baptism Service***

When you feel you have come to a decision, then you are ready to proceed either:

- with Option 1 to finalise the date and arrangements for the Thanksgiving Service or
- with Option 2 to arrange convenient dates for your Preparation for Baptism course.

