



Parish of West Moors

St Mary the Virgin



**Saying thank you to God for your child
Services of Thanksgiving and Baptism**

www.stmaryswestmoors.org.uk

Dear Parent - Welcome!

Thank you for contacting your local parish church to arrange the Christening of your child.

It is only natural to want to say thank you and praise God for the wonderful gift of new life in your child. For many the realisation of the care and responsibility you now have as a parent, either for the first time, or once again, is a very spiritual experience.

Life is a precious gift. Christians believe that our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reaches out in unconditional love to journey with each of us in our daily lives, as we turn to Him, and put our trust in Him. In the person of Jesus Christ, we celebrate God becoming truly man and yet remaining truly God. Jesus lived amongst us and took on human nature. We celebrate His life, the way He taught us to live and respond to the God that we may call our Father.

The love of God was shown in life and in death, in Jesus' act of personal sacrifice – as He died at the hands of men who just could not comprehend what Jesus meant when He proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven.

I would like you to have the opportunity to understand the alternative acts of worship and devotion available through the Parish Church today - I hope this leaflet helps.

I normally visit the family at home for an hour to discuss the service and its meaning.

Yours in Christ

Andrew Rowland - Vicar (Tel. 01202 - 893197)



We offer two acts of worship: -

Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child (Blessing)

This is for a private or public celebration of a birth, or adoption of a child, either with just close family and friends present, or in public at our monthly 10.00 a.m. 'Our Family Service' on the fourth Sunday of each month.

This service is very suitable for those who do not attend church regularly. It is a preliminary service before starting to come to church more often and becoming more involved in the Christian community. It allows time for you as parents to become familiar with the Christian faith, get to know us and to worship God here.

Holy Baptism (Christening)

Holy Baptism is one of the two biblical sacraments (the other is Holy Communion) as celebrated by the Church of England. In former times when most families attended church regularly they brought their infants for Christening and later as young adults for Confirmation. Children were nurtured in the Christian faith by their parents and their wider family. Nowadays family life is more pressured. Families are dispersed. Sunday is no longer kept as an Holy Day and parents may work, or have other interests and there is much competition for your time.

In Holy Baptism the parents act for the child. You make solemn promises before God to be faithful and encourage your child to grow in faith, through your personal example of public worship and private prayer. This is difficult for you and the church if you are not able, or willing, to make some commitment to the church. We welcome and encourage all who want to grow in faith and follow in the Way of Jesus Christ.

Your decision Whatever your preference, you do have the right to insist on Holy Baptism in the Parish Church of England wherever you are normally resident.

My primary wish is that you feel welcome in our church (your church) and experience Christian love, and the hope and joy of living as a follower of Christ.

My role is to help you to grow in faith and I'm pleased to offer both public and private instruction in the faith. It is a sad fact that our contemporary society seems to have no sustained interest in church, although over 70% of us say we believe in God. Being part of a church is being part of an active and lively community and it is life enhancing - certainly not dull!

Christians do not believe in any old God, nor do we seek to conform to some of the life reducing ways of this world. We try our best to live as Christians, following Jesus' teachings and sharing our faith both by our teaching and the way we live.

Jesus taught us by using simple stories, parables - they tell us that we have a choice to make in life; are we wheat or are we chaff? Are we prepared to die to our self, to rise to new spiritual life with God? Are we seeds that fall in good soil and grow (in faith), or are we seeds that fall in poor or rocky soil? - we grow in faith for a while, but the cares of the world distract and then overcome us, and then choke the spiritual life out of us!

A famous parable of Jesus is the story of the Prodigal Son - an errant and sinful son hits rock bottom and finally in desperation returns to his father in sorrow for his wrong doing and mistakes. The father does not scold the son - no - he runs out to greet him and declares let's celebrate! My son was dead, lost - now he is found and alive to me again. Jesus' message is, God the Father awaits and rejoices, whenever we are ready to turn to him and be his children.

A fresh start in life is always possible with God! What do you want for your life and your child? You are welcome! Come and experience life in all its fullness with us.

