Baptism

Freedom for a New Life

God made the world out of love, because he is love. He made us so that we may share that love, and enjoy his beauty, truth and goodness.

We all experience some of those joys, but alongside suffering, and evil, and death.

And yet we have hope, because of one person, Jesus Christ. He is the love and goodness for which we were made.

He is God the Son, who was born into our world, lived a life full of grace and truth, took on all that is against us, and overcome it by his death and resurrection.

In our baptism we are saying 'no' to evil, trusting Jesus, and receiving for ourselves the freedom he has won.

What does the water of baptism mean? Washing and forgiveness. Dying and rising with Christ. Being born from God that we may share his life. Made a member of Christ's body, the Church.

If you were baptised as an infant, have you been growing into this life?

If you have not been baptised, here is a gift, ready, waiting to be received.

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life'. John 11.25

Confirmation

Courage for a Bold Venture

By baptism we become members of the Church, but that does not mean we withdraw from the world into a holy club.

Jesus himself was baptised, in order to identify with the pain and suffering of humanity. Our baptism immerses us more fully into God's life, so it also makes us more fully present to our neighbour's need.

Every Christian has a calling, just as Christ came 'not to be served, but to serve'. At our confirmation the bishop says, 'God has called you by name and made you his own.'

In the Bible we read that the first church leaders, the apostles, would sometimes 'lay hands' on new Christians, and on those being sent to new tasks.

This is continued in the Church by the practice of confirmation, when the bishop lays hands on the head of each candidate, saying, 'Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.'

The Spirit of Christ rests on us to equip us with courage, wisdom, and understanding. Our daily lives become a venture of love. We are commissioned for service, sent out as ambassadors to represent Christ's way of peace.

Jesus said, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life'. John 14.6

Communion

Food for a Long Journey

Life is a pilgrimage, and often uphill. Jesus calls people to follow him in the way of the cross, with trials to face. He has therefore provided for our strengthening.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This is my blood'.

So we 'do this', often, in the service of Holy Communion. It is a 'service', for we gather to serve God – humbly, thankfully, and attentively. Then we find ourselves invited as guests to the table, where Christ is the host, serving us with his risen life.

It is 'Communion', for here we are united with God, and with each other, and joined with the whole company of heaven.

It is 'Holy', the most profound form of worship, and yet so simple in essence. We may do this within cathedral grandeur, in a humble chapel, or at the bedside of the dying.

We may grow weary, and we may stumble, but here is refreshment on the way, and an anticipation of the journey's end.

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life'. John 6.35

The Apostles' Creed

A concise summary of the Christian faith used at baptism and confirmation services.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come
to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

The prayer Jesus taught us to say.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Next Steps

Anyone may be baptised, at any age, and at fairly short notice.

Adults, and children (Y6+), may be confirmed; we have one service per year.

If you were baptised as an infant then the promise to turn away from sin, and to trust and follow Jesus, was made by your parents and godparents. Your confirmation allows you to express this faith as your own.

If you wish to be baptised and confirmed, this may happen at the same service, or separately.

Traditionally, communion is first received at confirmation, but if you are baptised, and planning to be confirmed, you may begin to receive communion.

If you have been baptised and received into communion in a church other than the Church of England, you may receive communion at St Mary's. If you have not been confirmed, you still may be.

Whichever step you may wish to take, or if you just want to find out more, please get in touch.

We are here to listen, to try to answer questions, and when you are ready, to help you to prepare for any of these steps.

God bless.

Revd Mark Hart
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ST MARYS
NANTWICH

An Invitation to…



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