



Hello all.

I just thought I would let you all know that I am really excited!!!! Because in a few days I am going to have the pleasure and privilege of baptising my 8-month-old Granddaughter Lillian Michelle Bryer! I am so looking forward to it: I have this grin across my face which just won't go away.

But I do enjoy Christenings and it is great that we do so many across the benefice. To clear up some confusion in the Christian tradition christenings and baptisms are the same thing. The root of the word baptism is from the Greek term used for ritual washing, a ritual of many faiths, where a ceremonial washing takes place regularly to purify the person before certain acts of worship or tasks and these

rituals are often something which are repeated over and over again.

In the Christian tradition, we are baptised once and become a Christian: we are Christened (or made one of Christ's own) and we believe there is no need to be re-baptised when we are one with Jesus because He is the one who makes us pure before God. Jesus said to his followers "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and this is why we do it: to fulfil this commission of Jesus.

Some Christian traditions don't go in for infant baptism, saying that you should be old enough to make your own decision to be a follower of a faith and I do understand that but, there is something in infant baptism which shows the generosity and grace of God: that no matter what we do, what we understand or don't, what we believe or don't God loves us just the same and wants the best for us: want us to be free and in relationship with Him. And of course, this is why Godparents also need to be christened, because they are not just making promises for themselves, to care and pray for the child, they are also answering questions on behalf of the child and therefore need to be willing to answer those questions for themselves.

I do love performing infant baptisms but there is something extra special about adult baptisms, where the person, for whatever reasons comes forward to be baptised and experiences that love and grace symbolised in the pouring of water. A number have talked of how they actually do feel different; more alive; lighter in their spirit: a burden lifted.

There is so much more to say about christenings: celebration, thanksgiving, forgiveness, new life, belonging, names etc. too much to go into here. If you or your child are not yet christened, it is never too late so please do get in touch if you would like to chat further about organising a service.

Yours in Christ,

Rev Andy Simpson