

BAPTISM POLICY, ST MARY'S, ARDESS

Introduction:

We rejoice in God's gift of all children, born to any parents, and so **GOING FORWARD AT** St Mary's we will offer a Thanksgiving for the gift of a child to any family who requests it. We also conduct infant baptisms at St Mary's, Ardess, which will include appropriate preparation, commitment and planning as outlined below.

Day and location of Baptism Services:

Unless there are very compelling and critical reasons otherwise, chronic weakness, illness or mortal danger, baptisms at Ardess will take place in the Principal Sunday Services, either at 9.30am or 11.00am.

Thanksgiving for the gift of a child will also be conducted on any Sunday which is not already designated for Baptism(s) and is not a special service for any other reason, but it will be entirely at the minister's discretion.

Baptisms will take place quarterly on set dates, with an initial home visit by the minister, followed by two preparation sessions before the baptism takes place. In a busy parish such as Ardess this will likely involve more than one child being baptised on those set dates. No more than 2 baptisms will take place per service on the designated Sunday. The practice of parents requesting specific dates has ended. **(See timetable below).**

Eligibility:

We will baptise older children, young people and adults upon a credible profession of faith in Christ, arranging further guidance for them as necessary and encouraging them to appropriately prepare themselves for their baptism. Where practical, and desired, such baptisms will be carried out by full immersion.

We will also baptise the infant children of any member of our congregation (defined as somebody who has attended at least for a period of 3 months) unless it is believed that they or the proposed godparents require further preparation.

In addition parents and godparents will be required to attend a baptism preparation course which explains the nature of baptism and the responsibilities parents have towards their children in making baptismal promises to the Lord on the child's behalf.

Those who have not been active members of our congregation will initially be offered a Thanksgiving for the gift of their child. If they want a baptism instead, a meeting will be arranged between the minister and the parents to discern the way forward.

The minister will arrange an exploratory meeting/conversation with any couple applying for a baptism of their child, where such parents are unmarried at the time of application.

As a minimum, parents will be expected to attend the church for a period of 3 months, before the baptism takes place, effectively from the date the application closes. This allows the congregation to get to know the parents and children, to welcome them into the community of worship, and to make with a clear conscience the promises that baptism requires of them.

In addition the parents and godparents should attend a baptism preparation course, as outlined below. Attendance at church and preparation will be reviewed, and appropriate support identified, and the church reserves the right to delay a baptism until both attendance and preparation have taken place.

Parents and Godparents (Sponsors):

We will accept as godparents, only those who have been baptised and, where possible, confirmed themselves.

We recognise that the baptism service will place duties on parents, as on godparents, and will therefore ask any godparents to attend at least session 2 of the baptism preparation.

DATES FOR INFANT BAPTISMS (QUARTERLY)
CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS & PREPARATION SESSION DATES

Please note that if a closing date is missed the application will roll to the next quarter.

Applications by hand delivery to Elaine at the church office during office hours,
or by email to Elaine at office@ardess.org.

INFANT BAPTISM: SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2025

(closing date for applications **1st October 2025** and start of church attendance if not already happening)

A home visit to be arranged directly with each family PLUS Preparation sessions held as follows:

THURSDAYS: 30th October & 13th November, 8.00pm until 8.45pm, The Moffatt Room, Ardess Parish Hall

* Godparents should also attend the 2nd session on 13th November

INFANT BAPTISM: SUNDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2026

(closing date for applications **23rd November 2025** and start of church attendance if not already happening)

A home visit to be arranged directly with each family PLUS Preparation sessions held as follows:

THURSDAYS: 29th January & 12th February, 8.00pm until 8.45pm, The Moffatt Room, Ardess Parish Hall

* Godparents should also attend the 2nd session on 12th February

INFANT BAPTISM: SUNDAY 17TH MAY 2026

(closing date for applications **22nd February 2026** and start of church attendance if not already happening)

A home visit to be arranged directly with each family PLUS Preparation sessions held as follows:

THURSDAYS: 30th April & 14th May, 8.00pm until 8.45pm, The Moffatt Room, Ardess Parish Hall

* Godparents should also attend the 2nd session on 14th May

INFANT BAPTISM: SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST 2026

(closing date for applications **24th May 2026** and start of church attendance if not already happening)

A home visit to be arranged directly with each family PLUS Preparation sessions held as follows:

THURSDAYS: 20th August & 27th August, 8.00pm until 8.45pm, The Moffatt Room, Ardess Parish Hall

* Godparents should also attend the 2nd session on 27th August

INFANT BAPTISM: SUNDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2026

(closing date for applications **6th September 2026** and start of church attendance if not already happening)

A home visit to be arranged directly with each family PLUS Preparation sessions held as follows:

THURSDAYS: 29th October & 12th November, 8.00pm until 8.45pm, The Moffatt Room, Ardess Parish Hall

* Godparents should also attend the 2nd session on 12th November