

# The Parish of Swaythling

St Mary's South Stoneham and St Alban the Martyr, Tulip Road.

## Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

### **Introduction**

*The birth or adoption of a child is a cause for celebration. Many people are overcome by a sense of awe at the creation of new life and want to express their thanks to God. This service provides an opportunity for parents and families to give thanks for the birth or adoption of a child and to pray for family life.*

*This service is not the same as Baptism (sometimes called Christening), which is the sacrament of initiation into membership of the Church, the Body of Christ. If you are interested in exploring the Christian faith, or finding out more about preparation for Baptism, ask the minister taking this service.*

*The minister welcomes the people and says:*

*This is the day that the Lord has made.*

**All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

*Psalm 118.24*

We are here today to give thanks for *these children*, with *their* family and friends, and to support *their* parents in their responsibilities with prayer and love. God became one of us in Jesus, and understands all that surrounds the arrival and upbringing of children. It is God's purpose that children should know love within the stability of their home, grow in faith, and come at last to the eternal city where his love reigns supreme.

*The minister says an opening prayer:*

Loving God, you hold all things in life  
and call us into your kingdom of peace;  
help us to walk the path of your truth  
and fill our lives with gratitude and faith,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: AMEN.**

*Minister:* What name have you given this child?

**Parents: His/her name is NN.**

*Minister:* N, in the name of Jesus, we welcome you!

**All: We welcome you!**

## **Reading from the Bible Matthew 18: 1-5**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’<sup>2</sup> He called a child, whom he put among them,<sup>3</sup> and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

## **Thanksgiving and Blessing**

*Minister:* In Christ’s name I ask N’s parents (and Godparents): Remembering the long months when *s/he* grew in secret, seen only by God, and the weeks since *his/her* safe delivery, do you receive *this child* as a gift from God?

**Parents and Godparents : We do.**

*Minister:* Do you wish to give thanks to God and seek his blessing?

**Parents and Godparents : We do.**

*Minister:* Parents (and Godparents), recognising our dependence on God, and the help he can provide, will you do all you are able to ensure that *N* will be enfolded in constant love and care?

**Parents: With the help of God we will.**

*The minister addresses the Godparents:*

Will you do all that you can to help and support *N* and *N* in the bringing up of *N*?

**Godparents: With the help of God, we will.**

*The minister addresses the whole congregation:*

Will you do all that you can to help and support *this family*?

**All: With the help of God, we will.**

*The minister says*

God our creator, we thank you for the wonder of new life and for the mystery of human love.

We thank you for all whose support and skill surround and sustain the beginning of life.

We thank you that we are known to you by name and loved by you from all eternity.

We thank you for Jesus Christ, who has opened to us the way of love.

We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**All: Blessed be God for ever.**

*The minister may take the child. The minister says*

As Jesus took children in his arms and blessed them, so now we ask God's blessing on N. Heavenly Father, we praise you for *his/her* birth; surround *him/her* with your blessing that *he/she* may know your love, be protected from evil, and know your goodness all *his/her* days.

*When all the children have been prayed for*

**All: May they learn to love all that is true,  
grow in wisdom and strength  
and, in due time, come through faith and  
baptism  
to the fullness of your grace;  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
AMEN.**

*The minister prays for the parents*

May God the Father of all bless *these parents* and give *them* grace to love and care for *their children*. May God give *them* wisdom, patience and faith, help *them* to provide for the *children's* needs and, by *their* example, reveal the love and truth that are in Jesus Christ.

**All: AMEN.**

## **Giving of the Gospel and a lighted candle**

*The minister gives a copy of the Gospel to the child and says:* Receive this book. It is the good news of God's love. Take it as your guide.

*The minister gives a lighted candle to the family and says:*  
Jesus said he is the Light of the World.  
Take this candle as a sign of the living light who has blessed  
your child this day.

May your love for each other shine in your hearts  
as this candle shines in the darkness;  
may Jesus, the Prince of Peace,  
who lived in an earthly family,  
fill each one of you with his peace in your family life;  
may the light of your love for each other support you  
during any difficult times ahead;  
and may you know God's joy and peace and presence  
throughout the whole of your lives together;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the Light of the World.

**All: AMEN.**

## **Prayers**

**All: God our creator,**  
**we thank you for the gift of *these children* ,**  
**entrusted to our care.**  
**May we be patient and understanding,**  
**ready to guide and to forgive,**  
**so that through our love**  
***they* may come to know your love;**  
**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**  
**AMEN.**

*Minister:* Father in heaven, bless these parents,  
that they may cherish their *child*;  
make them wise and understanding,  
to help *him/her* as *he/she* grows,  
and surround this family with the light of your truth  
and the warmth of your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: AMEN.**

*Minister:* Father God, from whom every family  
in earth and heaven is named,  
we thank you for the rich variety  
of the families you have created for us,  
and for the relationships  
which we see and enjoy within them.  
Help us to respect and learn from each other,  
that we may come to maturity  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**All: AMEN.**

*Minister:* Jesus taught us to call God Father, and so in faith  
we say together:

**All: Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
AMEN.**

## **Ending**

*The minister says the blessing*

The love of the Lord Jesus  
draw *you* to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus  
strengthen *you* in his service,  
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill *your* hearts;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among *you* and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

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