

The ceremony was held at the Chapel Royal at St James' Palace, which is also where big brother George was christened

Welcome Prince Louis

The royal family came together to celebrate the arrival of Prince Louis into the world at his christening

Words by Rachel Avery

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge welcomed their third child, Prince Louis Arthur Charles on the 23rd April 2018 – and it was no surprise that a christening soon followed.

Louis' older siblings, Prince George, born in 2013 and Princess Charlotte, born in 2015 have both been baptised, so following suit with royal tradition, so was Louis. It was 11 weeks after his birth and the blessing took place on 9th July 2018. The ceremony was held at the

Chapel Royal at St James' Palace, which is also where big brother George was christened. Sister Charlotte, however, got baptised at the Church of St Mary Magdalene in Norfolk.

SPECIAL GUESTS

As it was a private event, the christening was a small, intimate gathering and the guests on the day only included William and Catherine's closest friends and family. The couple had their children, George and Charlotte, by their side to

A proud moment for the Duchess of Cambridge



The family leave the Chapel Royal after the christening

witness this special occasion. And they were also joined by Prince Charles and his wife Camilla and Catherine’s parents, Michael and Carole.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex were, of course, among the attendees too, having tied the knot just a few months prior to the christening, on 19th May. This perhaps wasn’t Meghan’s first visit to the chapel though, as it’s been rumoured that she was baptised there, by the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, back in March ahead of her marriage to Prince Harry.

Catherine’s sister Pippa Middleton and her husband James were also at the chapel to celebrate with the family. Pippa was in the early stages of her pregnancy when she attended the christening of her nephew. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh did not attend the ceremony and it is thought that their absence was agreed with the family some time before, and although not officially confirmed, it is believed to be due to a clash of preorganised royal commitments.

Even though the Queen didn’t make it to the celebration, there were some very important guests in attendance – Louis’ godparents. Prince Louis, who is fifth in line to the throne, has been given six godparents – and it’s actually quite usual that royal babies are given numerous godparents. But, who are they, we hear you ask?

Well, let’s start with the family – Lucy Middleton is Catherine’s cousin and she works as a solicitor, while Lady Laura Meade is also a distant cousin of the Duchess. Then there are close friends of the couple such as Guy Pelly, a nightclub owner

who organised William’s stag do. Harry Aubrey-Fletcher and Nicholas van Cutsem are other godparents who know William very well – William and Harry attended Eton College together and Nicholas is a childhood friend. Catherine has also chosen a school friend to take on the godmother responsibilities – she and Hannah Carter went to Marlborough College together.

REGAL ATTIRE

Prince Louis wore a traditional christening gown made by Angela Kelly, which was the same one worn by his siblings when they too were christened. This silk and lace gown is a replica of the official Royal Christening Robe made in 1841 for Queen Victoria’s eldest daughter, also named Victoria. By 2004, it was found to be too delicate to be worn again, which is why the handmade replacement gown was commissioned.

Of course, Prince Louis stole the show with that incredible gown, but the Duchess of Cambridge also pulled out all of the stops to look immaculate on the day. The duchess demonstrated her fondness for Alexander McQueen once again, choosing to wear one of their designs for the christening (her wedding dress was also crafted by this fashion power house). The off-white, over-the-knee design was extremely chic and featured a clean-cut V-neck and demure puffed shoulders.

The duchess styled up her simple dress with a statement headpiece from milliner Jane Taylor. This was a departure from her usually reserved style and really drew attention to her stunning

BELOW The little prince slept soundly at the Chapel Royal

RIGHT (from left to right) The godparents are the Duchess of Cambridge’s cousin Lucy Middleton, Hannah and Robert Carter and Harry Aubrey-Fletcher (behind)



Did you know...

THE TOP SIX ROYAL CHRISTENING TRADITIONS

1 The christening gown

The original royal christening gown was crafted in 1841 for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert’s first child, Victoria. The amazing design, made from Spitalfields silk and Honiton lace, has been used in the christening of 62 royal babies. In 2004, the decision was made that the gown was too fragile to be worn again, and so the monarchy summoned Angela Kelly, the Queen’s dressmaker to create a replica of the gown to be worn by future royals.

2 Private affair

Royal christenings are almost always a private event, with the closest friends and family in attendance, unlike royal weddings which tend to be opened out to include public invitations as well. Rather unusually, Princess Eugenie’s christening was the only one to be public, at the parish church of St Mary Magdalene in Sandringham.

3 Public photograph

This is usually a time in which a new royal family photograph is released. In the Cambridges’ family photo, taken by photographer Matt Holyoak, we can see George upon his father’s knee beaming at the camera, Catherine holding baby Louis in his christening gown and Charlotte lovingly holding onto Louis’ hand.

4 The lily font

The font was commissioned by Queen Victoria in 1840, to be made by silversmiths Edward Barnard and Sons, ready for her daughter’s christening. It’s been used for all royal christenings since, with the exception of Princess Eugenie of York. When it is not in use, the font is kept at the Tower of London, as it is part of the crown jewels. The baptism of Princess Charlotte in Norfolk was one of the only times that the font had been removed from London, aside from being stored in Windsor for a short while.

5 The baptismal water

Royal babies are usually christened with water brought from the River Jordan where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist. It is thought specially sterilised water was flown in for the christenings of all three of William and Catherine’s children.

6 The godparents

Godparents are an essential element of royal weddings and it’s clear that Catherine and William consider these roles to be very important as Prince George has seven, Charlotte has five and Louis has six. The role of a godparent is to assist the parents in guiding and teaching the child and providing emotional support.





ensemble. Her signature glossy locks were pulled back into a chic bun – suitably formal for the occasion – and the look was finished off with a pair of oversized pearl studs, again something a little more daring than the Duchess’ usual choices.

The Duchess has worn white or cream coloured dresses to all her children’s christenings. It is not royal protocol to wear white or cream on the day that your child gets blessed, so it is thought that Catherine has opted to wear a neutral shade for each of her children’s baptisms in order to look aesthetically pleasing next to that incredible christening gown. In fact, the whole family, Charlotte and George included, coordinated on the day and looked very chic in white and blue outfits.

At the time, all eyes were also on newlywed Meghan Markle, who is now the Duchess of Sussex. She chose to wear a modest dress and hat combination, but it was the colour that made the impact. The Ralph Lauren olive-green dress, wasn’t necessarily attention-grabbing in itself, but the shade was a confident fashion statement. She was clearly showing the world that she was happy to step out of the spotlight to allow the Cambridge family to have their moment.

CEREMONY AND CELEBRATION

As they arrived at the Chapel Royal for the private ceremony, the Duchess of Cambridge cradled the

sleeping Prince Louis in her arms. The christening service was carried out by The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby. He is a senior bishop and the leader of The Church of England. In keeping with tradition, water from the River Jordan was used to christen Prince Louis. The provenance of this precious water has great spiritual significance as it is believed by Christians as written in the New Testament that John the Baptist baptised Jesus in the River Jordan.

Straight after the ceremony ended, the royal family gathered together for a new official portrait and the photographer, Matt Holyoak also took images of the Duchess on her own, holding baby Louis in her arms. Now awake, the prince even flashed a cheeky smile for the camera.

After the official ceremony and photographs were done, tea and fruit cake were served to the guests. In keeping with tradition, it was actually the Duke and Duchess’ own wedding cake. Slices were taken from the seven-year-old, eight-tier wedding cake for everyone to enjoy. The huge wedding cake, originally crafted by baker Fiona Cairns and her team for the wedding, was three feet tall and weighed 220 pounds. Portions of the cake have also been served at the christenings of Prince George and Princess Charlotte, meaning that the Duke and Duchess are likely to have eaten their wedding cake on at least four different occasions! 🍰

TOP LEFT The Duke and Duchess of Sussex leaving the chapel

ABOVE The proud grandfather, the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall

RIGHT Sharing a moment with the Most Reverend Justin Welby

The duchess styled up her simple Alexander McQueen dress with a statement headpiece from milliner Jane Taylor