

BAPTISM

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Answer: Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward change. It signifies our identification with Christ and his saving work done on our behalf on the cross.

If you are a believer in Christ, and have never been baptized, we encourage you to consider it. Baptisms are held in the middle of Town Square several times a year and are a time of celebration.

In the spirit of joy and celebration, each person being baptized receives an opportunity to share their faith story with the entire church through video. These videos will be shown on the day of baptism.

WHY SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED?

Answer:

1. To obey the commands of Jesus
2. To evidence that a person is a follower of Jesus
3. To follow the example that Jesus set

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 2:37-41

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 22:16

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Answer: We practice what is called "believer's" or "confessor's" baptism, which means we only baptize those who believe and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Reading through Acts, we find baptism explicitly related to repentance, receiving the Word, believing and receiving the Holy Spirit. There is no explicit evidence to suggest that nonbelievers were baptized.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 2:41

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 8:12

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Galatians 3:27

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

WHEN SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

Answer: As soon as a person trusts Christ, he or she should be baptized.

Acts 22:16

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.

SHARING YOUR FAITH STORY

Every person being baptized receives an opportunity to share his or her faith story with the entire church through a video. Please take a moment to complete the next portion of this form about your baptism story.

The Apostle Paul’s faith story:

Read Acts 26. Here Paul shared his story of how he became a follower of Christ.

Spend some time in thought:

Think about your life before you met the Lord. What was going on in your life leading up to placing your faith in God? What problems or needs were you facing at the time? How did your life change after that?

THREE-POINT APPROACH

A three-point approach is very effective in communicating your personal faith story. The outline focuses on before you trusted Christ, how you surrendered to him, and the difference since you’ve been walking with him.

Before (I was...)

Simply tell what your life was like before you became a follower of Jesus. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ? What was the key problem, emotion, situ-

ation or attitude you were dealing with? What motivated you? What were your actions? How did you try to satisfy your inner-needs? (Examples of inner-needs are loneliness, fear of death, insecurity. Possible ways to fill those needs include work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, etc)

How (And then...)

How did you come to faith in Christ? Simply tell the events and circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your searching. Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of trusting Christ. Where were you? What was happening at the time? What people or problems influenced your decision?

Since (And now...)

How has your life in Christ made a difference? How has his forgiveness impacted you? How have your thoughts, attitudes and emotions changed? Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.

After you have thought through each of these areas, take some time to write out your story below (should be two-four minutes long).

After you have written out your faith story, take a few moments to think about a sentence that represents your three main areas of focus (before, how and since). Your three sentences should begin with:

I was...

And then...

And now...

Great job! Don't forget to bring this document with you to the video recording of your story.