Baptism

Your First Step

Welcome to one of the biggest days of your life. Read through these pages, then call Pastor Andy to schedule your baptism.

Congratulations!

We're excited about your interest in baptism. It's a decision that will change your life… and your eternity. It's the beginning step of the Christian life, and it's our desire to get everyone started off on the right foot.

To help you get that good start, we ask you to take some time & read through the following pages. It includes a few basics that are important to know.

1. **The Basics of Jesus.** You know that Jesus died for your sins, but he also committed his life to teaching some important things. And it's important not only to know what he did, what he taught, but also who he was.
2. **The Basics of Baptism.** Baptism carries some important symbolism for Christians. And not all churches baptize people in the same way. We want you to have a full understanding of what the Bible teaches about Baptism.

After you've read through this packet, give me a call, and we'll schedule your baptism. It will be a day to remember.

Since this day will be a big day for you (you're starting a new chapter of your life), we'd love to see you share it with people who are important to you. We encourage you to invite family, friends, & neighbors to attend church with you on the day of your baptism. It's a great way to let them see how important your faith is to you, and they can celebrate your day with you.

I'm looking forward to sharing your new adventure in Christ and growing towards maturity along with you.

In Christ,

Pastor Andy

PART ONE

The Basics of Jesus

If you're at the point of desiring baptism, then you already understand the fact that we're all in need of someone to pay for our sins, and that the only person who can do that is Jesus. You've got that. We want to round out your knowledge of Jesus by looking at 3 other areas of his life.

Baptism is about entering into a life long relationship with Jesus Christ, so it's important to know some things about him. Who was he? What did he teach? Did he make any promises to us? Below are some Bible verses that help answer those questions.

We'd like you to take time to flip through your Bible & read the listed verses. We've added some simple notes to explain these verses in case they're not quite clear to you. Most of them are pretty straightforward, but the notes might be helpful. Of course, you can read more if you want, but these are the basics. When you understand these simple truths, you're ready for baptism. You'll spend the rest of your life learning more about Christ & maturing, but this is a solid foundation.

Good luck with this sheet. If you have any questions, give me a call.

In Christ,

Pastor Andy

1. *Who is Jesus?*

1 Timothy 2:5 · John 17:3 · Acts 2:32

Jesus is God's son and eternal life can ONLY be found through a relationship with him.

1 Timothy 2:5 makes the distinct relationship between God and Jesus very clear. God is the Father, and Jesus is His son… the one who makes it possible for us to re-connect with God.

John 17:3 makes it clear that eternal life comes from knowing whom God is AND knowing whom Jesus is.

Acts 2:32 points out that God has all power, and that Jesus was the first to benefit from that power… God raised him from the dead. We hope for the same thing in the future.

2. *What did Jesus teach?*

Luke 4:43 · John 3:16 · John 5:28-29

Luke 4:43 The theme of almost all of Jesus' teaching was the Kingdom of God. Even though the world is not perfect, God will make it perfect again in the future… the Kingdom of God. Until then, we need to live as "Kingdom citizens" living lives that are holy, becoming like Christ… but we ultimately look for the return of Christ when Jesus will establish God's Kingdom on earth.

John 3:16 Jesus also taught that the only way to gain eternal life (entrance into the Kingdom of God) is by accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Jesus is THE way.

John 5:28-29 makes it clear that Jesus taught that we look forward to a resurrection after we die. It's after that resurrection that we get eternal life… not immediately after dying, but at the resurrection… the final judgment. That's when we get into the Kingdom or not.

So in summary of these verses… Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God is our ultimate goal, that the only way to get there (eternal life) is through Jesus, and that we get eternal life at the resurrection. Pretty straightforward.

3. *What did Jesus promise?*

Matthew 6:33 | John 10:27-28 | Matthew 6:14 | Matthew 16:27

Matthew 6:33 says that if we make it our goal to live by God's rules, then He will take care of all of our needs. We need to trust Him.

John 10:27-28 says that if we trust Jesus with our salvation, no one can take it away from us. The power of faith is stronger than anything in the world. The only reason we could lose it is if we intentionally walk away from God.

Matthew 6:14 teaches that we need to forgive people who wrong us. And if we can forgive other people, then God will forgive us. Forgiveness is a big deal to Jesus.

Matthew 16:27 is Jesus' promise to come back to earth some day… literally. And when he does, we'll all be rewarded for what we've done for God… that's what people refer to as the final judgment.

I hope this hasn't overloaded you. In fact, I hope that it's given you a clearer picture of what Jesus desires for you personally. He wants you to place your trust in him and his plan for your future. It's a great plan, and your baptism is the first step in his direction. I'm excited about your decision.

PART TWO

The Basics of Baptism

After you make a commitment to trust Jesus, you enter into a life-long relationship with God as a Christian. A Christian (Christ's-one) then attempts to learn more about

- God
- His character
- His desires for your life and lifestyle

Many actions are mentioned in the Bible, but one specific & important action is baptism.

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by Christ.

"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river." Mark 1:9

2. Because Christ commanded it.

"Jesus said, 'Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.'" Matt. 28:19-20

3. It demonstrates that I really am a believer

"…many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized." Acts 18:8

"We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands." 1 John 2:3

What is the Meaning of Baptism?

1. It illustrates Jesus' burial & resurrection.

"Christ died for our sins… He was buried… and He rose again." 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

2. It illustrates my new life as a Christian.

"By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead… so also we may live a new life." Romans 6:4

Baptism doesn't make you a believer, it demonstrates that you already believe. It's important to understand that baptism does not "save" you. You are "saved" only by your faith in Jesus.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith … it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment you make in your heart.

Why Be Baptized by Immersion?

1. **Because Jesus was baptized that way.**

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water." Matthew 3:16

2. **Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.**

(Example) "… then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water…" Acts 8:38-39

3. **The word "baptize" actually means "to dip under" water**
4. **Immersion best symbolizes a burial & resurrection!**

"When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

Who Should Be Baptized?

1. **Every person who has believed in Christ.**

"Those who believe and accepted His message were baptized…" Acts 2:41

"Simon himself believed and was baptized…" Acts 8:13

"But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News … and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts 8:12

Belief always came BEFORE baptism. You believe first, then get baptized second. It's no use baptizing someone who doesn't believe. But on the other hand, belief isn't really believing if you refuse to get baptized.

When Should I Be Baptized?

1. As soon as you have believed!

"Those who believe … were baptized … that day! Acts 2:41

"Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, 'Look, here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized right now?' Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The man answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him." Acts 8:35-38

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are "perfect" you'll never be ready. That's why we're excited about your decision to be baptized!