

FAQs and FACTS about  
**BAPTISM**

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## FAQs and FACTS about Baptism

You are about to embark on a study of one of the most precious and important aspects of the Christian life: baptism. As such, this may be one of the most rewarding studies of your life! For more than two thousand years, followers of Jesus Christ have willingly and faithfully participated in two God-ordained ordinances that celebrate what God has done for us: communion and baptism. Both of these ordinances remind us of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ ([1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#); [15:3-4](#); [Romans 6:3-5](#)). Communion is celebrated on a regular basis and baptism is a one-time personal faith response of devotion to God.

Unfortunately, there is some confusion among people of faith about baptism. This study is designed to offer clear and straightforward answers about the most commonly asked questions people have about Christian baptism.

We based this booklet on one question: **What does the Bible teach about baptism?** Therefore, many of the scriptures about baptism are printed for you to read. Other scriptures are simply referenced by book, chapter, and verse. To receive the most from your study, we encourage you to read each passage cited.

In [Psalm 119:18](#), King David prayed, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your Law.” At the beginning of a biblical study on baptism, prayer is certainly appropriate! As you begin your study, we invite you to bow in prayer and pray something along these lines:

*God, I humbly ask that You would open my mind and my heart to what Your Word teaches about baptism. As I study, may You direct my thoughts and give me insight into the scriptures I will be reading. May my heart be receptive and responsive to the leading of Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*

## What Is Baptism?

### **IT IS A PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF JESUS CHRIST**

Baptism is a pronouncement of belief. It is like preaching a visual sermon. It is a public way of saying to everyone that you have decided to give your life to Jesus Christ.

“Many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.” Acts 18:8

### **IT IS A POINT OF DEPARTURE FROM YOUR PAST AND AN ENTRANCE INTO AN ALTOGETHER NEW LIFE**

For those who had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, their baptism was a vivid reminder that they had departed from a former way of life and had begun a new life in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Baptism was a tangible reminder of a point in time when this transition happened.

“When we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. So, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the wonderful power of the Father, we also can live a new life.” Romans 6:4 (NCV)

### **IT IS THE MEANS OF BRINGING US INTO UNION WITH CHRIST AND HIS BODY, THE CHURCH**

In Romans 6 we are told that we are “baptized into Christ” (v. 3) and “united with him” (v. 5). 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that when we were baptized we were baptized into the body of Christ, the church.

### **IT IS GOD’S CLAIM TO OWNERSHIP OVER ME**

You are baptized “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19-20). To baptize in the “name of Jesus” (Acts 2:38; 8:16), or in the name of the triune God, is one and the same. We use the names of the Trinity since it was our Lord’s commission to His disciples and to His church.

The phrase “in the name of” means both to call on the character and power of the one named and it means to become the “possession of” the Lord Jesus Christ.

## What Is the Significance of Baptism?

Baptism is not just a physical act. It is not just something to do. It is an act filled with deep spiritual meaning and reality. Consider the spiritual realities that baptism so vividly pictures:

### IT PICTURES CHRIST'S BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

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

"We were therefore buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may have new life." Romans 6:4

### IT PICTURES THE CLEANSING OF SIN

In Acts 22:16 Ananias instructed Saul to "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on the name of the Lord." This is one reason why immersion is so significant: it is the picture of a complete cleansing by which we are forgiven of all our sin (cf. Acts 2:38).

### IT PICTURES MY NEW LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN

"What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

"When we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. So, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the wonderful power of the Father, we also can live a new life." Romans 6:4 (NCV)

The act of baptism **alone** doesn't "save" you. Nor is the water of baptism the cleansing agent. Christian baptism is preceded by personal faith/trust in Christ and is coupled with confession and repentance. It is the beginning obedient commitment towards serving Christ. Consider these passages:

"You are all (children) of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned." Mark 16:16

"Repent and be baptized...for the forgiveness of your sins." Acts 2:38

“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?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.’ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” Acts 8:36-38

“For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.” Romans 10:9-10 (NLT)

## Why Be Baptized?

### BECAUSE CHRIST COMMANDS IT

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19-20

That Jesus commanded baptism should settle the matter for anyone desiring to be a follower of His. And not only did He command baptism, He also modeled it for us in order to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). The call to baptism is primary in our acceptance of Christ and His teachings. To know that Christ has called us to be baptized into “the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” to not obey is unthinkable for followers of Christ.

### BECAUSE OBEYING CHRIST’S COMMAND SHOWS YOU KNOW HIM

“We know that we have come to know Him, if we obey His commands. The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus walked.” 1 John 2:3-4, 6

### BECAUSE YOU WANT TO FOLLOW CHRIST’S EXAMPLE

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

Jesus believed that baptism was necessary for even Him to do in order to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Jesus, the Son of God, gave us a powerful example of humble submission to the will of God. He would not allow anything or anyone to deter Him from following God’s will in this matter (Matthew 3:14). And because

Jesus was baptized no one who wishes to be a follower of His should avoid submission to this call of God.

#### **BECAUSE IT IS THE APPEAL WE MAKE TO GOD FOR A CLEAN CONSCIENCE**

“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 3:21 (NASB)

There is a completeness, an assurance, a wholeness that comes to those who are baptized. No one ever emerges from the water after being baptized and asks, “Now what else do I need to do?” In effect there is a cleansing of the conscience that baptism brings both in personal experience and by God’s design.

Submission to Jesus’ command to be baptized is the response of a believing heart to what He has done for us on the cross (1 Peter 2:24) and His offer of new birth (John 3:3).

#### **BECAUSE IT UNITES YOU WITH CHRIST IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY**

“You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Galatians 6:26-27

Being “clothed with Christ” is a powerful word picture of what happens when a person is baptized into Christ. It has been said that in baptism we “put on Christ.” In a sense, our baptism is our full embracement of Christ and of His forgiveness and leadership over our lives.

#### **BECAUSE YOU DESIRE TO BE FORGIVEN**

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, everyone of you for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 2:36-38

## **How Should I Be Baptized?**

#### **LIKE JESUS WAS BAPTIZED—BY BEING IMMersed IN WATER**

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water.” Matthew 3:16

The Greek word BAPTIZO is often translated “baptize/baptism.” It

literally means to “immerse, dip under, or submerge beneath.”

For the first 1200 years of Christian history immersion was the universally accepted mode of baptism. Many of the great churches built during those years, including the Leaning Tower of Pisa, have large pools in which they immersed people.

Other modes of baptism (sprinkling and pouring) of men, not God.

#### **EVERY BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS BY IMMERSION**

When Jesus was baptized, the Bible uses the Greek word BAPTIZO to describe that event.

When Jesus commanded that His disciples be baptized, He used the Greek word BAPTIZO to instruct them how to do it.

Every baptism recorded in the New Testament was by immersion, consistently using the Greek word BAPTIZO to describe the event.

“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

The Apostles, consistent with Jesus’ example and command, instructed new believers to be immersed into Christ, using the Greek word BAPTIZO to describe the action.

“Peter replied, ‘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.’ Acts 2:38

#### **IT IS THE BEST WAY TO PICTURE A BURIAL AND RESURRECTION**

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too may have new life.” Romans 6:3-4

The picture immersion portrays is compelling: just as a person lowers you into the water, Christ lowers you into the pool of His grace until every inch of your soul is clean. Buried in a watery grave, covered from head to foot with God’s love, you are washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

### **Is the Form or Mode of Baptism Important?**

Many people find it difficult to believe that the prescribed form or way of being baptized is important to God. They would contend

that outward symbols are irrelevant to God; He is only interested in that which is in the heart. It is true that God is most concerned about our heart condition, but He often uses prescribed forms to test and demonstrate the sincerity of our hearts (i.e. our faith, trust, confidence, loyalty, obedience).

In the Old Testament cases are recorded where people ignored the form of the sacrifice and offered animals forbidden by law or had the form right but their meaning, or hearts, were all wrong (Malachi 1:8, Amos 5:21-25).

These truths can be seen in the New Testament as well in Jesus' harsh indictment of the Pharisees.

“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.’ And he said to them: ‘You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.” Mark 7:8-9, 13

May it never be that Jesus could make this statement to us because we have chosen to obey those traditions or forms we are comfortable with, and disregard the forms that don't suit us. Baptism by immersion may differ from our past traditions, be inconvenient, or even humbling, but if our Lord prescribed a certain form (i.e. immersion as the way of being baptized) we should submit to His clear instruction to us.

## Is Baptism a work?

Aren't we saved by faith, and not by works?

If a work is strictly defined as something we do, then in essence faith is a work, so is repentance and confession. “Then they asked Him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’ Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent’” (John 6:28-29). Faith is not necessarily automatic or naturally ingrained. Faith is something that we are commanded to have. “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6

Like faith, baptism is also called a work of God. “And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in

the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2:11-12 (NAS)

Martin Luther coined the phrase, “salvation by faith alone,” yet even he understood the role of baptism. In his Small Catechism in answer to the question “What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?”, Luther responded, “It effects the forgiveness of sins.” Concerning the sinner, Luther wrote, “Through Baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins.” He also wrote, “To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save.” In response to those who would call this a salvation by works, Martin Luther wrote, “Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work, but God's.”

#### **WHY THE EMPHASIS ON A PHYSICAL ACTION FOR SPIRITUAL RESULTS?**

The two cannot be neatly separated. For example, the physical act of disobedience brought about a spiritual result in the garden ([Genesis 1-3](#)). In addition, the physical birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus himself brings the greatest spiritual potential to us—salvation. Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised that a spiritual decision to accept Christ by faith is linked to a physical response like baptism. Honest faith always results in appropriate action. In fact, Scripture says that faith without action is dead ([James 2:17](#)).

### **Does the Act of Baptism Itself Save a Person?**

No. Scripture is abundantly clear that only Jesus saves ([Acts 4:12](#)). The work of salvation is a finished work by Christ on the cross ([Hebrews 9:24-28](#); [10:10-14](#)). Baptism has no redemptive powers of its own. There is nothing special about the water in the river, pond, or baptistry.

Tragically, some people believe they are going to heaven just because they have been baptized. They have no genuine personal faith, have never made a personal decision to receive Christ as Savior and Lord, and are banking on a hollow ceremony to save them. If baptism itself could save, the cross of Jesus would have no real meaning. If a person's faith is in the sacrament and not the Savior, he is trusting in a powerless ritual.

## What if a Person is Not Baptized—Can He or She Be Saved?

The Bible never specifically answers or addresses this question. It is never answered because no one ever asked, “Do I have to be baptized to be saved”? After the Gospel was an accomplished fact (i.e. Jesus had been crucified, buried, and raised back to life), the pattern of teaching in the New Testament is clear: upon placing their faith in Jesus Christ, people were instructed to be baptized. It is noteworthy that each time they responded without questioning the necessity of baptism.

When the disciples were once confused about who could be saved, Jesus said, “[With God all things are possible](#)” ([Matthew 19:26](#)). God is the only one capable of forgiving sin and giving His Holy Spirit. He can do it at any time or in any way that he chooses. This being true, consider this question, “Why isn’t the person baptized?” There are two possible answers:

### **I NEVER UNDERSTOOD BAPTISM**

Perhaps you were never instructed to be baptized. Maybe you’ve never been challenged to consider the issue. That’s entirely possible. If this is the case, we urge you to give thought to what God says about baptism. This doesn’t negate your faith up to this point. Part of maturity is an openness to understand and be obedient to new areas of the Christian walk.

### **I DON’T WANT TO**

Let’s analyze this response for a moment. God humbles himself by leaving heaven and being born in a stable. The God of the universe eats human food, feels human feelings, and dies a sinner’s death. He is spat upon, beaten, stripped naked, and nailed to a cross. He takes our eternal condemnation on Himself in our place. He then offers us the forgiveness of all our sins as a free gift and asks that we say yes to Him in baptism and someone responds, “I don’t want to.” Such a response does not make sense. Resistance of this kind points to a deeper problem of the heart. Such a person does not need a study of the ordinance. He needs a long, honest examination of the soul. The incongruity of disobedience puzzled even Jesus.

[“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things I ask?”  
Luke 6:46](#)

Believers not only offer their sins, they yield their wills to Christ. If

one won't obey Christ in baptism, why would he obey Christ in anything else?

The highest motivation to do anything is because God asks you to do it. The heart of the repentant believer says, "If you want me to be baptized in a pile of leaves, I'll do it. I may not understand every reason, but neither do I understand how you could forgive someone like me." If one is resistant to Christ's command to be baptized, one might wonder if there is genuine faith and a spirit of repentance.

Someone who understands the command of Christ to be baptized and refuses to obey should not consider himself to be submitted to Christ.

#### **WHAT IF I DIE BEFORE I CAN GET BAPTIZED?**

The answer to this question can be found in the character of God demonstrated to the thief on the cross (cf. [Luke 23:39-43](#)). Is it possible for an un-baptized believer to be saved? Yes, it is possible. However, it is extremely rare that an individual is unable to be baptized because he dies right after placing his faith in Christ.

Should every believer be baptized? Yes, absolutely. Should someone placing his faith in Christ be baptized as soon as possible (cf. [Acts 2:41, 8:35-38, 16:30-34](#))? Yes, absolutely.

## **Who Should Be Baptized?**

#### **EVERY PERSON WHO HAS BELIEVED IN CHRIST**

According to the Scriptures, those who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God should be baptized. The Ethiopian Eunuch asked Philip:

*"Why shouldn't I be baptized?" Philip replied, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." Acts 8:36*

Every person in the New Testament who was baptized first believed in who Jesus was—the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He or she also believed what Jesus did—died on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and was raised back to life three days later.

Popular author and speaker Max Lucado has written, "We are never told to be baptized and then believe, but to come to belief, to trusting faith, and then display that decision by associating ourselves with Christ in baptism. Baptism is the initial step of a faith-

ful heart. This decision requires significant levels of maturity” (Baptism: The Demonstration of Devotion, 1995). Note these additional passages:

“Those who 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...they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts 8:12

#### **THOSE WHO HAVE REPENTED OF THEIR SIN**

Closely connected to belief is repentance. Peter exhorted the people at Pentecost to:

“Repent...and be baptized.” Acts 2:38

Repentance means to have a change of mind. It means to make a U-turn or to do an about-face. You were going down the road of destruction, death and hell; but you repented, you turned around, changed your direction, changed your mind. Therefore, baptism is for believers who have repented of their sin.

### **Should an Infant Be Baptized?**

Since baptism is for those who have believed and repented, we do not practice infant baptism. An infant cannot believe. An infant cannot repent. Therefore, we do not practice infant baptism.

### **What Happens to Children Who Die Before the Point of Maturity?**

We believe that these children will be received into the eternal presence of Christ. The Bible teaches that eternal condemnation comes to those who have willfully sinned.

[Galatians 5:19-21](#) describes the willful “acts” or “deeds” produced by our sinful nature. A person is guilty of these acts/deeds when they are carried out, not before ([see Ephesians 5:3-6 and Colossians 3:5-10](#)).

Specifically, the Bible teaches that it is the sin of unbelief that causes a person to fall under God’s condemnation ([John 3:17-20; 8:24](#)). A young child does not have the ability to understand the message of Christ and therefore seek repentance. [1 Thessalonians](#)

1:8-10 indicates, it is an unwillingness to obey the gospel (i.e. making a personal faith-response to the gospel message) that brings “everlasting destruction.” It is those who know the truth about God and then ignore that truth who are deserving of death (see Romans 1:18-32). This is willful sin.

Deuteronomy 1:26-46 describes a time when the Israelites willfully rebelled against God. As a result, God sentenced that entire generation to die in the desert. However, He exempted young children from that fate precisely because they had no part in the willful disobedience toward Him, for they had no way of knowing good from evil (Deuteronomy 1:39).

Coming to the age of knowing and understanding right from wrong is often called the “age of accountability.” 1 John 3:4 says that “those who sin are opposed to the law of God” (NLT). Most often, parents, ministers, and others who have a close relationship with the child are the best ones to determine when a child becomes accountable to God for their own sins.

The Bible teaches that before the point of maturity, all children belong to God; He even calls children born to those who despise Him “my children” (Ezekiel 16:20-22). God lays full claim to children, for in their innocence they belong to Him (Matthew 18:1-14).

No infant is capable of ignoring God’s truth. In the same way, we believe that individuals mentally incapable of understanding what God has revealed will also come under God’s grace and mercy. Upon the event of the tragic death of these innocent ones they will be received into the presence of God.

## Can Babies Be Dedicated?

It is appropriate, though not necessary, to dedicate a baby. It is more appropriate, however, for parents to dedicate themselves to rearing their children in the Lord. Our tradition for dedication is to offer parents of newborns an opportunity to dedicate themselves to rearing their child to know and love God.

It is also a reminder to our congregation of partnering with parents in their responsibility to lead their children to faith in Christ. Please keep in mind, however, that it is a dedication ceremony, not a baptism. It is not for salvation or church membership. It is a commitment by parents to raise the child in a godly fashion, not a child’s personal decision of faith.

## What If I Was Sprinkled as a Child? What Should I Do?

Some denominations practice a "baptism of confirmation" for infants and children. This ceremony is a covenant between the parents and God on behalf of the child. The parents promise to raise their child in the faith until the child is old enough to make his or her own personal confession of Christ (confirmation). This custom began about 370 AD. Even though it is a beautiful and meaningful act by the parents, it differs from the baptism found in the Bible.

First, you should be grateful that you had parents who cared enough about you to set you apart for God. Because of their devotion, you have an opportunity to complete their prayer by willingly submitting to Christ in His call to you to be immersed.

Second, being immersed is not a sign of disrespect for what your parents did, nor is it an act of condemnation toward them. The very opposite is true: it should be seen as the fulfillment of their prayers and best desires for you.

Be thankful for the heritage of concerned parents, but don't be negligent of your responsibility as an adult to make your personal commitment and obedience to God in baptism ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)). If one knows the truth they should be compelled to follow it.

Many who are now members of this church were sprinkled as infants and then, upon coming to personal faith, were immersed into Christ. If God has led you to this point, we pray that you will take this step as soon as possible.

## Can a Child Be Baptized?

Yes! However, keep in mind that Biblically speaking, baptism is appropriate only for those who have made a personal decision to trust in Christ alone for their salvation.

At First Christian Church, we do not baptize children unless they are mature enough to place their faith in Christ and understand the true meaning of baptism and receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. There are helpful tools to assist parents to ensure that their child is mature enough and ready to respond to Christ in baptism.

These materials are available through the Children's Ministry.

## What If I Was Baptized by Way of Pouring?

(See “Is the Form or Mode of Baptism Important?” page 8) Although there is evidence, outside the New Testament, of the Greek work BAPTIZO meaning “to pour,” it still does not fit in the context and grammar of the New Testament text.

## Should a Person Ever Be Re-Baptized?

Re-baptism is only encouraged for those who lack confidence in their initial baptism experience because they don't remember it, they were coerced, or their heart was not right with God at the time. Anyone who has fallen into a pattern of sin after having received Christ and having been baptized should repent and seek forgiveness, but re-baptism is not necessary ([Acts 8:13-24](#)).

## When Should I Be Baptized?

You should be baptized as soon as you have believed in Jesus Christ as God's Son and Savior of the world. In the New Testament, there was a sense of urgency about baptism ([Acts 16:31-34](#)). Baptism is not an optional ritual, to be delayed or postponed. Jesus commanded that His followers be baptized. He never indicated they should wait until it was more convenient.

“Those who accepted his message were baptized...that day.” [Acts 2:41](#)

“But when they believed...they were baptized, both men and women.” [Acts 8:12](#)

“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](#)

The Bible teaches we are saved by grace through faith ([Ephesians 2:8](#)). In the New Testament church a person's baptism was always the immediate expression of faith, not separate from it. At First Christian Church, our desire is to restore the original intent and practice of baptism found in the Scriptures. Therefore we encour-

age people to be baptized at the point they are ready to make a commitment to Christ.

## **I'm Ready to Be Baptized. Now What?**

To schedule a baptism, call the church office at 548-0867. Baptisms are performed in any of our weekend worship services and can also be scheduled before or after a service.

If you would like to be baptized in front of a smaller, more intimate group (a few friends, family members, etc.) you can schedule your baptism for any day/evening of the week. We are very flexible and eager to help in any way that we can. We are happy to accommodate any special physical needs that you may have as well.

## **What Should I Wear When I Am Baptized?**

You will be given a baptismal robe to wear. It is suggested that you bring a bathing suit (or something similar) to wear under your robe. Private changing rooms are provided, along with hair dryers, combs, and plenty of clean towels.

## **Will I Have to Say Anything?**

Yes. You will be asked to repeat the words of the Good Confession as a public profession of your personal faith in Jesus Christ: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and I accept Him as my Lord and my Savior."

## **Can My Family Be Baptized Together?**

Yes. If each family member fully understands the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his/her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment. Young children who wish to be baptized are asked to meet with a staff member from our Children's Ministry for a pre-baptism conversation.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal decision, not a family tradition. It is unwise to delay your baptism while waiting on other family members, particularly children, to make their own decision to accept Christ. This puts an undue pres-

sure on them, leading them to make the decision of follow Christ for the wrong reason. It could also delay your obedience and response to Christ.

## **Who Can Baptize Me?**

Generally, a minister will baptize you. However, we believe in the priesthood of all believers ([1 Peter 2:5, 9](#)), and Jesus' commandment to go, make disciples, and baptize ([Matthew 28:19, 20](#)) is a commandment to all Christ followers. Therefore, we encourage any believer to baptize those whom they've influenced or led to Christ.

The pattern of the Old Testament shows that it was the parents (particularly the father's) responsibility to "train up a child in the way he should go..." ([Proverbs 22:6](#); see also [Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#)). We encourage and guide parents in baptizing their own children.

## **Do I Have to be Immersed to Become a Member of First Christian Church?**

Yes. It is a requirement that everyone placing membership with First Christian Church be an immersed believer in Christ. If you were immersed at an earlier point in your life, it is not necessary to be re-immersed to become a member of First Christian Church (see the question "Should A Person Ever Be Re-Baptized?" on page 13). However, if you have never been immersed, we ask that you be baptized the way Jesus commanded and demonstrated Himself, even though you may have been "confirmed" or sprinkled as a child.

## Some Concluding Thoughts

- \* **We want to teach and practice everything the Bible teaches about baptism.** We are not interested in making it more important than Scripture does. On the other hand, we are not willing to make it any less important, either. We believe that the answers provided in this study reflect what the Bible clearly teaches in regard to this ordinance.
- \* **Don't allow baptism to be something it is not.** Apart from the cross it has no significance. If you are trusting the water to save you, you have missed the message of grace. Beware of dogmatism. No one on this side of heaven can fully understand the majesty of baptism. Watch out for the one who claims to have a corner on the issue.
- \* **Don't prevent baptism from being what God intended.** It is a precious symbol of God's grace. It is a beautiful illustration of our union with Christ. It is a willing plunge into the power and promise of Christ. In baptism God signs and seals our conversion to Him. This is no optional command of Christ. This is no trivial issue. Baptism is a holy event and therefore is not to be taken lightly. The ritual of washing ([Acts 22:16](#)) signifies our admission that apart from Christ we are dirty, but in Christ we are pure. The ritual of burial ([Romans 6:1-5](#)) signifies that we are willing to die to sin and self and that we can be made alive again because of Him. Christ's death becomes my death. Christ's resurrection becomes my resurrection.
- \* **For all we may not understand about baptism, we can be sure of this:** baptism is a holy moment commanded by Jesus to be obeyed by all who place their faith in Him.

**Dear friend, never forget the words of the apostle Peter on the first day of the Church:**

*"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38*

## Personal Study Questions

Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow.

### Matthew 3:11, 13-17

According to Matthew 3:11, why was John baptizing?

Why did Jesus insist on being baptized?

What two significant signs accompanied the baptism of Jesus?

### Matthew 28:18-20

Upon whose authority is the “great commission” given?

In whose name is baptism to be done?

What is to follow the baptism of a disciple?

What special promise goes with this command?

### Mark 16:15-16

What is the promise to the one who has both believed and been baptized?

What warning is related to refusal to believe in Jesus?

### **Acts 2:36-39**

When the people were ready to accept Christ, what did Peter tell them to do?

What were they assured of if they sincerely took these steps?

When were they baptized?

### **Acts 8:34-39**

What was the message preached by Phillip?

How did the eunuch express his faith in words? In actions?

What form of baptism is described in these verses?

### **Acts 16:30-34**

What did Paul and Silas tell the jailer to do when he asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

What message was given to the jailer and his family?

How did the jailer show repentance (a change of heart and actions) toward Paul and Silas?

What was the reason for the rejoicing of the jailer and his family?

Why do you suppose the jailer and his family were baptized during the night?



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