MADE NEW

BAPTISM AT CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

WELCOME
TO BAPTISM

We're thrilled that you're investigating baptism as the next step in your spiritual journey. Baptism is a wonderful step of obedience in following Christ. It is an opportunity to follow Jesus' example and teaching by publicly proclaiming your trust in him. By being baptized, you announce that Jesus has washed away your sins and given you new life. By getting in the water we are not declaring that we've achieved sinless perfection or some type of "super-Christian" status. In fact, we're saying almost the opposite. Baptism is not about what we've achieved, but about what Christ has achieved in us. Baptism also pictures the fact that we were dead in our sins until we trusted Christ who paid our sin's debt and conquered sin's power through his resurrected life.

When people are rightly related to Jesus, they are rightly related to one another as well. Baptism serves as a visible initiation into God's family, in which we all stand on equal footing as brothers and sisters.

So this is a very special event! Whether you are new to the faith or a long standing Christian, our desire is for your baptism to be a joyful and memorable experience.

We encourage you to look forward with eager anticipation to our next baptism service.

Invite family. Invite friends. And, if you know some folks who do not yet know Christ, take another courageous step of faith and invite them to come to your baptism, too.

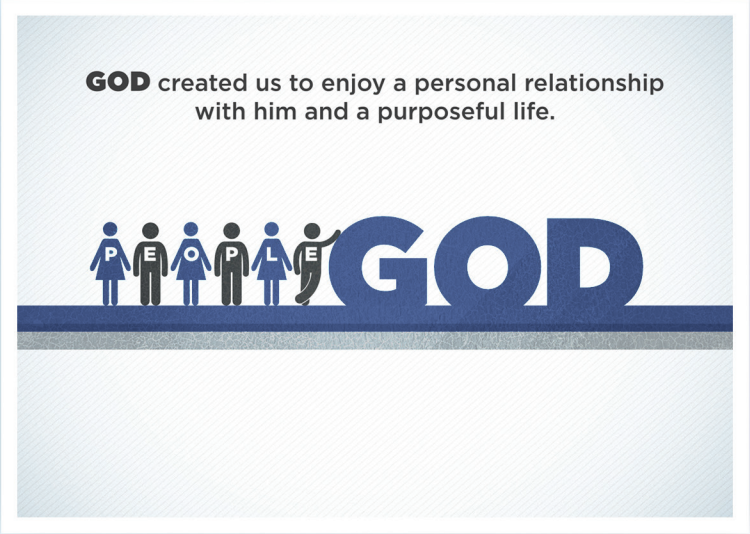
God often uses the stories of people like you to draw others to himself. Your baptism celebration of new life may spark new life in someone else!

PART ONE
WHAT IS GOD'S GOOD NEWS?

Here at Christ Community, we use a tool called God's Good News to illustrate the good news that God has a plan to redeem us.

On the following pages are four simple truths that summarize God's Good News communicated to us in the Bible.

TRUTH 1



> "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3).

TRUTH 2

> "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you..." (Isaiah 59:2).
> "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

TRUTH 3

> "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

TRUTH 4

> "It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

IF YOU HAVE NEVER PRAYED A PRAYER THAT IS LIKE THE ONE HERE TO BEGIN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS, YOU CAN PRAY THIS PRAYER NOW.

"Lord Jesus. I believe you are God's Son. I believe you died on the cross for me and you were raised back to life. I admit that I have sinned and I'm sorry. Please forgive me for my sins. Thank you for giving me the gift of your Holy Spirit to help me live a life that is pleasing to you. I want to follow you for the rest of my life as my Lord, the one in charge of my life. And as my Savior, the one who has saved me from my sin and the punishment for my sins. In Jesus' name, Amen."

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PUT YOUR TRUST IN CHRIST?

• You are saved.

"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved**" (Romans 10:9).

• You are given eternal life.

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. **I write these things to you who believe** in the name of the Son of God **so that you may know that you have eternal life**" (1 John 5:11-14).*

TWO QUESTIONS

Do you surrender to Jesus as your Savior to forgive your sins and make you new?

Do you pledge allegiance to Jesus as your King to rule over your life?

PART TWO

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT BAPTISM?

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is immersion into water. It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection for us. It also shows our commitment as a Christian to follow Jesus.

Look at the following verses:

Romans 6:3-5 • 2 Corinthians 5:17 • Ephesians 2:8-9 • John 14:6 • Luke 23:32-43

1. Does baptism make you a believer or show that you already believe?

2. Are you saved just because you are baptized?

3. Do you think someone can go to Heaven without being baptized? Why do you think that?

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every person who believes in Christ as their Lord and Savior. Baptism is an obedient step as a believer.

Look at the following verses:

2 Corinthians 5:14-17 • Colossians 3:1-4

By choosing to be baptized you are making a public statement that you want to follow the example set by Jesus. You also are recognizing that Jesus commanded us to be baptized. By being baptized you are demonstrating that you have made a decision to follow Jesus and that you are a Christian.

Look at the following verses:

Mark 1:9 • Matthew 28:19-20 • 1 John 2:3 • Acts 8:12-13 • Galatians 3:26-28 •
1 Corinthians 12:12-14

1. Why should someone get baptized?

2. What is baptism a symbol of?

3. What does getting baptized say about you?

4. What does it mean to be baptized into the body of Christ?

5. Why should we be baptized in front of our church

WHY DO SOME CHURCHES BAPTIZE INFANTS?

Infant baptism began about 300 years after the Bible was completed. For some churches, it was a ceremony for parents to pledge to raise their children in the Christian faith until the child was old enough to make his or her own personal confession for Christ.

In the Catholic tradition, the belief is held that the water operates apart from a child's faith, taking away original sin and making the child acceptable to God. Others in the Reformed tradition emphasize the parallels between the Old Testament practice of circumcision and the New Testament practice of baptism. Circumcision marked a baby boy as part of the covenant community. In the same way, they believe infants can be baptized into Christ's body based on the faith of their parents and church.

At Christ Community Church, we see no Scripture that instructs infant baptism. The model we see throughout Scripture is that of believers (not infants) going public with their faith in Christ through baptism. We see the practice of Jesus blessing or dedicating children, not baptizing them. We believe child dedication and baptism are best observed as two distinct practices.

HOW OLD MUST A PERSON BE TO BE BAPTIZED?

We are not given a specific age in Scripture. The model we observe in Scripture is an authentic confession of sin and trust in Christ.

At Christ Community Church, we wait until our children are old enough to believe, understand, and articulate their faith before we baptize them. This is typically not before 4th or 5th grade. We desire children to have a firm memory of their baptism experience.

Prior to baptism, we do offer child dedication services for parents who wish to thank God for the gift of their children and promise to raise and encourage their kids to follow Christ with the support of the church.

SHOULD A PERSON EVER BE RE-BAPTIZED?

Some people realize that the infant baptism they experienced missed some of the essential significance God intended for baptism. Others sense that their mode of baptism lacked the powerful symbolism of submersion. And still others recognize that they were baptized without having saving faith, maybe under pressure, or as an initiation rite into a religious system rather than as a personal response to God's Good News found in Jesus.

Any of these reasons are legitimate. 1 Peter 3:21 says that baptism involves "the pledge of a good conscience toward God."

If your conscience is not clear because you never came to baptism with faith in Jesus, we encourage you to be baptized again. But, if you believe you had legitimate saving faith at your previous baptism; even if you subsequently stopped following Jesus for a time, you do not need to be re-baptized.

IF I PUT MY FAITH IN JESUS LONG AGO, SHOULD I STILL BE BAPTIZED NOW?

Many of us simply were not instructed about baptism when we first came to Christ. By getting in the water now, you will correct this past oversight and communicate your earnestness in following Jesus. Being baptized now will bolster your faith and clear your conscience. The very fact that you are reading this paragraph right now probably indicates that God's Spirit may be prompting you to follow Jesus in this area.

ARE THERE ANY REASONS THAT I SHOULD NOT BE BAPTIZED?

If you have not made the decision to surrender to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior or if you have ongoing intentional disobedience against God and his Word would be reasons to wait.

PART THREE

HOW DO I WRITE & SHARE MY FAITH STORY?

THINK THROUGH AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO PREPARE TO WRITE YOUR FAITH STORY.

1. When and how did you ask God to forgive you and lead you?

2. Who is God to you? What has he done in your life?

3. Why do you want to follow Jesus?

4. Who has helped you take these steps in your life?

5. What does being baptized mean for you?

6. How will your life be different because you have put your trust in Jesus?

As you put all of these answers together, they form your faith story. Rewrite your answers to these questions in paragraph form so you can share your story with others!

WHEN YOU WRITE YOUR STORY

Writing the three parts of your faith story. (250 word maximum)

PART 1

BEFORE CHRIST

What caused me to see that I need Christ? Use your answer to question 2 on the previous page to help write this part of your story. (25-50 words)

SAMPLE PERSONAL FAITH STORY, word count = 25

"Before I trusted in Jesus, other things were more important to me like possessions and what other people thought of me."

PART 2

MY DECISION

The who, what, when, where, why, and how of my decision to surrender to Christ. Use your answers to questions 1, 3, and 4 on the previous page to help write this part of your story. (50-75 words)

SAMPLE PERSONAL FAITH STORY, word count = 66

"Then my daughter introduced me to Christ Community. Here, I heard the truth about Jesus dying for my sins because he loved me. My eyes were opened and I saw the sin in my life: greed, anger, lust, self-centeredness, and pride. With our friends Jon and Sarah, I confessed I was wrong and asked Jesus to forgive my sins and take control of my life."

PART 3

AFTER CHRIST

Now having a relationship with Jesus, what changes have taken place in my life? Use your answers to questions 2, 4, 5, and 6 on the previous page to help write this part of your story. (50-80 words)

SAMPLE PERSONAL FAITH STORY, word count = 80

"Since then, I can truly say my life has changed. My husband and I pray together every day. We are closer to our children. We have enjoyed serving at the church. I've also joined a wonderful women's Community Group. I know there will still be trials and tribulations, but James 1:12 says, 'blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him'."

THREE HELPFUL ELEMENTS

1. Use Scripture, making sure Jesus is the hero of your story. Some great Scripture verses to consider: Romans 10:9, 10, John 14:6, John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8, 9. Make it personal.

2. Name people instrumental in helping you trust or grow in Christ, using their first & last name. This will be a HUGE encouragement to them. Also, make sure you invite them to your baptism!

3. Stay away from "churchy words" people won't understand like, "read in the word," "redeemed by the blood of the Lamb," "baptized by the Spirit," "sanctified," "fellowship," "the world..."

WE NEED TO HAVE YOUR PERSONAL FAITH STORY *AS SOON AS POSSIBLE*

We will make edits to each story to correct grammar and avoid potentially confusing language while affirming Bible truths. Be assured that the story will be true to what you prepare and in your voice.

Please send your faith story via email to:

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF FAITH STORY:

PART FOUR

WHAT WILL BAPTISM DAY LOOK LIKE?

WHEN SHOULD I ARRIVE?

You and your guests that will be on stage with you need to arrive one hour prior to your scheduled baptism service. At this time, you will receive final instructions, so please be prompt! Wear the clothes you will be baptized in. Bring a bag with a change of clothes, two towels, and a plastic bag for wet clothes.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

We recommend you wear dark pants, ideally shorts and your baptism shirt. Avoid garments such as jeans or sweats. They absorb too much water. Everyone should take special care to be modest, wearing swimsuits or t-shirts under their other clothes. Please do not wear white. Everyone will receive a baptism t-shirt that you will wear over your swimsuit or other clothing.

DO I GET TO CHOOSE MY BAPTISM SERVICE?

We try to be as accommodating as possible with service selection, so we would like to know which service you prefer. Occasionally, however, we are not able to place you in your preferred service. We try to have a balance of male/female, adult/children. The order in which we receive the faith stories also plays a part in which service you will be part of. Once you have been assigned a service we are generally not able to change it. We thank you in advance for your understanding of this outreach opportunity.

WHAT DO I DO AFTER I COME OUT OF THE WATER?

We will provide separate changing rooms for women and men. Bring a change of clothes along with 2 solid colored towels. You should place your change of clothes: under-clothing, shirts and pants, towels, and footwear in a duffel bag or backpack in the appropriate changing room.

SHOULD I INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY?

Yes, yes, YES! The baptism service is a wonderful outreach opportunity. Family and friends who do not yet know Christ, and who otherwise might not be interested in coming to church, are often very willing to come to your baptism service. So invite them! Let them hear story after story, including yours, of how God changes lives. You may even want to plan a party or reception after service. We encourage everyone to take full advantage of this opportunity to share God's good news with your family and friends.

CAN MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS TAKE PICTURES?

Yes, in appropriate areas.

WHAT IF I HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS?

Let us know. We will work at accommodations together.

ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS?

Email

PART FIVE
WHAT'S NEXT?

At Christ Community Church, we always want to be helping someone take the next step in their walk with Christ. Because we are all about making passionate disciples of Jesus Christ who are belonging, growing, serving, and reaching. After baptism, many people pick one of the following next steps:

JOIN ROOTED

Whether you are new to faith, new to Christ Community Church, or are ready for a refresh. Take the step to deepen your connection with God, the church, and your life's purpose in our next Rooted session.

ccclife.org/rooted

JOIN CARE NIGHT

Grow in hope, help, and healing through our next session of Care Night.

ccclife.org/carenight

START SERVING

Find your place to use your gifts, abilities, and passions to serve in the church, community, and world.

ccclife.org/volunteer-opportunities

> “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, we too may live a new life.”
> - Romans 6:4

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