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.

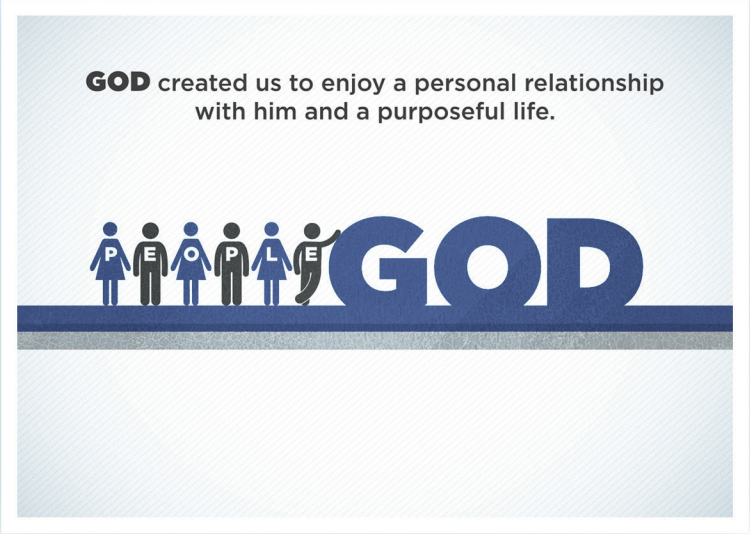
God often uses the stories of people like you to draw others to himself. Your baptism celebration of new life may spark new life in someone else!

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?

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)

BAPTISM SHOWS THAT YOU ARE SAVED THROUGH DEATH

The word "baptize" originally meant to put something underwater. Water shows up at every major moment in the Old Testament. In creation, God brings a new world out of the waters of chaos. In Noah's flood, Noah passes through the waters of judgment into new life. At the Red Sea, Israel passes through the waters from slavery into freedom. At the Jordan River, Israel passes through the waters again, this time from the wilderness into the Promised Land.

When John the Baptist called people to be baptized in the waters of the Jordan River, he was saying, "Repent. Turn away from the old life that is killing you, and enter the new life God is offering." Baptism gathers up all those biblical images: the flood, the Red Sea, the Jordan, and new creation. Every person who stands in the water of baptism is declaring that they need to be rescued from sin and brought into the life God gives.

That is why baptism is both serious and hopeful. Water is dangerous; you cannot live underwater. In the same way, sin pulls us down and leads to death. But Jesus entered the waters of death for us. He took our sin, guilt, and shame to the cross, went down into the grave, and rose again to bring us with him into new life. As Romans 6 says, we are "buried with him through baptism into death" so that "just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life."

BAPTISM REPRESENTS YOUR UNION WITH CHRIST

Note Paul's repetition in the passage above: we are "in Christ Jesus," "baptized into Christ," "clothed with Christ," "one in Christ Jesus," "belonging to Christ." Baptism is not a spiritual New Year's resolution where we promise to try harder and become better people. It is the opposite of self-improvement. In baptism, we admit that we cannot save, change, or fix ourselves. Through union with Christ, we live by Jesus' strength and Jesus' merits.

Jesus didn't need to repent or have sin washed away. So why did he get baptized? Here are four reasons:

1. *He identified with sinners.*
2. H*e showed the delight of God*
3. *He was crowned as King*
4. *He was empowered by the Spirit*

On our own, we do not have the power to change ourselves or make an impact on the world. But if we are united to Christ, it means Christ is in us by his Spirit, so we no longer have to live by our own strength, but by God's power inside us.

BAPTISM MARKS YOUR ENTRY INTO THE COVENANT

A covenant is a promise that turns non-family into family. We still see this today in marriage and adoption: people who were not family make promises and become family. In the Old Testament, God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. They became his people, his children, and his heirs.

But when Jesus sent his followers to all nations, non-Jews began putting their faith in Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, and this raised an important question: can Gentiles join Abraham's covenant too? Paul's answer is yes: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Through faith in Jesus, anyone can be brought into God's covenant family.

Baptism is the ceremony that marks entrance into this family. That is why, in the New Testament, people were baptized as soon as they surrendered to Christ. Paul assumes this when he writes, "In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Baptism does not create faith, but it publicly marks someone as belonging to the covenant family of God.

This also helps answer the question, "Who should be baptized?" In the Old Testament, circumcision marked entrance into the covenant, and Jewish boys received it as babies because they were born into Abraham's family. But with Jesus, three shifts happen:

Circumcision → Baptism | Genealogy → Faith | Babies → Believers

Since entrance into the covenant is based on personal faith in Jesus, baptism is for anyone old enough to surrender to Jesus for themselves.

BAPTISM MARKS YOUR BELONGING TO THE CHURCH

Why can't you baptize yourself? Because baptism is not only a private declaration of faith; it is initiation into a community, welcome into a family, and citizenship in the kingdom of heaven.

This mattered deeply in the early church because people from different nations, cultures, languages, and economic classes were suddenly being brought into one church. Some had even been enemies. Public baptism became a way for the church to say, ''They belong to Jesus, so they belong to us.'' Paul says, ''There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'' In Christ, ethnicity, class, and gender do not determine someone's value, status, or place in God's family.

Baptism declares that what unites us is deeper than what divides us. We come from different backgrounds, generations, political groups, family situations, and life stories, but if we belong to Jesus, we are unified with one another. Through baptism, we are publicly adopted into Jesus' family, the church.

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.

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.

SAMPLE PERSONAL FAITH STORY

"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.

SAMPLE PERSONAL FAITH STORY

"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.

SAMPLE PERSONAL FAITH STORY

"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 any guests that will be on stage with you need to arrive one hour prior to your scheduled baptism service. At that 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. Avoid garments such as jeans or sweats. They absorb too much water. Take special care to be modest, wearing a swimsuit or t-shirt under your other clothes if necessary. Please do not wear white. When you arrive, you will receive a baptism t-shirt that you will wear over your swimsuit or other clothing.

DO I GET TO CHOOSE MY BAPTISM SERVICE?

When you register for baptism, you will select your preferred service time. On rare occasions, however, we may not be able to place you in your preferred service. We do our best to accommodate everyone's preferred service time. The best way to ensure you can be baptized at your first choice of service time is to send in your faith story as soon as possible.

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

We will provide changing rooms. After you change, you'll collect your belongings and return to your seat in the auditorium for the remainder of the service.

SHOULD I INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY?

Absolutely! A 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 stories of how God changes lives. You may even want to plan a party or reception after service. We encourage you 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 together to make necessary accommodations.

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/care

START SERVING

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

ccclife.org/serve

> "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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