

# Baptism FAQ

## Frequently asked questions about baptism

### WHAT IS BAPTISM?

From the EFCA Statement of Faith, on the Church: "We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer."

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*  
Matthew 28:18-20

### WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

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

*"For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ."* Colossians 2:12

It illustrates my new life as a Christian.

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

*"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 symbolizes our decision to accept what it means to be united with Jesus. Going down into the water pictures the death of the self and the rising up out of the water pictures the resurrection of the self to a new life now, and eternal life in the future.

## **WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM TODAY? (CONCEPT VS. CEREMONY)**

A crucial part of understanding baptism is to differentiate between the CONCEPT of baptism and the CEREMONY of baptism.

Ephesians 4:4-6 anchors the concept of baptism by mentioning seven “exclusives” in God’s reality: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. Notice there is only ONE baptism. This is the one baptism that has not been mentioned until now, and is documented in:

*1 Corinthians 12:13 “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”*

In this verse, three of the exclusives from Ephesians 4:4-6 are mentioned. It is obvious that the One Spirit places us together with One Lord in order to be identified with His Body [One Body]. This is the essence of baptism—the one and only baptism that qualifies one for eternal acceptance in heaven.

It was a spiritual transaction that you may not have been aware of, that moment you reached out to God and He reached out to you and placed His Spirit within you! The verse stated emphatically that ALL true believers have experienced this act of God. This is the spiritually true CONCEPT of baptism.

It is customary worldwide for a bride to wear an object or mark that identifies her as a bride. In our culture the wedding ring given at the ceremony is a symbol for all to see and know of her relationship. That ring is a symbol of a much higher value and truth than the ring itself. A bride is married [baptized] or placed into a relationship and remains married with or without her ring. Similarly, when we were placed in a relationship with our Lord God, Jesus the Christ, we experienced the spiritual marriage of that relationship.

Subsequently, believers elect to experience a public ceremony of baptism as a symbol of that relationship. It is a way to express the reality of your relationship with your Lord. You might say it is your ring to display to the world. It is also your affirmation of the faithful relationship you agreed to and became one with the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE BAPTIZED?**

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*

Because Christ commands it.

*“Jesus said, ‘Go then, to all the people everywhere and make 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.’”  
Matthew 28:18-20*

It demonstrates that I really am a believer.

*“...many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized.”*

## **WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?**

Because Jesus was baptized that way.

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

Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

*“...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 Greek word baptize (baptize) means “to immerse or dip in water.” It best symbolized a burial and resurrection.

Luther—I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed, as the work imports and the mystery signifies.

Calvin—The word baptize signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.

## **WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?**

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*

At Pleasant Valley Church, we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

Some churches practice a baptism of confirmation for children. This ceremony is intended to be 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 own personal confession of Christ. This custom began about 300 years after the Bible was completed.

This is different from the baptism talked about in the Bible which was only for those old enough to believe. The purpose is to publicly confess your personal commitment to Christ. At Pleasant Valley Church, even though a person might have been “confirmed” as a child, we still practice believer’s baptism for those who have made a genuine and believable profession of faith.

## **WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?**

*“Those who believe...were baptized...that day!” Acts 2:41*

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have received Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you wait until you are perfect, you will never feel “good enough.”

Pleasant Valley Church schedules baptism services periodically throughout the year. Please speak with a Pastor when you decide you would like to be baptized.

## **WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?**

We suggest that you wear medium colored clothing, pants or shorts, and slip off shoes, or bare feet. Clothing that retains a minimum amount of water is recommended. Please wear these clothes to the service and bring a change of clothes and a plastic bag for wet clothes for after the service. We will provide an area for changing and towels for your use.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT AN INDOOR DURING-WORSHIP-CELEBRATION BAPTISM SERVICE?**

Please meet in the back of the ministry center (by the kitchen window) 15 minutes before the service begins. We will go over any questions, let you know the order of the baptisms, and pray. The service will begin as normal, with worship, the offering, and a message. A pastor will then explain the meaning of baptism, focusing on the theme of Christ's payment for our sins through His death on the cross. Another song will begin and the baptizing pastor will enter the baptismal. You will come forward in the pre-determined order. You will enter the baptismal pool and your photo will then be shown. The Pastor will ask you a few simple questions. You can answer with a simple nod, or you may read a short faith story prepared on a 3x5 card. A person of your choice, or the baptizing pastor will then pray for you. Then he will immerse you into the water. You will only be under water for a few seconds. Then you will exit the pool and be handed a towel. Please walk behind the baptismal, and stay on the stage, where all who are baptized will gather. When all have been baptized, friends and family will be invited up to the stage.

A photo gallery of the baptism will be available on facebook a week or so after the celebration.

\*\* Please change afterwards, in the bathrooms by the Library, and leave your wet towels in the tote provided in each bathroom.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT AN INDOOR EVENING BAPTISM SERVICE?**

Please meet in the back of the ministry center (by the kitchen window) 15 minutes before the service begins. We will go over any questions, let you know the order of the baptisms, and pray. The service will begin with musical worship, followed by the message. A pastor will then explain the meaning of baptism, focusing on the theme of Christ's payment for our sins through His death on the cross. Another song will begin and the baptizing pastor will enter the baptismal. You will come forward in the pre-determined order. You will enter the baptismal. The Pastor will ask you a few simple questions. You can answer with a simple nod, or you may read a short faith story prepared on a 3x5 card. A person of your choice, or the baptizing pastor will then pray for you. Then he will immerse you into the water. You will only be under water for a few seconds. Then you will exit the pool and be handed a towel. Please walk behind the baptismal, and stay on the stage, where all who are baptized will gather. When all have been baptized, friends and family will be invited up to the stage.

A photo gallery of the baptism will be available on facebook a week or so after the celebration.

\*\* Please change afterwards, in the bathrooms by the library, and leave your wet towels in the tote provided in each bathroom.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AT AN OUTDOOR BAPTISM SERVICE?**

Please meet in the pavilion at LaCanne Park 15 minutes before the service begins. We will go over any questions, let you know the order of the baptisms, and pray. The service will begin with musical worship, followed by the message. A pastor will then explain the meaning of baptism, focusing on the theme of Christ's payment for our sins through His death on the cross. Another song will begin and the baptizing pastor will enter the lake. You will come forward in the pre-determined order. You will enter the lake, and the pastor will ask you a few simple questions. You can answer with a simple nod, or you may read a short faith story prepared on a 3x5 card. A person of your choice, or the baptizing pastor will then pray for you. Then the pastor will immerse you into the water. You will only be under water for a few seconds. Then you will exit the lake and be handed a towel. Please walk off to the side, and stay near the lake, where all who are baptized will gather. When all have been baptized, friends and family will be invited up near the lake.

A photo gallery of the baptism will be available on facebook a week or so after the celebration.

\*\* Please change afterwards, in the bathrooms at the park, and leave your wet towels in the tote provided in each bathroom.

\*\* Please bring a chair if you desire to sit during the service.

\*\* In case of rain, the event will be postponed. If the weather looks questionable, visit [www.pvwinona.com](http://www.pvwinona.com) after 3pm.