



baptism

Our statement on baptism and answers to some frequently-asked-questions.

Water baptism is for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple; therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the church, oneself and the world, a believer is immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It also signifies that a person's former way of life has been put to death and depicts a release from the mastery of sin.

What is the meaning of baptism?

Baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a person's former way of life (unbelief) has been put to death and depicts a release from the mastery of sin. (Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3-4)

Who should be baptized?

Baptism is for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the church, oneself and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:41)

Why should I be baptized?

Baptism is obedience to God's command in Scripture (Matthew 28:18-20). It is mentioned more than 70 times in the New Testament. Jesus himself was baptized as an example for us (Matthew 3:16-17), and baptism gives evidence that a person is a disciple of Christ (Acts 2:38-41).

Why is it important that I be baptized by immersion?

Believer's baptism by immersion was the early church method described in the Bible. Descriptions such as "plenty of water" (John 3:23), "came up out of the water" (Mark 1:5,10), "went down... came up out of" (Acts 8:38-39), make clear that immersion was the practice. No mode of baptism more clearly articulates the centrality of the Christian message (of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus) than immersion.

What if I was baptized as an infant or child?

Infant baptisms are a beloved tradition that many congregations and families hold dear, but they are more a symbol of a parent's faith than their children's. While we recognize the heart and intent of this practice, we believe the Bible teaches that you should be baptized after making your own decision to follow Jesus for salvation. (Acts 2:36-38, Acts 16:29-34)

When can my children be baptized?

Children can be baptized once they've put their faith in Jesus Christ. We strongly recommend that children, up to 6th grade, attend our Trails baptism class for kids before they are baptized. Proverbs 20:25 issues a significant caution against the danger of making a vow before adequate knowledge, forethought, and reflection have been given. The Trails class helps children be certain about their salvation and baptism and may prevent a premature commitment they may not fully understand.

Who can perform baptism?

Contrary to some traditions, there seems to be no biblical reason to limit the person baptizing to a pastor who has been ordained to vocational ministry. Therefore, (at the discretion of our lead pastor, staff pastors and elders) we allow any believer who has been baptized, male or female, to perform the ordinance of baptism.

What if I was baptized but now suspect my actual conversion occurred later?

The question is, "Was I truly trusting in Christ when I was baptized?"

If you conclude that your original baptism experience was prior to trusting in Christ as Lord, (i.e., you were pressured into baptism by your parents or friends, had no real grasp on salvation, had some ulterior motive, etc.), then you should pursue obedience in this area and be baptized now.

Or, if you conclude that your baptism depicted the beginning of a journey of faith marked by numerous defining moments, then let it stand. As Christians, we continually have new experiences of grace that progressively deepen our understanding of Christ's work and our relationship with Him. Believers should not be re-baptized each time they experience greater joy and sanctification.

BAPTISM AND MEMBERSHIP

At Storyline, we require anyone desiring to join our church to have been baptized following their conversion. While baptism is not a condition for salvation, it is nonetheless an important theological conviction that we hold firmly. We love and respect our brothers and sisters in Christ who hold a different view, but we believe and subsequently teach believer's baptism by immersion as the biblical form of baptism.