

# Understanding Baptism



**BRENTWOOD PARK**  
Alliance Church

# BAPTISM at Brentwood Park Alliance Church

## *Taking the Next Step....*

Baptism is an important step of faith in the life of a person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ. It's a wonderful event that celebrates and declares the work of God in a person's life and their commitment to follow Jesus. But there are many questions about what baptism is, who should get baptized and why. This booklet is designed to help answer some of those questions.

### What is baptism?

1. It is a **personal** declaration of a new life with Christ, a symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection.

*"For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to **new life** because **you** trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead."* Colossians 2:12 NLT

2. It is a **public** declaration of a new life with Christ.

*"The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."* John 1:29-31 NLT

3. It is not a condition of salvation; it is **evidence of salvation**.

*"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."* Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT

### Why should I get baptized?

1. To follow Jesus' **example**.

*"One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John (the Baptist) **baptized him** in the Jordan River." - Mark 1:9 NLT*

2. To follow Jesus' **instruction**.

*"Jesus came and told his disciples, "...Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit**."*



Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.”” - Matthew 28:19-20 NLT

### 3. Because you see it practiced in the **early church**.

“Those who believed what Peter said were **baptized** and added to the church that day – about 3,000 in all.” - Acts 2:41 NLT (See also Acts 2:38, 8:12, 9:18, 10:47, 16:15, 18:8, 19:5)

### 4. Because you believe that obeying Jesus’s commands shows that you **know Him**.

“And we can be sure that we know him if we **obey** his commandments.” - 1 John 2:3 NLT

### 5. Because participating in baptism = identifying with Jesus’ **death** and **resurrection**

“Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” - Romans 6:3-4 NLT

## How Do We Do Baptisms?

### We practice baptism by **immersion**.

“After his baptism, as Jesus came up **out of the water**...” - Matthew 3:16 NLT

Water baptism symbolically demonstrates what happens when Christ comes into our lives. We are first lowered into the water, **symbolizing** that we have died and are buried with Christ. We are then raised out of the water, **symbolizing** that we have been resurrected with Christ to new life (Romans 6:3-4).

## Who Should Get Baptized?

### Every person who believes in **Jesus Christ**.

“But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized.” - Acts 8:12-13a NLT

The one requirement for baptism is belief in Christ. Therefore, we do not baptize children until they are old enough to understand and believe what Jesus has done and what following Jesus means.

### **When Can You Get Baptized?**

**As soon as you choose to *believe*.**

While it is important to be old enough and mature enough to fully understand your decision, baptism isn't a ceremony for when you have all of Christianity figured out - it is an early step in your faith journey. You don't have to be perfect; just committed to Jesus.

*"Those who believed what Peter said were baptized..." - Acts 2:41 NLT*

*"So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and then they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him." - Acts 8:35-38 NLT*

### **Can You Be Baptized Twice?**

If you have not been baptized by immersion since becoming a believer, our church recommends that you be baptized again. It doesn't *devalue a prior experience* but simply reflects your desire to be baptized in the same way Jesus was baptized. If you were baptized by immersion as a believer, there is no need to be baptized again.

*"There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all." - Ephesians 4:5-6 NLT*

### **How do I share my story?**

At Brentwood Park Alliance, we believe that everyone who wishes to be baptized should write out their personal testimony because each Christian's ability to communicate how they entered into a relationship with Christ is *very important*. Writing your story will help organize your thoughts and will prepare you to share your story with others.

Your testimony is the story of how you came to follow Jesus Christ. Each person's story is special, and, like a snowflake, no two are exactly the same. While you have the freedom to write your testimony in any form that you deem appropriate, many have found it easier to write their story of grace by breaking down their testimony into three stages:

### **1. Life before you accepted Christ**

Describe your value system, motivations and lifestyle prior to your conversion. You don't have to give lots of details of your "old ways," especially because some people have experienced a more gradual change before committing themselves to Jesus, but it would be very helpful for people to understand how Jesus has helped you to understand and live life in a different way.

Identify the events, people and situations that caused you to consider Jesus Christ as the solution to your spiritual needs and ultimately led to your decision to accept Him as Lord and Saviour. In some cases, this process may have taken place over a long period of time.

**Note:** It is very possible that you accepted Christ as a young child and have very little recollection of your life before coming to follow him. In that case, focus on the difference it has made to have Christ a part of your everyday life.

### **2. Circumstances surrounding inviting Christ into your life (Why did you choose Jesus?)**

Include the specific steps that you took to become a Christian and why you believe that you have eternal life. Perhaps start with this line: ***"I confessed my faith in Christ when ..."***

### **3. How has your life changed as a result of being a new creation in Christ?**

Describe the difference that Jesus has made in your thinking, motivation, values, and actions. This step will allow you to think through and describe how your life is different than what it could have been and to describe the transformation that is continuing to take place in your life.

Be sensitive to those that are present at your baptism. Even if you have struggled to deal with difficult people or issues, be honourable and gracious. Avoid speaking critically about other denominations or making unnecessary generalizations about whole groups of churches.

### **Is God calling you?**

While baptism has a lot of imagery and symbolism behind it, in practice, it involves sharing your story of faith publicly and being submerged in water according to the practice in the New Testament. It is something that has been practiced in the church since the time of Jesus and is a beautiful faith response to the work of Jesus on the cross. So, if you believe in your heart that Jesus died and was resurrected and that through that, you have been saved, then it's time to be baptized and declare to the world that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10).

## **Getting Baptized at Brentwood Park Alliance Church**

We are delighted that you have made the decision to be baptized. We hope the following instructions will help guide you through the process and answer any questions you might have.

### **1. Before the Baptism**

- Meet with the pastor to go over any questions you may have, to share your story of faith and to plan the details (e.g. date, location, etc.)
- Write your story. It should be **no longer than a page** and should clearly tell people about your commitment to trust and follow Jesus and why you have decided to step forward to be baptized. If you are uncomfortable with reading your testimony out loud at your baptism, we can pre-record it and then play it for people to watch.
- Ask someone to pray for you. This person will come and publicly pray for you from the stage
- Ask someone to baptize you.
- Determine and ask if you want more than one person to baptize you.

### **2. Day of the baptism:**

#### **A. What to bring**

- A towel – two if you have long hair.
- Wear a long dark T-shirt and shorts of your choice to the service. Many women feel more comfortable wearing a bathing suit underneath their T-shirt and shorts. You may also want to think through footwear to wear after coming out of the baptismal tank. (Optional)
- Bring a change of clothes for after the baptism (remember underwear - you'd be surprised at how many forget that part 😂).
- Plastic bag for wet clothing.
- Hairbrush or comb (and hair elastic if desired).
- **A copy of your testimony.**

#### **B. When to meet**

- Meet with the person/people baptizing you at least 15 minutes before the service starts. You can ask any questions you might have, and they will pray with you before the service.

#### **C. What happens in the service**

- The person/people baptizing you enter the tank first, and then you enter after.
- After your introduction, either you will read your testimony or the pre-recorded video of your testimony will be played
- Someone of your choosing will come up and pray for you.
- The person leading will then ask you two questions:
  - 1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, being both fully God and fully human, died for your sins upon the cross, was raised from death to**

**life on the third day, and will one day return to restore the earth and reign as our King?**

**2. Do you pledge to follow and obey the Lord your God with all your heart to the best of your ability from this day forward?**

- After you answer, the leader will then say something like: **“Based on the profession of your faith, it is our joy and honour to baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”**
- You will then be submerged in the water. To make it simple, as you are being laid into the water backwards, bend your knees and hold the arm of the person baptizing you. This facilitates the process.
- Following your baptism, you will exit the tank and go where you can dry off and change.
- After the service, make yourself available for people to congratulate you and wish you well.
- You will receive a certificate of baptism from the pastors at Brentwood Park Alliance Church.

If you have any questions, including if you would like help crafting your story, feel free to connect with Pastor Kirk at [kirk@brentwoodchurch.ca](mailto:kirk@brentwoodchurch.ca).