

Preparing for Baptism

We're Excited for You!

Your decision to turn from sin and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is the most important decision you will ever make. Following your personal commitment to submit your life to the Lordship of Christ, an important next step in your spiritual journey is to be obedient in believer's baptism. This will be a special moment in your life, and your faith family, The Branch, looks forward to worshiping and celebrating with you at your baptism. This document has been prepared to outline for you the steps you need to take in preparing for your baptism.

Understanding the Meaning of Baptism According to the Bible

Baptism:

- 1 ▶ Publicly demonstrates your identification with Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:4-5; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:11-12). You are showing the work of Christ—His death, burial, and resurrection—and your participation in that work by God's grace.
 - 2 ▶ Visibly declares your deliverance from the judgment of God (1 Peter 3:18-21).
 - 3 ▶ Displays your union with Christ's body, His Church (Acts 2:26-41; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:3-6).
 - 4 ▶ Follows both the example (Matthew 3:13-17) and the command of Christ (Matthew 28:19).
- Baptism is a symbol of what God has already done for us in Christ, in regenerating our heart. It is an outward expression of an inward reality.
 - Baptism signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and depicts a release from the mastery of sin. The Branch practices and teaches believer's baptism.

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- Therefore, baptism is a celebration of the grace of God in your life. It is an external celebration of an internal transformation. We are celebrating what God has done by his grace in giving you a new hope and a new heart by making you a new creation!

Prepare Your Testimony

At your baptism, you will have the opportunity to publicly share with your church family and the world your personal decision to submit your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The goal of this time is to share how God's grace was made evident in your life through a personal response to the gospel. Prior to preparing a summary of what you will say, take some time to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your words so that all those who will be present at your baptism will hear and respond to the gospel. Your recounting of the gospel can actually lead another person to trust in Christ.

The questions below will help you write a testimony that you will share at your baptism.

1. What is your understanding of who God is? What is God like?

2. What is the Gospel? Describe it in 15 words or less.

3. How did you come to the realization that you were guilty before God and separated from God? What separated you from God?

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4. How has the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ overcome your guilt and separation?

5. How have you responded to the gospel?

6. What circumstances and people influenced your decision to trust in Christ? Write out a couple of events, conversations or key turning points in your life to come to this decision.

7. Why do you want to be baptized?

Now that you have thought through your responses, use them to form a simple paragraph below. Try to keep your testimony between 150 and 250 words. Be sure to practice what you plan to say. Begin by stating your name and your age. Close your testimony with why you desire to be baptized and a statement of what you are wanting to declare to the world about what Jesus has done. (i.e. Jesus has saved me and I will follow him forever...God has changed my life and I want the world to know that Jesus is my Lord now....etc.) After you have prepared your testimony and shared it with a pastor for their guidance, you are ready to schedule your baptism!

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Speak with a pastor

Prior to scheduling your baptism, you will need to make an appointment to meet with a pastor to share how you came to trust in Christ and why you desire to be baptized. This is a very important meeting in that it will help you clarify any questions that you may have about what it means to be saved by grace and what a biblical response to the gospel looks like in your life. This personal conversation will also help prepare your testimony.

Name of pastor: _____ Date of meeting: _____