

Why should I 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 Why was Jesus baptized? In order to save Him? No. He didn't need to be saved. He was perfect. Baptism doesn't save us. It is a symbol of obedience and an example that we are to do what He has done.
- Because Christ commands it. Christ commands that every Christian be baptized. *"Jesus said, 'Go then to all people and (1) make them My disciples, (2) baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and (3) teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.'"* These are the three things the church is commanded to do: make disciples (help people come to know Christ), baptize them, and help them "grow up" in God. Many people think, "I'll be baptized after I've grown up. After I know about the Christian life, then I'll be baptized." This is backwards. Notice the order. Make disciples, then baptize them, then spend the rest of your life growing as a Christian.
- It demonstrates that I'm really a believer. The Bible says, *"Many of the people who heard Him believed and were baptized."* Baptism doesn't make you a Christian. It just shows that you are a Christian. A wedding ring doesn't make me married. It is a symbol of a commitment that I made. If I were to lose my ring, I'd still be married. Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward commitment. It says to the world, "I'm not ashamed to tell the whole world what's happened to me. I've given my life to Christ? A little boy asked me one time, "Pastor Bill, when can I get advertised?" (meaning to say "baptized"). I like that. Baptism is an advertisement for Jesus.

What is the meaning of baptism?

- Baptism illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection. *"Christ died for our sins. He was buried and He rose again,"* the Bible says, *"for when you were baptized you were buried with Christ and in baptism you were also raised with Christ."* At FCC, we baptize the way they did in the Bible - putting people all the way under the water. It is a symbol of a burial and resurrection. Just like Jesus Christ died and was buried in the ground for three days and then rose again.
- Baptism illustrated my new life as a Christian. *"When anyone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. The old life has passed away and a new life has begun."* 2 Corinthians 5:17. In the Bible, there was no such thing as a person claiming to be a Christian who wasn't baptized. It was automatic. You were baptized as soon as you gave your life to Christ.

Why does FCC believe in and practice baptism by immersion?

- Because Jesus was baptized that way. We want to do it the way they did it in the Bible. *"As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water."* He went down to the Jordan River and John the Baptist baptized Him in the river. Jesus set the example.
- Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion. As an example, *"Then both Philip and the man went down into the water and Philip baptized him. Then they came up out of the water."*
- Because that's what the word means. "Baptize" literally means "dip under water."
- It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection. The founders of denominations agree on this:
 - Martin Luther (Lutherans) said, "I would have those who are to be baptized to be entirely immersed as the word imports and the mystery signifies."
 - John Calvin (Presbyterians) said, "The word 'baptize' signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."
 - John Wesley (Methodists) said, "'Buried with Him' alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church."
 - Even some Catholics are now going back to baptism by immersion. I recall an article in the *Times* that says, *"Many Catholics are returning to the full immersion baptism of church history and its greater symbolism."* The number one background of people attending FCC are people who are former Catholics. We've had many people say when they get older and accept Christ, "I want to be baptized the way Jesus commanded, the way Jesus talked about." We're not talking about the baptism of confirmation but a baptism of confession.

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Who should be baptized?

- Every person who believes in Christ. *"Those who believed and accepted His message were baptized."*
- At FCC we wait until our children are old enough to believe and understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them. There is only one qualification in the Bible to be baptized. You've got to believe in Christ. Obviously, you have to be old enough to understand what that's all about. There are many churches that practice the baptism of confirmation. This ceremony is intended to be a covenant between the parents and God on behalf of the child. This custom only began about 300 years after the Bible was finished. This is different than the baptism talked about in the Bible, which was only for those old enough to believe. At FCC it is a membership requirement. Every member must be baptized the way Jesus demonstrated, even though many of us were confirmed as children.

When should you be baptized?

- As soon as you become a believer, or as soon as you realize its importance. Maybe you've been a believer for a while but you didn't realize how important baptism is. Jesus said, *If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" Baptism is one of those commandments.
- There is no reason to delay. After you've decided to receive Christ, baptism is the next step.

Can my family be baptized together?

- Yes. If each family member understands the full meaning of baptism and has become a Christian, we encourage families to be baptized together. I once baptized a family of six: the mom, the dad, and four teenagers. It was a great experience.
- Younger children who wish to be baptized are asked to attend a Children's Baptism class. Contact [Pastor Rebecca Morrison](mailto:rmorrison@familycommunity.church) at rmorrison@familycommunity.church for more information.

What should I wear for it? Will I have to say anything at my baptism?

- Wear whatever you feel comfortable in. If you're a woman, wear a swim suit with a t-shirt over the top for modesty. If you're a man, a pair of shorts and a t-shirt works. Basically, wear something you don't mind getting wet.
- You won't have to say anything at your baptism. At the beginning of the service, the pastor will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait at the edge of the baptism tank for your turn to be baptized. Then I or another pastor will introduce you, read your personal testimony of how you came to Christ (that you will have given us in writing), and briefly lower you into the water. You can then leave, dry off, and watch others be baptized if you like. Later, you will be mailed a certificate of your baptism.
- We also encourage you to pick up invitations to mail out to friends and relatives inviting people to your baptism.

Is it ok to be baptized more than once?

- I have had an instance where a wife, who was baptized when she gave her life to Christ, later wanted to be baptized with her husband when he became a Christian. Of course, this is ok. Do you take communion only one time? There's no law that says you can only be baptized once. If you are in the Holy Land and want to be baptized in the Jordan River as a reaffirmation of your faith, go ahead. There's nothing wrong with that.

What if I have a special circumstance that requires a private baptism?

- We would be happy to do this for you. For instance, if you're petrified of water or have had a surgery or medical condition that could cause you to be embarrassed, we are understanding and sympathetic. All you need to do is call or email a pastor at FCC and arrange a private baptism.

If you have read the above information and still have questions about baptism, feel free to contact us and we can assist you with any further questions. Email info@familycommunity.church.