

WHAT FCCC BELIEVES ABOUT BAPTISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Jesus’ words from Matthew 28:18-20

Have you ever wondered why baptism is mentioned so much in religious circles? It is not uncommon for newcomers and those with different religious backgrounds to wonder *what the big deal is*. If you have been baptized by immersion, this information will affirm your previous decision. If you have not been baptized by immersion, this brochure will help you understand why this is an important step in the process of making Jesus the Lord of your life. If you were christened as a baby, this information will help you come to a fuller understanding of God’s plan of salvation. Whatever your background, we are pleased that God has brought you to this point in your faith walk with Him.

What is Baptism?

What does the word itself mean? Greek dictionaries define the word which was used in Biblical times (baptismos) as *immersion, dipping or submersion*. For this reason, in New Testament times believers were immersed when they became believers in Jesus Christ. In fact, for the first several hundred years of the church, immersion was universally accepted as the way a person was baptized.

Baptism is an important step of obedience by one who has declared his faith in Jesus. So important is this step that throughout the book of Acts, every person who professed belief in Jesus was baptized by immersion. Jesus himself modeled baptism. *“Jesus came...and was baptized by John.”* Mark 1:9

In the Bible, baptism is clearly commanded as part of the process of accepting Christ as Lord and Savior.

...God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ Acts 2:36-38

Who Should Be Baptized?

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

The first thing to understand is that Jesus came to earth, was crucified, buried and resurrected for the forgiveness of your sins. If you realize you are a sinner and you are ready to make Jesus your Savior, you are ready to be baptized. The decision to be immersed is an important one and should be made by one who is ready to make a full commitment to trusting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

You need not feel as if you must be .perfect. or know all about the Bible in order to take this step. You just need to desire to be a follower of Jesus. As you mature in your faith, you will more fully understand that through baptism you receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, as well as complete forgiveness and rebirth. Notice the symbolism of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus experienced in baptism.

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Romans 6:3-7

What About Infant Baptism/Christening?

If you were baptized/christened as an infant, be grateful that you had parents who cared enough about you to set you apart for God. Because of their devotion, you have an opportunity to complete their prayer by willingly submitting to baptism. This is not a sign of disrespect for what your parents did, in fact, it can be seen as a fulfillment of their prayers. Be thankful for the heritage of concerned parents, but don't forego your opportunity to make your personal decision to obey God in baptism.

It is important to note that there isn't a clear reference to an infant being baptized in the Bible. Every time baptism is mentioned, it is preceded by an acknowledgement or confession of belief. Baptism is meaningful only when it is an expression of one's personal belief in Christ, which requires a significant level of maturity. At First Colony, we designate one Sunday each year to dedicate newborn babies to the Lord. This ceremony is designed to demonstrate the commitment of the parents and of our congregation to lead these little ones to a life of faith in Jesus. It is our hope and desire that as these children mature, they will make their own personal decision to obey God in baptism.

What happens at Baptism?

"Those who accepted His message were baptized, and were added to their number." Acts 2:41

When one submits to be baptized as an expression of faith and out of love for God, God fully and completely forgives that individual's sins and adds that person to His church. The change in relationship with God does not come because we merit or deserve it. It is *God's power*, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, that works the salvation of man. God only requires that we submit in trusting obedience.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

What Should I Do If I Haven't Been Baptized?

Do you believe in Jesus as the Son of God? Are you truly sorry for your sins and are you ready to let Jesus be the Lord of your life? All spiritual blessings await you in Christ Jesus, including His Holy Spirit to help and empower you.

The heart of the believer says, .God, if you want me to be baptized, I'll do it! I may not understand every reason, but neither do I understand how you could save a sinner like me.. Baptism is not a trivial issue or an optional command. In baptism, God signs and seals our conversion to Him . it is a Holy moment.

How Does One Arrange for Being Baptized at First Colony?

A baptism can be arranged just about any time that is convenient for you, however typical times are during Sunday morning or Wednesday night services. Call the church office (281-980-7070) for baptism arrangements or to set up a meeting to discuss baptism further.

How Do I Become a Member at First Colony Church of Christ?

Individuals that have been baptized by immersion may become members of FCCC by completing a Membership Form, which is available at our Welcome Center or in the church office. After your Membership Form has been received in our office, you will be contacted regarding your desire to be formally affiliated with our church family.