

The Importance of Baptism

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is an outward act signifying an inward grace received by the believer as they publically declare their wholehearted allegiance to Jesus Christ. Within this faith community (St. Albert Alliance Church) and denominationally (C&MA in Canada), we affirm two things through the ordinance and practice of baptism.

First, the believer is symbolically identifying with Christ's death and resurrection and the new life that ensues. (Romans 6:3-4 NIV)

Second, the believer identifies with Christ's Body, the Church, and affirms the importance of unity within the Body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13 NIV)

WHY IS BAPTISM IMPORTANT?

It signifies our obedience to Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." It's as simple as that. When we love Jesus, we want to do what He says.

When we are baptized, we are following the example of Jesus who was obedient to God the Father, and was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness." The early church believers were baptized. In Peter's first sermon he said, "*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ.*" (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19-20a NIV)

It is a testimony to others.

Baptism is an outward expression of our conversion to Jesus Christ. The Bible records that people always demonstrated belief in Jesus Christ and then were baptized as an outward testimony of their allegiance to Christ. Because salvation only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9), baptism does not earn us favour with God. Rather, it is an expression of our commitment to Him.

Every single baptism is a witness (an acting out) of the gospel story - that Christ died and we are dead to sin through salvation; that Christ was buried and we are burying our old sinful life; that Christ was raised from the dead and that we are raised to live a new life in Christ.

It is an expression of our identification.

The original word "baptizo" means literally to dip, to immerse, to place into. Just as a cloth placed into a vat of dye is "identified" with the dye, so in baptism a Christian is identified completely with Jesus Christ. The Bible says we have "*clothed ourselves with Christ*" (Galatians 3:27).

We also identify with the church (the body of Jesus Christ), "for we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Corinthians 12:13). Our baptism is a powerful testimony to others.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Everyone who has made a decision to believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is seeking to follow Jesus as Lord of their lives.

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

The biblical pattern for baptism is immediately following someone's decision to repent and accept God's forgiveness of sins. Most often, this was the very same day (Acts 2:41; 8:35-38).

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. If you have any questions or concerns, we would love to talk further with you about these.

WHAT IF I WAS BAPTIZED AS A BABY?

We view adult baptism as the fulfillment of infant baptism. Parents have their children baptized with the desire and hope that their children will be followers of Christ and part of His church. For that same child to mature to the place where they themselves make a conscious and willing decision of their own to follow Christ is an actualizing of that original intent of the parents. It takes nothing away from infant baptism; rather it fulfills the original intent of infant baptism.

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN?

At St. Albert Alliance Church, we do not baptize infants but wait until people are old enough to express their own personal faith in Jesus Christ and understand the meaning of baptism. Children who are interested in baptism must attend an Xtreme Kids First Steps class together with their parents, where they will learn the significance and meaning of baptism.

NEXT STEPS

Contact

You can personally contact any of our pastors who would be happy to walk you through the process, or if you're not sure which pastor to ask, you can contact Luella Krueger at lkruieger@staalliance.org for more information.

Before you make contact, there are some things for you to consider:

- Who do you want to baptize you?
- How do you want to share your testimony (live or via pre-recorded video)?

Interview

We are so excited that you are considering this essential step in the Christian walk, and we want to hear your story and answer any questions you may have. This conversation can be set up through Luella or directly with the pastor who will baptize you.

Testimony

An essential part of the baptism journey is sharing your story with the congregation. This can be done 'live' or via pre-recorded video. The pastor involved will review your story with you prior to sharing it publically. The testimony should include how you came to faith in Jesus and why you are choosing to be baptized. We encourage testimonies to be about 2-3 minutes in length.

Jesus told His disciples to "...make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Matthew 28:19-20a NIV