

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

What It Is & Why
We Practice It

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At Oakdale Community Church, we practice Believer's Baptism by immersion. I have put together for you:

- a brief description of what Believer's Baptism is.....page 2
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Believer's Baptism represents the Believer's initial commitment to Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper represents the ongoing commitment of the Believer to Christ. Because of these beliefs, neither will be taken lightly in this church.

May we continue to grow in our commitment to our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, who gave us life by His death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb.

*If you have committed your life to Jesus Christ, or if
you want to talk with someone about Jesus
and what it means to be a Christian,
please call the Oakdale Community Church
(651) 457-3866*

Virtually all Christian churches practice the rite of baptism. They do so in large part because Jesus, in His Great Commission, commanded the apostles and the church to "*go... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" (Matthew 28:19)

Faith is possible without baptism (our salvation does not depend upon being baptized). But baptism is a natural accompaniment to the Christian faith.

Baptism is an act of faith and a testimony that a believer has been united with Christ in His death and resurrection. It is a public indication of a Christian's commitment to Christ.

WHO DO WE BAPTIZE? Because baptism is an act of faith, we baptize those who are believers in Jesus Christ. As a result, we call it *Believer's Baptism*. It is a special celebration set aside for those who have committed their lives to Christ.

At Oakdale, we realize it is important for a person to go beyond a commitment to Jesus Christ. It is essential that we grow in our new faith. Because of this, we encourage each believer to be involved in ways that help us to serve God and others, and mature in our faith.

WHY IS THE BELIEVER IMMERSED? When the believer is baptized, he or she is immersed completely under the water, and then brought out again. The New Testament word "baptizo" is translated "baptize". It means "to dip or to plunge under the water." The tradition of the early Christians was to baptize believers by immersion.

There is a significant connection between this method, what it symbolizes, and the basic beliefs of the Christian faith. A person is lowered into the water, and then raised out of it. We die to sin and are born again to new life in Christ. This illustrates for us the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM: A MORE DETAILED BACKGROUND

At Oakdale Community Church, we practice Believer's Baptism by immersion.

Baptism is something practiced by almost every Christian church. The word "baptizo" (from which we get our word "baptize") appears first in the Old Testament purification laws of Moses (Exodus 30: 17 -21; Leviticus 11:25). Here it means "washing or cleansing". Jews baptized proselytes, or converts from pagan religions to Judaism. John's baptism in the New Testament was connected with repentance, so that the people may be spiritually prepared to recognize and receive the Messiah.

Christian baptism symbolizes union with Christ (Galatians 3:26-27), remission for sins (Acts 2:38), identification with Christ in our death to sin and resurrection to new life (Romans 6:3-5), and becoming a member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The blessings of baptism are received by faith (Romans 6:8-11).

Baptism is an outward symbol of the inward change which has occurred in the life of the believer. It is a public testimony of one's faith in Jesus Christ. It does not produce any spiritual change in the one baptized. Rather, it is an indication of the change which has already taken place. We baptize because of Christ's instructions, and it serves as a form of proclamation. It confirms one's salvation to oneself, and affirms it to others.

Baptism is not an act of regeneration (it doesn't save us or forgive our sins). It presupposes faith and the salvation which faith leads to. It is a testimony that salvation has already occurred.

The examples and teachings of Scripture all lead to the conclusion that believers are the only people who are to be baptized. Baptism is an act of faith in Jesus Christ.

The words "sprinkling" and "pouring" are never used in the New Testament for "baptism". This has compelled Bible scholars of all denominations to describe that in the original meaning and in the New Testament use, baptism meant immersion of those who have expressed their faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ.

-Martin Luther: "The term 'baptism' is a Greek word. It may be rendered 'a dipping'. We dip something in water, that it may be entirely covered with water."

-John Calvin: "The word 'baptize' signifies 'to immerse'; and the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church."

When and why did sprinkling become the method of baptism for so many churches? The Bible teaches that we depend on the grace of God for our salvation. The belief developed that there is such a close relationship between baptism and salvation, that they cannot be separated. The natural fear then was that a person dying without baptism would be lost. A sick or injured person could not be immersed because of his physical condition, but if baptism were necessary for salvation, he would be lost if he should die. And there is a danger in immersing babies under the water. Thus, sprinkling began to be practiced.

Sprinkling began occasionally in the 3rd century A.D. But it wasn't until the 14th century A.D. that the option of either sprinkling or immersion became officially adopted by any church. In 1644 the Church of England adopted sprinkling as the proper means of baptism by vote of Parliament (the vote was 25 to 24). This is quite an interesting way to determine the will of God.

As we discuss this, be sure to remember the example of Jesus on the cross. The repentant robber hanging beside Jesus was given the promise "Today you shall be with me in Paradise. "

The word "baptism" and the various forms ("baptize", "baptizing", etc) occur 99 times in the New Testament. (This does not include references to John the Baptist).

-15 times it is used figuratively (14 times it refers to Christ's sufferings when He would be "overwhelmed" by the suffering of bearing the sins of the world upon the cross; 1 time it refers to Israel crossing the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses).

-7 times it refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Four of these refer to Christ baptizing with the Holy Spirit).

-77 times it refers to water baptism.

Baptism is considered an "ordinance", something "ordered by Jesus Christ" (see Matthew 28). Ordinances are outward symbols of inner spiritual experiences. Baptism portrays the beginning of the Christian's spiritual life. The Lord's Supper, or Communion, portrays the continuation and renewal of the Christian's life.

1) Baptism pictures the believer's identification with Jesus Christ, who was crucified, buried, and raised again for our salvation. Baptism expresses symbolically and publicly what has taken place in the transformed life, and it further expresses a new allegiance to Christ.

2) Baptism symbolizes the new life of the believer: dead to sin, buried under the water, and raised again. We are now a new creation.

3) Baptism portrays the believer's glorification: looking forward to the resurrection day. Baptism says expressively that we believe in the reality of this resurrection. Even death has been conquered by Christ in His resurrection. By faith in Him, we too may conquer death and participate in the resurrection.

SOME VERSES RELATED TO BAPTISM

Matthew	3:1-17	Baptism follows confession Jesus is baptized by John
	18:1-10	We must be child-like to enter the Kingdom of God
	28:19-20	We are to make disciples, baptize, teach
Mark	1:4-9	John's baptism of repentance
	10:38-39	Baptism represents complete suffering
	11:30	John's baptism of repentance
	16:16	Believe and be baptized, leading to salvation; disbelief leads to condemnation
Luke	3:3-22	John baptized with water Jesus baptized with the Spirit and fire
	7:28-33	John's baptism of repentance
	20:4	John's baptism of repentance
John	1:25-34	John baptized with water
	3:22-26	John's baptism emphasized repentance
	4:1-2	Jesus' followers were baptized
Acts	1:5	John baptized with water, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit
	2:37-41	Repent and be baptized
	8:12-16	When they believed, they were baptized Phillip
	8:26-39	baptized an Ethiopian
	10	Cornelius and other believers baptized
	16:19-34	Jailer told to believe He and his household were baptized
	18:8	Crispus and his household believe and were baptized with many others
	18:25	Apollos baptizes
	19:1-7	Some who were baptized by John were re-baptized in the name of Jesus
22:16	Baptism was part of calling on the Lord	

Romans	6:1-11	Baptism means following in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, uniting one with Christ
1 Corinthians	1: 13-17	Paul had baptized Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanus' household
	12:13	We are baptized into one body, the church, the body of Christ
2 Corinthians	5: 17	Through baptism, we are new creatures
Galatians	2:3-5	Circumcision is not required for salvation
	3:26-27	We are baptized into Christ
	5:1-12	Circumcision is not essential, faith is
	6:12-15	We are a new creation
Ephesians	4:5	We are united in baptism
Colossians	2:12	We are buried and raised with Christ
Titus	3:5	We are saved by Christ's mercy not by any deeds we do
1 Peter	3:21	Baptism is an appeal to God for good conscience, a demonstration of change