



eastside baptismal packet

We are so glad that you are considering baptism. Please take some time to review the information in this packet. If you have any questions, feel free to call the church office at 513-831-4373. We love you and are here to serve.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

At Eastside, we believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins.

The Wedding Illustration

Imagine a wedding. The bride and groom stand side-by-side in the front of the church. They take turns promising “till death do us part”. These two young lovers don’t look any different on the outside, but in just a few moments they will be married—united for life by invisible cords. Signifying that unseen union, the bride and groom exchange rings. These bands of gold tell the world they are now married. They identify the couple as husband and wife.

Imagine that an unmarried couple is watching. They decide that they want to get married too. So they give each other rings. No commitments, no vows are made, just the symbols of the union. As they walk out of church right behind the last groomsman, their hands, like those of the bride and groom, bear the accepted token of lifetime love. But only the couple that has made the commitment to each other is really married.

Symbol is not substance. Marriage depends on a commitment, not on bands of gold. The same is true of becoming a Christian. What may outwardly identify you as a believer does not make you one. The wedding rings do not marry the couple. They are fitting symbols, but without the reality of commitment, a ring - like baptism - is void of meaning.

Biblical Passages Concerning Baptism

Of course, the real significance of baptism cannot be defined merely with the analogy of a wedding ring.

We are saved by the atoning Blood of Jesus Christ when we repent of our sins, accept His forgiveness, and begin a personal relationship with Him. Baptism declares a public confession of an inward profession of faith. The act of baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a

simple act of obedience to the Lord when we follow through and commit ourselves to do it for Him. It has a symbolic connotation of cleansing, dying to the old life, and allegiance to the new life with a new Master. (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 10:48; Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38-41, 8:12, and 10:47-48). Repentance of sin and faith in Jesus are the marks of a Christian. And all Christians are commanded to be baptized in order to identify themselves with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Only someone who has truly accepted Christ into their heart should be baptized. The Scriptures are the source of our beliefs.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus commands His followers to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...” Baptism is the means by which followers of Christ are identified.

In passages such as Acts 2:41, 8:12, and 10:47-48 it is evident that baptism follows an individual’s decision to trust Christ alone for salvation. The New Testament records the baptisms of adult believers only. Baptism was never intended to provide salvation for an individual, but rather to publicly identify a person with Christ.

A Word Concerning Infant Baptism

If the purpose of baptism is to publicly identify a believer in Jesus Christ, the question may well be asked by some, “What is the significance of my baptism as a baby?” In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them, prayed for them, and told us to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

If you were baptized as a child, it was the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your baptism as an adult can be viewed as the fulfillment of your parent’s wishes. It in no way repudiates the baptism you received as a child.

AM I READY TO BE BAPTIZED?

Baptism is for believers. Believers realize their sin separates them from God. They have given up all efforts to reach God through good works or religious activity. They have concluded that only Jesus Christ’s death on the cross for their sins can bridge the gap between them and God. A believer is someone who has decided to trust Christ alone for salvation.

If you have come to that point in your spiritual journey, then the answer is yes; you are ready to be baptized. Just as the bride and groom tell of their love for one another through the symbol of rings, you should also want to show the world through baptism of your union with Christ. Let the invisible miracle that's happened in you show through the sacrament He ordained for you.

If you have other questions regarding baptism contact us - email info@myeastside.cc or calling the church offices at 513.831.4373 ext. 21.

YOUR LIFE STORY

As part of celebrating what God has done and is doing in your life we would ask that you write a paragraph or two describing how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation. We feel this is helpful for you to recognize the difference Christ has made in your life.

When writing your story, do your best to focus on these points:

1. Be sure to explain your story in such a way that if someone heard your story, he would know what to do to become a Christian.
2. What was your life like before you decided to trust Christ?
3. Describe how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation.
4. How has this decision made a difference in your life?

Please complete the form provided on page 6 and e-mail (connect@myeastside.cc), mail, fax (513.831.4376), or drop it off at the Info Center (during services) or main office (during office hours). If you are dropping it off, please place it in an envelope and clearly mark it as "Baptism Story" with your name.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR FOR MY BAPTISM?

- ◆ Dark clothing, tee shirt and shorts (knee length).
- ◆ Please bring your own towel
- ◆ We will provide a place to change out of your wet clothes.
- ◆ You will want to bring something to hold your wet clothing in when you change.

WHERE DO I GO THE DAY OF MY BAPTISM?

- ◆ We will contact you with the specific area that we will meet at prior to the time of your baptism.

Eastside Christian Church Baptism Policy

Approved by Elder Board - 03/01/05

1. Background

The word baptize (βαπτίζω) was commonly used among the first century Greeks to signify a number of ordinary events. Examples include the dyeing of a garment by plunging it into a vat, the drawing of water by dipping one vessel into another, or even the sinking of ships at sea. It was also used metaphorically. For instance, a teacher might use the term when students bombard him with questions.

The literal and figurative forms of the word are both used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). For example, in 2 Kings 5:14, when Naaman “dipped (baptized) himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him.”

Some form of the word is used 91 times in the New Testament. The vast majority of these cases refer to the act of submitting to immersion in a body of water in response to a person’s admission of his sinfulness, a sense of repentance, and the realization of the need for God’s mercy and forgiveness to overcome that condition. In light of this large body of Biblical references, Eastside Christian Church views baptism as an important milestone for every believer. It is a beautiful drama, ordained by God, in which an individual publicly proclaims his/her commitment to Christ in a visual portrayal of death and burial to self, and resurrection to walk in a new Christ-centered life. We maintain that baptism itself does not save you - Jesus does. However, it is the expected practice for every follower of Christ (Acts 2:38-39).

2. Policy Details

Since the Bible commands it and Jesus Himself modeled it, we encourage every individual that has come to personal faith in Christ to submit to baptism. In order to be true to the spirit and meaning of the term (as used in Biblical examples as well as in first century Greek culture), Eastside Christian Church practices baptism by immersion.

Primary (Biblically mandated) prerequisites include:

- acknowledgment of, and repentance for sin
- statement of belief that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, Son of the Living God
- belief in His physical death and resurrection
- understanding that belief in His death on their behalf is sufficient payment for their sin

Secondary (locally established) prerequisites include:

- approval of parent/guardian if less than 18 years of age
- be in at least the 2nd grade
- meeting with a member of the Family Ministry Staff (parents attend with child)

As a result of faith, repentance, and baptism a person receives from God:

- forgiveness of sin and the capability to develop a personal relationship with God Himself
- entrance into the family of God with all rights as co heirs with Jesus, including eternal life
- the indwelling Holy Spirit to teach, guide, and mold him/her into the likeness of Christ
- specific spiritual gifts, given according to His wisdom and grace, for use in ministry

Your Life Story

Name _____ Phone _____

1. What was your life like before you decided to put your trust in Jesus Christ?

2. Describe how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation?

3. How has this commitment made a difference in your life?