

Water Baptism

Why do we practice water baptism?

At Grace Life Church, we believe that the act of baptism is not for receiving salvation; instead, being baptized acknowledges salvation. Choosing to be water baptized is a person's way to profess to the community and world that they are following Jesus. Water baptism is not a man-made ritual, but was given to us by the Savior Himself. We baptize believers into Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27) out of obedience to our Lord who has commissioned us to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19).

Water baptism is a spiritually significant event for the one being baptized as well as the witnesses. Being completely immersed is the definition of "baptize." Paul refers to baptism as "burial" in Romans 6:3—and when a dead person is buried, they are not just sprinkled with dirt, but completely covered in it. As in burial, in water baptism one is completely covered with the water (and must stop breathing, and shut their eyes). Being lifted up out of the water represents resurrection into a new life—opening the eyes and breathing again! In essence, baptism is being buried backwards and is a beautiful symbol of submission to our Lord Jesus.

In Mark 16:16 Jesus tells to believe and be baptized. So for an individual to receive Christian water baptism he/she must repent of sins and confess Jesus as the son of God.

When should one be water baptized?

You should be water baptized when you are inspired by the Holy Spirit to be baptized.

Were you baptized as an infant?

You can be re-baptized if you were baptized as an infant because infants are not eligible for believer's baptism (see Acts 19:3-5 as a case in point for re-baptism).

Where should one be baptized?

People can be baptized in any place with enough water to immerse the individual. A stream, lake baptistery, river, pond, or pool will all work (see Acts 8:35-38). Outdoor baptisms are usually conducted in warm weather, and during the cold season use is made of swimming pools for baptisms.

What takes place at a gathering for baptism?

At a gathering for baptism we often sing songs of praise. Someone shares scriptures and an explanation of water baptism. Then the candidates for baptism come forward, one by one. Before one is baptized he/she is asked to share a brief testimony declaring his/her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is often a time of fellowship afterward.

How do you go about being baptized?

See one of the elders or pastors and express your desire to be baptized. They will discuss baptism with you further.

Practical instructions for being baptized

Bring towels and a change of under and outergarments. Don't wear leather or glasses into the water. Slacks, jeans and sweatshirts are appropriate; especially consider wearing darker clothing which will not reveal undergarments when you come out of the water. You may go barefoot or wear sneakers into the water. We make adequate arrangements for men and women to change in privacy. Be sure to have warm enough clothing for after the baptism - even during the summer - especially if we are outside.