



# Baptism Guide

## What is baptism?

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). In obedience to Christ, baptism publicly proclaims that a person is united to Christ by faith in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4), and is a member of His body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:13).

## Does baptism save?

No. Baptism does not impart God's grace or save anyone from their sins. Rather, it is an obedient response to being saved through faith, and it is a symbol of how the person has died to sin and been made alive in Christ (Romans 6:11).

## Why does God command baptism?

Baptism is a concrete way for believers to demonstrate their obedience to Jesus' command to profess faith in Him publicly (Matthew 10:32; 28:18-20). As a person is immersed in water, he or she is proclaiming: "I believe in Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection; I am trusting in Him alone for my salvation; and I belong to His body, the Church" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 4:12). Baptism is also a proclamation and illustration of the gospel to nonbelievers, as well as an invitation for them to come to faith in Christ.

- **Baptism is a visible symbol of our identification with Christ.** We identify with Christ's death and burial when we go under the water. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, our coming out of the water symbolizes that we now walk in a "newness" of life (Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17). This does not mean we are now perfect; growing to become more like Christ is a process. But when we trust in Him for our salvation, we are no longer enslaved to sin, and we have the power through Christ to defeat what our flesh desires to do (Romans 6:5-11).
- **Baptism is a public profession of belief in Christ.** You are not saved by being baptized, but you are baptized to show that you have been saved. Salvation is a free gift paid for by Christ on the cross (1 Corinthians 1:17) and is not dependent on our own works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- **Baptism is an act of obedience for believers in Christ.** Even though baptism does not save, the Bible still commands believers to be baptized (Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism is more properly called an "ordinance." We participate in the ordinance of baptism because it was ordained and commanded ("ordered") by the Lord Jesus Christ as a symbolic demonstration of our faith in Him.
- **Baptism visibly displays our identification with Christ's body, the Church.** Baptism is not done in isolation; you can't baptize yourself. Believers are baptized into the body (1 Corinthians 12:13) by someone who is already a member of the body. Typically, people are baptized by a leader in the local church.

## When and how does Watermark baptize?

Every week, individuals who have been changed by a relationship with Christ are baptized. Baptisms are offered after all services. We baptize by immersion, which we believe best symbolizes death, burial, and resurrection, and is the way baptism was demonstrated by Jesus and the Apostles (Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38-39). In the warmer months, we do this in “The Pond” out front of the building!

## What if I was baptized as a baby?

At Watermark, we believe baptism is for believers who have consciously decided to be baptized. We believe baptism is an outward sign of new life given to an individual who has trusted in Christ for salvation (Romans 6:1-14; Matthew 28:19-20)

If you have been baptized as an infant, we would strongly encourage you to be baptized as a believer.

## How does the local church participate in baptism?

Every week, as individuals are baptized at Watermark, our local church plays a role of welcoming them into the family of God. The local church affirms their testimony and seeks to encourage them as they walk with Christ.

## Ready to be baptized?

If you have trusted in Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins and hope of eternal life, and would like to “go public” with your faith in Christ, we would love to help.

Go to [watermark.org/baptism](https://watermark.org/baptism) to let us know you are interested. From there, we will meet with you to hear your story of grace and confirm that baptism is a great next step of obedience for you.