

Baptism

Packet



BAPTISM PROCESS OVERVIEW

Congratulations!

Chatham Community Church celebrates your interest in baptism! Baptism is a significant step in your spiritual journey and we look forward to sharing this experience with you. If you would like to be baptized by Chatham Community Church, below is the process for scheduling and preparing for your baptism:

1. **Read through the Baptism Study Guide (pages 2-5)**
2. **Complete/Submit Baptism Request Form and Testimony (pages 6-7)**
3. **Share your testimony with us**
4. **Be baptized!**

If you have any questions or concerns as you work through this process, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to call! We look forward to celebrating your baptism with you!

Alex Kirk
Lead Pastor
alex@chathamchurch.org

BAPTISM DAY INFORMATION

Arrival Time: Please arrive 30 minutes before the celebration begins. Find the officiating pastor when you arrive.

Clothing: Wear conservative clothing, i.e., bathing suit with shorts and t-shirt (no white, please). Bring a towel, plastic bag for your wet clothes and some dry clothing.

Contact Person: On baptism day, if for any reason you cannot be there as scheduled, please contact Alex Kirk at 919-730-7414 and let him know ASAP.

BAPTISM STUDY GUIDE

People from Chatham Community Church come from various backgrounds, some have never attended church regularly and some have a long history in a church. Some people at our church have experiences with churches with different points of view of baptism. This information should help you understand a biblical point of view whether you are new to the Christian faith or you are a Christian but have not been baptized after accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior.

What baptism means and doesn't mean:

Baptism is a symbol of the salvation that has already taken place in your life! Water baptism serves as a public identification with Jesus—a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's connection to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death and that he is now a new creation of God.

Baptism is a spiritually significant union with the church community, uniting you with all believers through the ancient practice that has taken place for centuries in churches around the globe. In many ways, it is public announcement similar to an initiation ceremony, joining you with other followers of Jesus.

The water of baptism does not save you, only faith in Jesus Christ saves, but those who are saved by Jesus are to be baptized. It is an outward sign that a person has entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ. It symbolizes what takes place inwardly at the time of salvation:

- Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Sharing in His death and resurrection.
- Being symbolically washed clean.
- New birth into a new family—the family of God's people

Because Jesus instructed us to be baptized, baptism is also an act of obedience. It demonstrates submission to God.

A good way to understand baptism is to look at a wedding ring. A wedding ring is worn by people who've committed their life in marriage to their mate. The ring doesn't make them married but shows a reality (their marriage) that has already taken place and so it is with baptism. It announces the reality of your salvation in Jesus Christ.

Who should be baptized?

All who have trusted Jesus Christ as their savior should be baptized. Baptism was given to those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is an expression of one's faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Essential Beliefs about the Person of Jesus:

1. Jesus is God.

John 1:1 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2. Jesus became a man.

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Philippians 2:7 - but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men

3. Jesus is the only way to be reconciled to God and be with him forever.

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Acts 4:12 - And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Essential Beliefs about the Work of Jesus:

1. Jesus lived a perfectly obedient life.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

2. Jesus died as a substitute for me.

1 Peter 3:18 - For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit

3. Jesus rose from the grave.

Romans 10:9 - if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

1 Corinthians 15:17 - And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

When should I be baptized?

One should be baptized as soon as possible after accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Acts 8:35-38 - Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water: Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him."

Acts 2:41 - Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

Why should I be baptized?

1. Christ commanded it.

Matthew 28:19-20 – Therefore go and 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

2. It follows Christ's example.

Mark 1:9-10 – At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

3. It is a public profession of your faith.

Acts 18:8 – Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

How is a person baptized?

The Greek word for baptism, *baptizo*, literally means to immerse or dunk, and this is the word used to describe Jesus Christ's own baptism by John the Baptist. Because Jesus modeled this act for us, we baptize by immersion. The bible gives us the normative method of baptism in the baptism of Jesus.

Matthew 3:16 – As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

Colossians 2:12 – For when you were baptized you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do church members have to be baptized?

Since Jesus commands that all of his disciples be baptized, baptism is a requirement for all Chatham Community Church members ([Matt. 28:19](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [10:48](#); [1 Peter 3:21](#)).

What about being baptized outside of a church building or service?

There is nothing more “spiritual” about being baptized in a church building or in a church service. In the teaching of the Bible and the church, the emphasis is on a public statement of faith in Jesus as a part of the church community. Your flexibility is appreciated. Please keep this in mind as we work out a time and place for our celebration with you.

What about being baptized again?

If you have been baptized after accepting Jesus Christ but have struggled and are now renewing your commitment to Christ, you don't need to be baptized again but we will do so if you'd prefer it. What we'd encourage you to consider is participating in our public "Affirmation of Faith" practice.

For those who have made a commitment to Christ, drifted away, and are looking to re-commit themselves and celebrate that faith is taking on new meaning, we have a short series of vows that we invite you to affirm in front of the church body. After you make the affirmations, we anoint with oil (a common practice in the New Testament) as a sign of sealing you with the Holy Spirit and as God's child. The vows are below. If this sounds interesting to you, email us and we'll talk more about it.

Affirmations of Faith:

Brothers and sisters,

As ones who have been baptized, but desire to make afresh a public declaration, you have come now before God and the church to affirm your faith in Christ.

(The following questions are written for unison response.)

*"Do you wish to affirm and celebrate that the Lord has awakened faith in you in a new way?"
I do.*

*Do you believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and confess Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?
I do.*

*Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as your guide for faith and life?
I do.*

*Do you, relying on the grace of God, promise to confess Christ publicly before others, to serve Christ daily, and to walk in Jesus' way?
I do.*

Do you promise to share fully in the life of the church; to be faithful in worship and service; and to offer your prayers and gifts?

I do.

Do you promise to receive the spiritual guidance of the church; and to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation?

I do.

The congregation shall rise; the minister or elder addresses the members of the congregation:

Do you promise to love, encourage, and support these brothers and sisters by modeling Christian faith and character supporting them in fellowship, prayer, and service and welcoming their gifts and contributions to our community?

We do.

Prayer of anointing with oil.

Of course, if you are seeking to rededicate your life to God the best action is to get connected in a small group and focus on growing your relationship with God through full involvement in the church community. If you are sensing that you need to rededicate your life to Christ, it is important that you tell someone about this choice so that someone can celebrate this decision with you and encourage you along the way. Please seek out your small group leader or other church leader to let them know how God is working in your life.

What about infant baptism?

While we celebrate the love and blessing of parents, in the Bible we see baptism occurring only after a person has made a conscious choice to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. For this reason, Chatham Church performs believer baptisms only, which means we don't baptize infants.

If a person was baptized as a baby and does not want to be re-baptized due to reasons of theological conviction, he or she will still be welcomed as a member upon completion of the membership process.

PREPARING AND SHARING YOUR STORY

Communicating how you entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ is vitally important. On a separate sheet of paper take some time now to tell us more about that experience in your life. You may either hand write your testimony or type it on a computer. Either way, please include this document when you submit your paperwork.

While you have the freedom to write your testimony in any form that you deem appropriate, many have found it easier to share their story of salvation by breaking down their testimony into the following three stages:

Before I received Christ:

Describe your value system, motivations and lifestyle prior to your conversion. Identify the events and circumstances that caused you to consider Jesus Christ as the solution to your spiritual need and ultimately led to your decision to accept Him as Savior. In some cases this process may have taken place over a long period of time.

How I received Christ:

Please include the specific steps that you took to become a Christian and why you believe that you have eternal life. As much as possible, try to avoid religious lingo or church clichés (“born again”, “asked Jesus into my heart”, etc.) as this will prepare you to communicate your story more clearly and authentically to your friends.

After I received Christ:

Describe the difference that Christ has made in your thinking, motivation, values, and actions. For some this may be a dramatic change from the “before” description. For others who accepted Christ at an early age, this step will allow you to think through and describe how your life is different than what it could have been and to describe the transformation that is continuing to take place in your life. In either case, please state what assurances that you have of forgiveness and eternal life.

We understand that this may be the first time you have ever written out your testimony and it can be a challenging task. If you need help, please feel free to contact Alex Kirk. (e-mail: alex@chathamchurch.org)

We look forward to reading your story of faith and we hope that you will take the time to share it with someone else who may not know the truth of the Gospel.

SCHEDULING A TIME TO SHARE YOUR STORY

A time will need to be set up for you to share your story, or testimony. This is a time when you can tell others how God has been at work in your life bringing you to this point of being baptized. This is one of the greatest times for a church to celebrate together, and a wonderful privilege for us to celebrate God’s work with you personally.

When you have turned in your baptism request form and your story, we will work with you to schedule a time to share your testimony.

BAPTISM REQUEST FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Home # _____ Cell # _____ Work # _____

Please complete all information requested. This information is important to us in communicating with you as we prepare for your baptism.

- I read the Baptism Study Guide.
- I completed my story/testimony, and included it with this application.
- I feel that I am ready to be baptized.
- I have questions and would like to speak with someone before proceeding with my baptism.

State briefly why you want to be baptized?

After completing this form, you may bring it to the church service, or mail it to Chatham Community Church, 1685 Andrews Store Road, Pittsboro, NC 27312. If you have questions or concerns regarding baptism, please contact Alex at 919-933-9477 or alex@chathamchurch.org.