

Baptism & the Lord's Supper
A Pastoral Statement from the Elders of Redeemer Church

Dear Members of Redeemer Church,

Among the greatest privileges entrusted to the local church are two visible expressions of the gospel that Christ Himself instituted for His people: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are not inherited customs or denominational preferences. They are sacred, Christ-ordained acts of worship, given by our Savior to His church, through which the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are proclaimed in living color before God, His people, and the watching world.

We have written this statement as an act of pastoral care and discipleship. Many sincere Christians have never had the opportunity to think carefully and biblically about these ordinances: what they mean, what they declare, why they must be practiced within the life of a local church, and why their faithful observance matters for your soul and for our life together. Our desire is not to be heavy-handed or to reduce these glorious gifts to a list of rules. We want you to see them as they are: beautiful, wise, and gracious provisions of our Lord for His church, and to celebrate them with joy, understanding, and conviction.

This statement stands alongside our existing Redeemer Church Statement on Youth Baptism and Membership, which addresses questions specific to baptism and membership for children and young people. Readers with questions in that area are encouraged to refer to that document as a companion resource.

We write to you as your elders, your fellow servants under the Chief Shepherd. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will use these pages to deepen your love for Christ and your appreciation for what He has given us in these ordinances.

In Christ and for His church,
The Elders of Redeemer Church

PART ONE: WHAT ARE THE ORDINANCES?

Divine Appointments, Not Human Traditions

The word “ordinance” carries the idea of something commanded and ordered by a rightful authority. When we speak of the ordinances of the church, we are referring to those specific acts of worship that Jesus Christ Himself instituted and commanded for His church to observe until He returns. They are not the invention of any council, denomination, or tradition. They are divine appointments, given by the head of the church.

As Redeemer Church, we confess and affirm what Scripture teaches:

REDEEMER CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH — ARTICLE XIV

“These ordinances given by Christ belong to the gathered church, marking off believers from unbelievers and making the church visible on earth.”

This single sentence from our Statement of Faith contains several profound truths that will anchor everything else in this document. The ordinances belong to the gathered church. They are given by Christ. They mark off believers from unbelievers. And they make the church — the invisible body of Christ — visible in a particular place and time. Each of these truths deserves our careful attention.

Ordinances, Not Sacraments

You will notice that we use the word “ordinances” rather than “sacraments.” This distinction is more than terminological. In many Christian traditions, the word “sacrament” implies that the physical act itself conveys or imparts saving grace to the one who receives it. We do not believe this is what Scripture teaches. Our Statement of Faith describes baptism as “a solemn and beautiful emblem” and the Lord’s Supper as “a symbolic act of

obedience.” They are signs. They point to and publicly declare the realities of the gospel. They do not produce or complete those realities.

This does not make them less important; it rightly locates their power and meaning. A wedding ring does not create a marriage, but it is a meaningful, public declaration of a covenant that is real. In the same way, the ordinances declare what Christ has done and continues to do for His people. Their significance is immense precisely because of what they signify: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Ordinances as Visible Gospel

One of the most helpful ways to understand the ordinances is to see them as the gospel made visible. The preached Word declares the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in verbal form. The ordinances declare that same gospel in enacted, physical form. They are, in a sense, sermons without words.

In baptism, a believer is immersed in water and raised again, a public picture of dying to sin and being raised to new life in Christ. In the Lord’s Supper, the broken bread and poured-out cup announce that Christ’s body was given and His blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins. Both ordinances are proclamations. Both are acts of worship. Both require the community of the church to perform them faithfully and meaningfully.

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” — 1 Corinthians 11:26

PART TWO: BAPTISM

Christ Instituted Baptism for His Church

Baptism was commanded by Jesus at the close of His earthly ministry as part of the Great Commission:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” — Matthew 28:19–20

The order in this commission is deliberate and meaningful: make disciples, then baptize them, then teach them. Baptism is the first public act of obedience expected of a new disciple. It is the means by which a person who has repented and believed steps forward publicly into the community of God’s people.

The book of Acts shows us this pattern practiced with consistency and urgency. On the day of Pentecost, Peter called those who received his word to “repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38), and three thousand were baptized and added to the church that same day (Acts 2:41). The pattern continues throughout Acts — including the Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius and his household, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer — all of whom were baptized immediately upon professing faith. Baptism was not deferred, debated, or treated as optional. It was the expected and joyful response of those who had come to faith in Jesus Christ.

What Baptism Declares

Our Statement of Faith describes baptism as “a solemn and beautiful emblem that declares our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior as well as our union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life.” Baptism is a convergence of several glorious truths, all centering on the gospel:

It declares union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4). It declares the washing of sins through the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16). It publicly identifies the believer with Jesus and with His people (Galatians 3:27). It marks entry into the covenant community of the local church (Acts 2:41; 1 Corinthians 12:13). It is the believer’s first act of obedience and public testimony to the world (Matthew 10:32–33).

It is worth being clear about what baptism does not declare: it does not save. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). Baptism is the outward

sign of an inward reality that has already occurred. It is the believing disciple's public response to the grace already received, not a means of obtaining that grace.

Believer's Baptism

We practice what is historically called credobaptism — the baptism of those who have made a credible personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Our Statement of Faith makes clear that Christian baptism is “the immersion of a believer in water.” The subject of baptism, according to Scripture, is a believer: one who has repented of sin and trusted Christ for salvation.

This conviction flows from the consistent pattern of the New Testament. In the Great Commission, baptism is commanded for “disciples.” In Acts, those baptized are those who “received the word.” In Jeremiah 31:34, the new covenant community is described as one in which all its members “know the Lord.” Baptism is the sign of entry into that covenant community, and therefore it is properly given only to those who have personally come to know the Lord through faith.

We cherish the children of our covenant families and pray earnestly and expectantly for their salvation. We recognize, however, that the desire and hope of godly parents does not constitute personal faith, and it is personal faith that baptism declares. For our full approach to how we shepherd children and young people toward baptism and membership, we direct you to our Redeemer Church Statement on Youth Baptism and Membership.

Baptism by Immersion

We also believe and practice baptism by immersion — the full submersion of the believer's body under water. This conviction rests on the meaning of the Greek word baptizo (to immerse or dip), on the rich symbolism of burial and resurrection described in Romans 6:3–4, and on the New Testament accounts which describe candidates going “down into the water” and coming “up out of the water” (Acts 8:38–39).

Immersion is not merely a preferred tradition. It is the mode that most fully and vividly enacts what baptism declares: that the believer has died with Christ, been buried with Him,

and risen with Him to a new life. The physical act of going under and coming up out of the water speaks the gospel with a power that no other mode can match. We extend genuine Christian charity to brothers and sisters in traditions that practice sprinkling or pouring, while maintaining that immersion is the mode most faithful to the New Testament and most expressive of the ordinance's meaning.

PART THREE: THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christ Instituted the Supper on the Night of His Betrayal

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus gathered with His disciples, observed the Passover, and transformed it into something entirely new:

“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”” — Luke 22:19–20

The Passover feast had for centuries declared the redemption of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Now Jesus, standing in the upper room as both host and sacrifice, reorients the feast entirely around Himself. He is the Lamb of God. His body is the bread. His blood is the cup of the new covenant. What the Passover anticipated in shadow, Jesus fulfills in substance. From that night forward, the church has gathered at this table to “proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

What the Lord's Supper Declares

Our Statement of Faith describes the Lord's Supper as “a symbolic act of obedience whereby the members of the church, following earnest self-examination, use bread and the fruit of the vine in a sacred manner to commemorate together the dying love of Christ.” This commemoration, however, is not passive. The Lord's Supper is a proclamation in three directions at once:

We Look Back — Remembrance. Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Every time we gather at the table, we are actively fixing our eyes on the cross. We declare that we are a people whose lives are defined by the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The bread says: His body was broken for us. The cup says: His blood was poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

We Look Around — Proclamation. Paul tells us that in taking the Supper we “proclaim the Lord’s death” (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Supper is not a private transaction between an individual and Jesus. It is a corporate declaration made before God, before one another, and before the watching world. As Paul also says, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

We Look Ahead — Anticipation. Every Lord’s Supper ends with the horizon: “until he comes.” We eat and drink not only remembering the past but also anticipating the future. This meal is a foretaste of the great marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), the eternal feast with our Savior when He returns to make all things new. Each table at Redeemer is, in this sense, a small preview of the glory that is coming.

How We Observe the Lord’s Supper at Redeemer

At Redeemer Church, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper each week as part of our regular gathered worship. The New Testament shows us a church that was devoted to “the breaking of bread” as a central and repeated practice (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Weekly observance keeps the gospel visual before us every Lord’s Day. Far from diminishing its significance through frequency, we aim for each celebration to be a fresh encounter with the death and resurrection of Christ.

We approach the table with both joy and solemnity. The Apostle Paul’s warning to the Corinthians is a word we take seriously: “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Corinthians 11:28). Self-examination is not a morbid exercise in self-condemnation; it is a holy act of bringing ourselves honestly before the Lord, confessing sin, seeking reconciliation with others, and approaching the table with a heart that genuinely honors what it proclaims.

Fencing the Table

Each week, before the elements are distributed, an elder “fences the table” — a practice with deep roots in the history of the church, by which the congregation is instructed as to who the Lord’s Supper is for. Fencing the table is not an act of exclusion; it is an act of love. It protects the integrity of the ordinance, honors Christ who instituted it, and guards individuals from eating and drinking in a manner that brings judgment rather than blessing (1 Corinthians 11:29–30).

The statement read by our elders each week is as follows:

TABLE FENCING STATEMENT

“The Lord’s Supper is a family meal for the members of Redeemer Church. If you’re visiting with us today and you’ve been baptized as a believer in a gospel-preaching church — and you’re a member in good standing there — then if you’re welcome to take the Supper at your home church, you’re welcome to take it with us here. However, if that does not describe you — whether you are not yet a Christian, have not been baptized as a believer, or are not a member in good standing of a gospel-preaching church — we ask that you refrain from participating. Instead, we encourage you to use this time to reflect on the gospel message and consider the hope found in Jesus Christ.”

This reflects our practice of what is historically called “close communion.” We practice close communion not out of an inhospitable spirit toward guests, but out of fidelity to the biblical connection between baptism, church membership, and the Lord’s Table. The Supper is a meal for baptized believers who are accountable members of a local church; it presupposes both a personal profession of faith and a community of accountability in which that faith is known and affirmed.

PART FOUR: THE ORDINANCES AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Given to the Church, Not to Individuals or Families

One of the most important truths about the ordinances — and one that many sincere Christians have never had the opportunity to think through carefully — is that Christ did not give baptism and the Lord’s Supper to individual Christians, to families, or to parachurch ministries. He gave them to the local church. Our Statement of Faith puts it plainly: “These ordinances given by Christ belong to the gathered church.”

This is not a fine point of ecclesiology reserved for theologians. It has practical implications for how we live as a church. Understanding why the ordinances belong to the local church helps us understand why a parent cannot baptize their own child at home, why a small group cannot share the Lord’s Supper as a private gathering, and why a summer camp or parachurch ministry is not the right setting for either ordinance. The answer to each of these questions flows from the same source: the nature of what the ordinances are and what they declare.

The Keys of the Kingdom

To understand why the ordinances belong to the local church, we must understand what Jesus called “the keys of the kingdom.” In Matthew 16, Jesus declared to His disciples: “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18–19).

In Matthew 18, Jesus extended this authority to the gathered church in matters of discipline and binding decisions among believers (Matthew 18:15–20). The “keys of the kingdom” refer to the authority Christ has delegated to His church to declare, in His name, who belongs to the kingdom of God and who does not. This is not authority the church invented for itself; it is authority that the King granted to His church.

The ordinances are the primary instruments through which this authority is exercised:

Baptism is the key that opens the door: it publicly declares that a person who has professed faith in Christ is received into the covenant community. When the church baptizes someone, it is saying on Christ’s behalf: “This person belongs to Jesus and is therefore one of us.”

The Lord's Supper is the ongoing meal of those who have entered through that door: it publicly declares that these people continue to walk in covenant fellowship with Christ and with one another. It marks and renews the membership of the body.

Church discipline — including the solemn withholding of the Supper when necessary — is the key that, in cases of unrepentant sin, withdraws that public declaration until repentance and restoration occur.

This means the ordinances are not incidental to church life; they are central to it. They are the God-given means by which the church carries out its responsibility to make the kingdom of God visible in a specific place.

The Church as a Heavenly Embassy

One of the most illuminating images for understanding the local church is that of an embassy. An embassy in a foreign nation is a colony of the government it represents. It does not operate by the laws and culture of the nation where it resides; it operates under the authority of the nation it serves. Its officials speak and act on behalf of their government, not on their own personal authority.

The local church is a heavenly embassy planted in the midst of the present age. It represents the kingdom of God. It operates under the authority of King Jesus. When the church baptizes someone, it is not making a human preference known; it is acting as Christ's authorized representative to declare that this person belongs to the kingdom. When the church gathers at the Lord's Table, it is not merely a social gathering; it is the kingdom of God assembling together, in a particular place, to feast in the presence of their King and to proclaim His death to the world around them.

This embassy character of the church is precisely why the ordinances require the gathered church. They are acts of the body. They carry meaning because they are performed by and before a community of covenant accountability — a community that knows its members, affirms their faith, and shares in the responsibility of their discipleship. Removed from that community, they lose the very meaning that makes them what they are.

Why Not Individuals, Families, or Parachurch Ministries?

We want to speak pastorally and directly to some specific situations that members of our congregation may encounter or have already experienced.

When a parent baptizes their own child, or when friends baptize each other on a mission trip or at summer camp, the heart behind the act is often beautiful — a genuine desire to follow Christ and celebrate what God has done. We do not question the sincerity of those moments. But we must ask: baptism into what? Into no defined community? With no ongoing accountability? Baptism in the New Testament does not merely unite a person to Christ in the abstract; it incorporates them into a specific community of believers who will know them, love them, disciple them, and hold them accountable. The act requires the community, because the act is about entering the community.

Similarly, when a small group or family shares the Lord's Supper privately, the desire may be a sincere longing for deeper communion with Christ. But the Lord's Supper is a meal for the gathered church (1 Corinthians 11:17–20). It is not a private communion; it is a corporate proclamation. As Paul makes clear, the Supper requires the assembled body — those who know each other, are in covenant with each other, and can genuinely examine themselves in light of their relationships with one another (1 Corinthians 11:27–29).

Parachurch ministries serve an important and valued role in the kingdom of God. But they are not the local church. They do not have elders who shepherd souls. They do not carry out church membership and discipline. They have not been given the keys of the kingdom. When they administer baptism or the Lord's Supper, they step into a role that Christ assigned specifically to the local church, and in doing so, they inadvertently communicate something the New Testament does not teach: that these ordinances can be properly observed apart from the covenant community to which they belong.

We say all of this not to minimize the genuine experiences of faith people have had in these settings. We say it to call you into the fullness of what Christ designed. The local church is not a limitation on your faith; it is the context in which your faith is to be expressed, nurtured, witnessed, and proclaimed.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” — Acts 2:42

PART FIVE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We anticipate that many of you will have sincere and thoughtful questions about how this applies to real situations. The following answers are meant to be clear, concise, and rooted in Scripture. If your question is not addressed here, please speak with one of your elders.

Who can participate in the Lord’s Supper?

The Lord’s Supper is for baptized believers who are members in good standing of a local church. Our Statement of Faith states that “baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord’s Supper,” reflecting the consistent order of the New Testament: faith, then baptism, then membership in the covenant community, then participation at the table.

At Redeemer Church, we practice what some call close communion. The table is open to all who have been baptized as believers and are members in good standing of a gospel-preaching church, whether members of Redeemer or visiting believers from another church who meet these qualifications. The table is not open to those who have not yet come to faith, have not been baptized as believers, or have not submitted to the oversight of a local congregation through church membership.

We hold this position not to be unwelcoming, but because the Lord’s Supper is a declaration of covenant membership. It presupposes a community of accountability. If you are uncertain whether you should participate, we warmly encourage you to speak with an elder before the service, or to abstain and speak with an elder after the service. We would love to talk with you.

I am technically a member of a church, but I haven’t attended regularly in a long time. May I take the Supper?

We want to answer this with honesty and genuine care, because it gets at something important. Membership in good standing is not simply a name on a roster — it is a living, accountable relationship with a covenant community. If you have been away from your church for a prolonged season, without the knowledge of your elders and without a plan to return, you have in a real sense drifted from the fellowship that the Lord's Supper is meant to express and renew. Scripture does not treat regular gathering as optional (Hebrews 10:25), and the Supper is meant to be shared among those who are actively walking together in it.

If this describes you, we want you to hear this as an invitation rather than a rejection: the most important thing is not resolving a question about the table — it is returning to a church family. We would genuinely love to help you think through what that next step looks like. Please find one of our elders today.

Can my child take communion?

We love your children, and we long to see them come to a genuine, saving knowledge of Christ. The Lord's Supper, however, is for those who have repented and believed, been baptized as believers, and are members of the church. Paul's call to self-examination before participating (1 Corinthians 11:28) requires a genuine understanding of the gospel and an honest assessment of one's own spiritual state — a capacity that presupposes personal faith.

It is also worth noting that the Lord's Supper is not an ordinance entrusted by Christ to Christian families; it is an ordinance entrusted to the local church (1 Corinthians 11:20; Matthew 18:17–18; Acts 2:42). The church alone has been given the authority to extend the table to those it has recognized as having a credible profession of faith and has received into membership. This means that even the most well-intentioned parent cannot, on their own, authorize their child to participate.

For children who have not yet made a credible profession of faith, been baptized as believers, and been welcomed into membership, we ask that they observe rather than participate. We encourage parents to use the Lord's Supper as a teaching opportunity. For children and young people who are beginning to express faith in Christ, we have written a

dedicated document — the Redeemer Church Statement on Youth Baptism and Membership — which addresses this topic in full.

What if I was baptized as an infant? Do I need to be baptized again?

We want to answer this question with both theological clarity and genuine pastoral care, because we know it touches on something meaningful for many people and families.

Our Statement of Faith defines Christian baptism as “the immersion of a believer in water.” The subject of baptism, according to the New Testament pattern, is a believer — someone who has personally repented and trusted in Christ. Infant baptism, administered before any personal profession of faith, does not meet this definition, however sincere the intentions of the parents and the church may have been. We recognize that many sincere and godly Christians have practiced and defended infant baptism throughout church history, and we hold those brothers and sisters with genuine respect. But the New Testament does not record a single instance of an infant being baptized, nor does any passage instruct the church to do so. The consistent pattern from the Gospels through Acts and the Epistles is faith, then baptism — always in that order.

We also want to address the discomfort many feel with the idea of “re-baptism.” We do not use that word here. “Rebaptism” is not a biblical category. The New Testament knows only one baptism — the baptism of a believing disciple. What we are inviting you into is your first baptism: a joyful, obedient, and deeply personal act of following Jesus.

If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ and desire to pursue membership at Redeemer, we would lovingly encourage you to be baptized as a believer. Any of our elders would be glad to sit down with you, Bibles open, and walk through what the New Testament teaches. Not to argue, but to help you see what we see. Please speak with one of our elders.

Can someone who is theologically convinced of infant baptism join Redeemer?

We want to begin by saying what this question is not about: it is not about whether you are a genuine Christian, whether your faith is real, or whether we love and respect you as a brother or sister in Christ. Those things we do not question. What the question does require us to address honestly is something more specific — whether a person who is actively and

sincerely convinced that believer's baptism is wrong can, in good conscience, make the particular promises that membership at Redeemer requires.

The honest answer is that we do not believe they can, at least not yet.

When someone joins Redeemer, they are asked not merely to tolerate our Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, but to affirm and defend them. Our Statement of Faith speaks to baptism with both theological precision and doxological warmth: *"We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is a solemn and beautiful emblem that declares our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior as well as our union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord's Supper."* This is not a preference for one permissible practice among others. It is a definition — a confession of what Christian baptism is, who it is for, and what it declares. Our Church Covenant carries the same weight. Every member of Redeemer has signed this commitment: *"We will seek the spiritual health of this church by supporting and defending biblical preaching, a biblical administration of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper, and when necessary, the biblical exercise of church discipline."* Members do not simply agree to practice believer's baptism personally. They commit to support and defend it. A person who holds an active conviction that believer's baptism is wrong cannot make that promise honestly. Scripture calls us to let our yes mean yes (James 5:12), and we would rather have a plain and caring conversation about that than invite someone into a commitment they do not genuinely hold.

It is also worth explaining why this is not a secondary matter that generous-minded Christians should simply set aside. Our conviction about believer's baptism does not sit quietly in one corner of our Statement of Faith — it is woven into the structure of how we function as a church. Because we are a congregational church, authority in the life of Redeemer rests ultimately with its covenant members: those who have been baptized as believers and who have signed a covenant committing themselves to this church and its doctrine. That membership carries a share in the governance of the congregation. A member who is actively convinced that believer's baptism is wrong would hold a

congregational vote on the very doctrine they disagree with. Beyond the question of governance, our understanding of baptism shapes how we receive new members, how we administer the Lord's Supper, and how we exercise church discipline. The disagreement cannot be quietly bracketed. It touches the way we are organized as a church at every level.

Some people raise what feels like a reasonable middle path: what if I hold to infant baptism personally but agree not to teach it or press it on others at Redeemer? We appreciate the sincerity behind that offer. But the covenant does not ask members to stay quiet — it asks them to support and defend. Accepting membership on the condition of privately suppressing a conviction is not the same as genuinely affirming the covenant, and we cannot in good conscience receive someone into membership on that basis. It would mean asking them to stand before God and this congregation and make a promise they do not actually believe. There is nothing kind about that.

We also want to address a practical reality plainly, because it bears on the spiritual health of anyone who finds themselves in this situation. Remaining a regular attender at a church without pursuing membership is not a sustainable long-term arrangement, and it would be a pastoral disservice to suggest otherwise. Scripture does not treat regular, accountable gathering with a covenant community as optional (Hebrews 10:25), and what membership provides is not incidental — it is the structure through which real pastoral care happens. The members of a congregation have made covenant commitments to care for one another that do not extend in the same way to those outside of membership. Elders are charged before God with watching over the souls of those entrusted to them. Someone attending week after week without membership is not receiving what Christ designed the local church to provide. The most loving counsel we can offer anyone in this situation is this: find a gospel-preaching church that shares your convictions about baptism and join it. Be known there. Be cared for there. Sit under its elders. Make the covenant promises it asks of you with a full and honest heart.

If you are still genuinely working through this question and open to studying it further, or if your convictions on baptism ever shift, we would be glad to have that conversation with

you. In either case, please speak with one of our elders. We count it a privilege to walk through these things with you.

I was baptized as a believer, but I later fell into serious sin or questioned my conversion. Should I be baptized again?

This is a question that arises from a tender and honest conscience, and we want to honor that.

For most people asking this question, the struggle is not really about baptism — it is about assurance. A season of serious sin, prolonged doubt, or spiritual coldness can make a person look back at their baptism and wonder whether it meant anything at all. If that is where you find yourself, we want to offer you genuine encouragement. Baptism marks the moment of your public entry into the covenant community as a professing believer. It is a declaration of what God has done in you — not a declaration of what you will always do perfectly. The New Testament nowhere teaches that a believer who falls into sin, wanders, or endures a season of doubt must be baptized again.

If this is your situation, you do not need another baptism. You need the grace of repentance, the comfort of the gospel, and the support of your church family. Your baptism still stands as the declaration of the new birth God brought about in you.

That said, this question sometimes arises from a genuinely different place. After honest reflection and counsel, some people come to believe that at the time of their original baptism, they were not truly converted. If, after prayerful examination and conversation with your elders, you have a genuine reason to believe your original baptism was not the baptism of a true believer, then what you are considering is not “re-baptism” in any meaningful sense — it is simply your first baptism, and it would be a right and joyful act of obedience.

Whether you are a struggling believer in need of assurance, or someone with genuine uncertainty about the validity of your original profession, any of our elders would be glad to sit with you, Bibles open, and help you think through your own history with care, honesty, and hope. Please reach out to one of us.

Can I be baptized at home, at a camp, or by a family member?

As we explained in Part Four, baptism is not simply a private spiritual moment between an individual and God. It is a public declaration administered by and before the local church that incorporates a person into a local covenant community. The meaning of baptism includes being received by a body of believers who will know you, affirm your faith, and share in the responsibility of your discipleship.

For this reason, we believe baptism is most properly administered in the context of a local church: not at a family gathering, not at summer camp, not on a mission trip, and not by a parent acting on their own authority outside of the church's gathered life and authority.

If you have been baptized in one of these settings and are wondering whether that baptism is valid, please come speak with one of the elders. We will listen carefully to your story, work through the relevant biblical considerations with you, and help you discern a clear and joyful path forward.

How often should we observe the Lord's Supper?

The New Testament does not prescribe an exact frequency, but it does show us a church that gathered regularly and devotedly around the Lord's Table. In Acts 2:42, the early church was devoted to "the breaking of bread." In Acts 20:7, the church at Troas gathered on the first day of the week to break bread. Paul's extended instruction in 1 Corinthians 11 assumes the church gathers regularly for this purpose.

At Redeemer Church, we observe the Lord's Supper every week. We do this because we believe the gospel deserves to be proclaimed visibly every time God's people assemble together, and because weekly observance keeps the death and resurrection of Christ at the very center of our corporate worship.

Some have wondered whether taking the Supper weekly might cause it to lose its significance over time. We take the concern about reverence seriously, but notice that we never make this argument about preaching, singing, fellowship, or prayer. We do not suggest that preaching the Word weekly makes it mundane, or that praying together each

Lord's Day cheapens prayer. We approach each of these means of grace with renewed intentionality and fresh faith. The Lord's Supper deserves the same.

We also believe that the Lord's Supper is a means of God's grace to His people. As we come to the table in faith, the Spirit nourishes us, the cross is set vividly before us, and our love for Christ is stirred. That being so, the question answers itself: how often do you want to benefit from a means of God's grace toward you? For us, the answer is every time we gather.

Does baptism save you?

No. Baptism does not save. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). The thief on the cross received the promise of paradise from Jesus without ever being baptized (Luke 23:43). Abraham was declared righteous by faith before he received the sign of the covenant (Romans 4:10–11). The sign of covenant membership does not produce the saving reality it declares; it follows and points to that reality.

The passage sometimes cited in support of baptismal regeneration, "Baptism now saves you" (1 Peter 3:21), is immediately clarified by Peter himself: "not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The saving instrument is not the water; it is the faith directed toward the risen Christ, which baptism publicly declares and confirms.

That said, the fact that baptism does not save does not make it optional. Jesus commanded it (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). The apostles practiced it immediately upon conversion, without exception. A person who genuinely loves Christ will desire to be baptized not to earn grace, but as an act of glad obedience to the Savior who gave His life for them.

Must I be baptized?

The short answer is yes, and we want to explain why in a way that we hope will feel less like a requirement and more like an invitation.

Baptism does not save you. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. A person who repents and believes the gospel is saved, full stop. We want to be clear about

that because we never want anyone to think that the water of baptism contributes anything to their standing before God. It does not.

That said, the fact that baptism does not save does not make it optional. Jesus commanded it (Matthew 28:19). On the day of Pentecost, the apostolic response was immediate and unambiguous: “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). In the pages of the New Testament, there is no category of an unbaptized believer living contentedly apart from this act of obedience. Faith and baptism are not presented as two separate tracks; they are presented as the natural and expected movement of a person who has been transformed by the gospel.

Baptism is the moment when a believer steps out of the crowd and into the open, publicly declaring before God, the church, and the watching world that they belong to Jesus Christ. It is your first act of public discipleship. It is the door into the covenant community of the local church. And it is a profound gift — an opportunity to dramatize in water what God has already accomplished in your heart.

If you have placed your faith in Christ and have not yet been baptized, we would lovingly and warmly encourage you not to wait. Not because your salvation depends on it, but because your obedience to Christ does. We would love nothing more than to walk with you toward that step. Please reach out to one of our elders.

A CLOSING WORD

We close where we began: with joy. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are gifts. They are the gospel enacted, the kingdom made visible, and the community of God made concrete in a particular time and place. They are not burdens Christ has laid upon His people; they are graces He has lavished upon His church.

We do not ask you to observe these ordinances as obligations to be discharged or regulations to be satisfied. We ask you to see them as what they truly are: the wisdom of

Jesus Christ for His gathered people. He who knew every generation that would follow Him — knowing the temptations of individualism, the allure of private religion, and the drift toward a Christianity disconnected from community — gave His church two simple, profound, embodied acts through which the gospel would be proclaimed again and again until He returns. Water. Bread. Cup. What mercy. What a Savior.

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will.” — Hebrews 13:20–21

If you have questions about baptism, the Lord’s Supper, church membership, or any of the matters addressed in this statement, we warmly invite you to speak with any of the elders of Redeemer Church. We also encourage you to read our companion document, the Redeemer Church Statement on Youth Baptism and Membership, for guidance specific to children and young people. We count it a privilege to serve you.

To the glory of God alone.

The Elders of Redeemer Church