

# celebrating baptism

with new spring church





# what is baptism?

Christian water baptism was established by Jesus when He called his followers to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. MATTHEW 28:19-20

Baptism is one of the primary practices (along with communion) Jesus calls his disciples to observe as visible symbols of invisible grace. In other words, baptism is meant to be a tangible representation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ at work in our lives.

Baptism is an outward proclamation of the inward reality that God has created new life within a person through salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a new believer's testimony of belonging to Jesus and His Church.

Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.  
ROMANS 6:4

The apostle Paul explained that baptism represents the believer's union with Christ: that when we are immersed and raised out of the water, we are symbolically joining with the life-changing death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul describes this as putting on new clothes!

For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.  
GALATIANS 3:27

# baptism is...

1. Baptism is about identification. To "identify" with someone is to say that you are with that person; you belong together. In sports, players wear jerseys to identify with a team. You identify with your mom and dad; you belong together. When a believer is baptized, they publicly identify with Jesus and with other Christians.
2. Baptism is a symbol. You see symbols all the time. The red mark on the faucet in the sink symbolizes hot water. The blue mark represents cold. When you see the dial turned to the red mark, you know that the water coming out of the faucet is hot. Baptism is meant to be a symbol of our union with Christ and his church.
3. Baptism is a picture of our death. The person being baptized goes under the water, which is a picture of the burial of their old self that was enslaved to sin. We are as dead to our sin as Jesus was dead on the cross. Jesus really died on the cross and was buried. When we put our trust in Christ to save us, God's Word assures us that we really died to our sin and our old self was buried along with Jesus.
4. Baptism is a picture of our resurrection. The person being baptized is brought up out of the water, which is a picture of their soul being raised from the dead to eternal life. It also reminds us of God's promise to one day resurrect our physical bodies from the grave just like he did for Jesus.

# why do we baptize?

We baptize because Jesus modeled it himself and made it part of His ministry and part of our mission. Simply put, we baptize because Jesus commanded us to.

However, there is also purpose and wisdom in that command. Baptism provides a decisive, public way of taking a stand that Jesus has saved you, that you're crazy about Him, and that you're going to follow Him all the days of your life.

Essentially, you are publicly proclaiming three things in Baptism:

## **TO GOD**

Thank You for saving me. I'm Yours. Help me to live a life that shows Jesus to the world.

## **TO BELIEVERS**

Celebrate with me! Jesus has saved me! Remember when He saved you? Encourage me, help me, and keep me accountable to following Jesus.

## **TO UNBELIEVERS**

I want you to know the Jesus that I know. If you see any change in my life, if you see anything good in my life, it's not me— it's Him! He wants you to know Him.

# who should be baptized?

Our understanding of baptism as practiced in the New Testament is that believers were baptized following a confession of faith, which is something that an unbeliever has not done, nor an infant can do. Because we believe baptism represents a union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we practice what's known as *credobaptism*: the baptism of confessed believers in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

# does baptism save us?

We are saved solely by God's grace applied to us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing we do can save us—our salvation is not a result of our works.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

We are, however, called to do good works and obey the commands of Jesus, baptism being one of them. So like all the other "good works," we baptize and are baptized not in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Just because a Christian is not yet baptized doesn't mean he isn't a Christian.

Baptism is an outward demonstration of what has already occurred inside of us. Though baptism doesn't save you, God is pleased when His child proclaims to the world that the salvation of Christ has come into his life.

# knowing the gospel

The Gospel is for everyone. Baptism expresses the following truths about our relationship with God.

1. God loves you! He made you and knows everything about you. (**Psalm 139**)
2. When we mess up and do wrong things, it's called sin. We deserve to be punished for those things, but when we follow Jesus, He takes the punishment for us. (**Ecclesiastes 7:20**)
3. To follow Jesus, you have to admit that you're a sinner and that you've messed up. You need to tell God you're sorry. (**Acts 3:19**)
4. God loves you so much He sent His son Jesus to earth. Jesus took the punishment for the sin of everyone who would believe in him by dying on a cross. But Jesus didn't stay dead! God brought Jesus back to life. To follow Jesus, you have to believe Jesus died for you and that God brought Jesus back to life. (**Romans 10:9-10**)

While we do not believe there is a specific, special prayer we should pray to become a Christian, one of the ways we affirm the truths above is through prayer. If you've never made a decision to trust Jesus with your life, you may choose to pray something like this:

*God, I know you love me. I admit I have done wrong things and I am truly sorry. I believe in my heart that Jesus, your Son, died for me and you brought Him back to life. I commit to following you. Jesus, you are my leader, the Lord of my life! Amen.*

# participating in baptism

What does it look like to celebrate baptism with New Spring Church?

- At the beginning of the baptism ceremony, we provide an opportunity for the person(s) being baptized to share a testimony to affirm their faith to the family of God. We will often do this via video.
- Our pastor and/or one of our elders will perform the baptism service. If we're baptizing a child or family member of another believer in our congregation, we will usually invite a family member to participate.
- When you enter the water, the person performing the baptism will ask, "Do you confess and believe Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?" You affirm your faith by responding, "Yes" or "I do."
- You will be immersed and raised up out of the water. Typically, this is done by leaning back into the water while being supported by those performing your baptism. (If it's easier for you, we may also have you lean forward into the water.) While doing this, the person performing your baptism will say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life."
- If circumstances prevent us from performing a full immersion baptism, we will pour water over the head of the person being baptized.



# helpful tips to prepare for you baptism

- Wear dark shorts & a dark shirt. Light-colored garments tend to become see-through when wet.
- Bring a change of clothes, towel, and a bag to hold your wet clothes after you change.
- If you have friends and family visiting to celebrate your baptism, have them sit in the first few rows of the center sections.
- We will also stream the baptism on our screens at the front of the sanctuary. If outdoors, there will typically be plenty of room and visibility.

## baptism & covenant membership

Water baptism is a requirement for membership at New Spring Church.

We require anyone wishing to join the church to have obeyed Christ's command to be baptized following conversion. While we practice baptism by immersion, we do not require the mode of immersion for membership, as long as your water baptism follows your conversion.

# a word on baptizing young children

Parents: being the primary spiritual influence in our children's lives is a big responsibility. As your church, we want to affirm your discipleship of your child. We believe baptism is a practice for any child who offers a confession of faith should be baptized. While it's important to discern if a child is offering a credible confession of faith in Christ, it is equally important not to evaluate a child's faith by an adult's faith.

- If your child wants to get baptized, ask questions. You'll want to make sure your child understands what they are affirming in baptism by asking some of the basics: *Can you tell me who Jesus is? What did Jesus do for you?*
- If your child has received Jesus into his/her life, make sure they understand what baptism is and what it means. You can review this guide with them, but we also recommend looking up key verses about baptism, like: **Mark 16:16**, **Romans 6:4**, and **1 Peter 3:18**.
- Initiate but don't dominate conversation. Let your child ask questions and answer them.
- Remember that discipleship is not a sprint! It's possible your child might not be ready and THAT'S OK! Baptism is about your child's faith in Christ, not yours. Let baptism be as meaningful to them as it is for you.

When it comes to baptism, we want to encourage you to be discerning and realistic regarding whether your child is ready for baptism.

# sharing your story

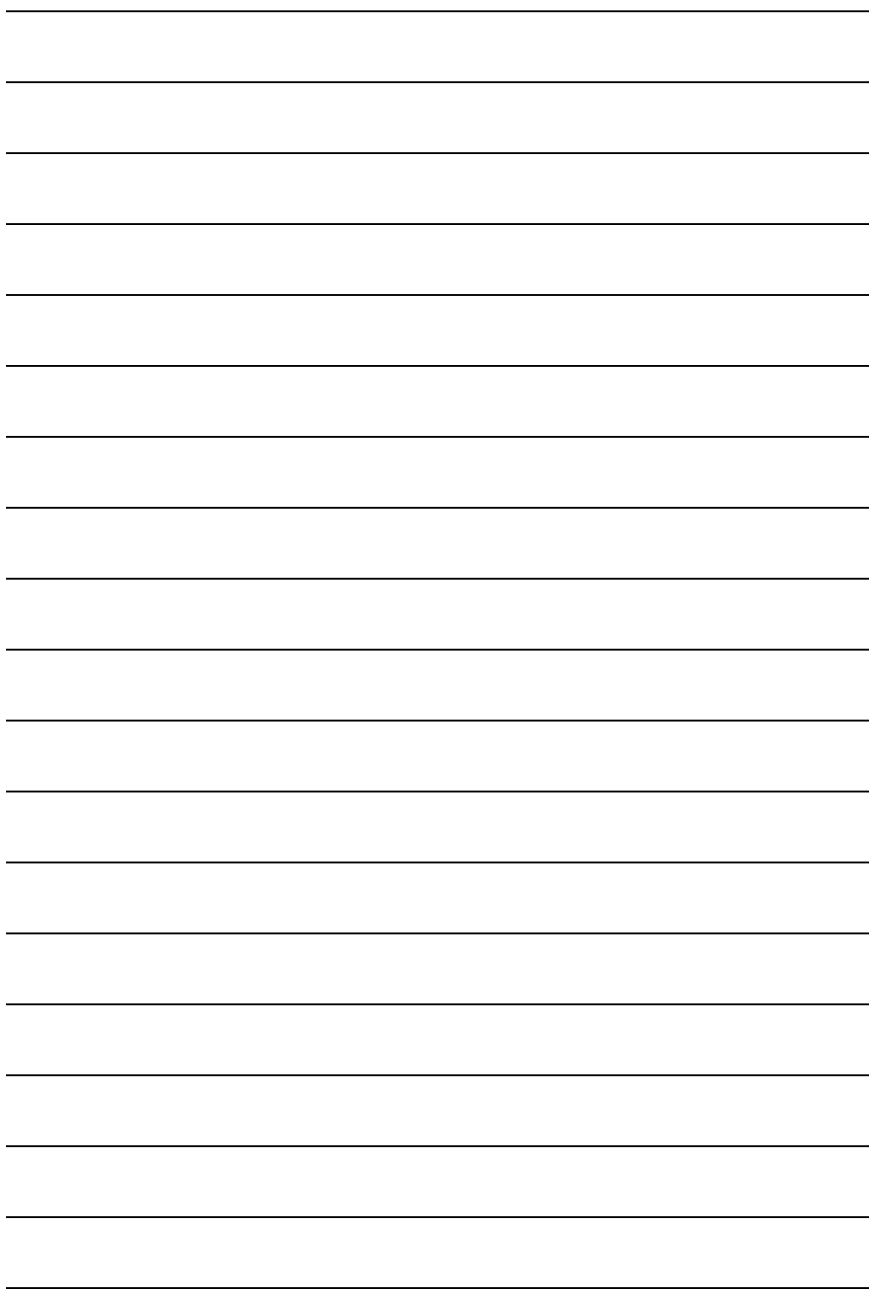
Baptism itself is a public proclamation of faith. For New Spring Church, everyone who participates in baptism is asked to declare their faith and share their story of becoming a follower of Jesus.

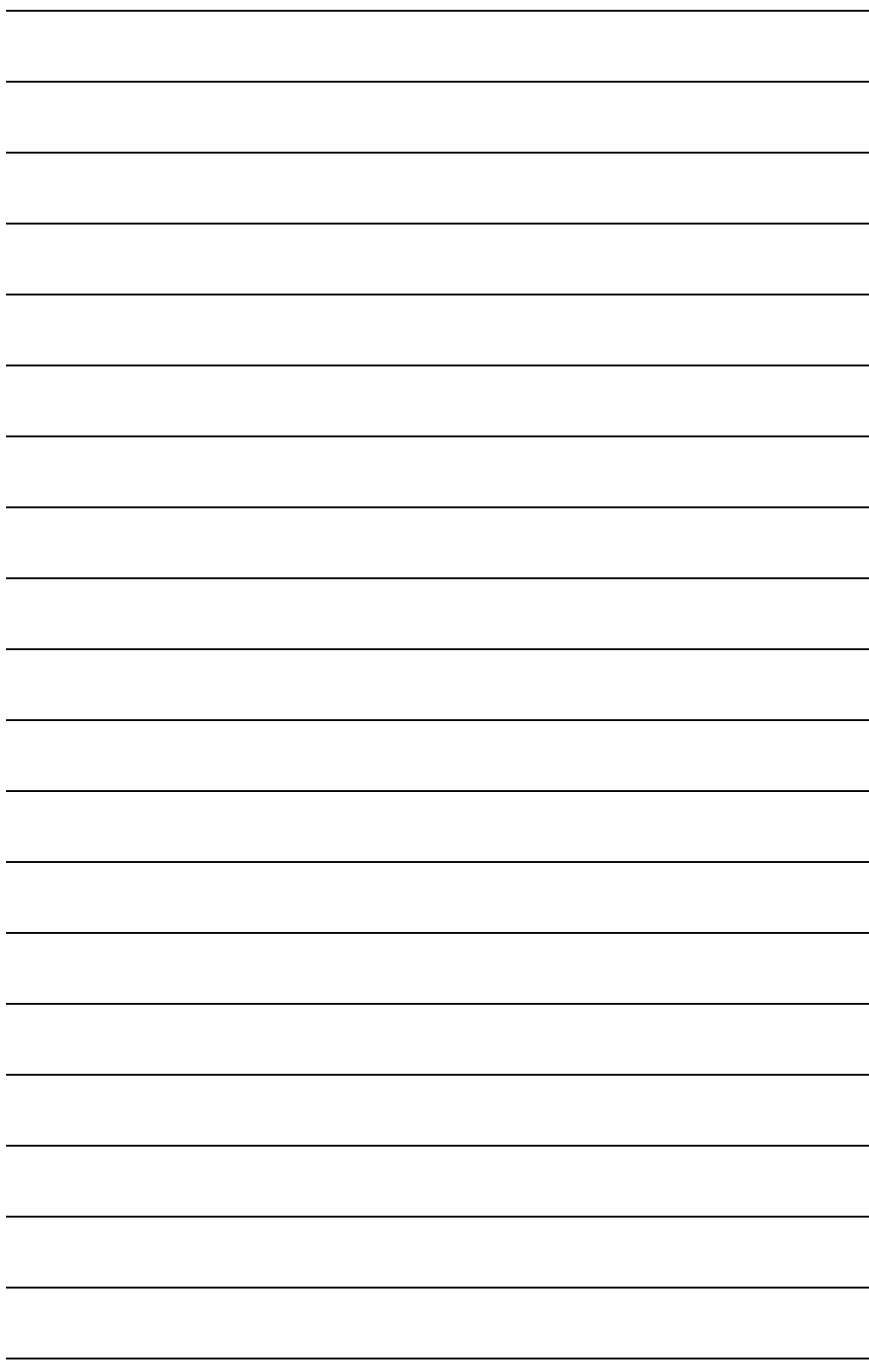
Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

1 PETER 3:15

To help you prepare for this, follow the prompts below to write a testimony to share before your baptism.

- How do you know God loves you?
- What has Jesus done for you?
- When did you choose to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?
- How do you see God at work in your life?
- Who has helped you learn to follow Jesus?
- Why do you want to be baptized?









If you'd like to discuss baptism further,  
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