

Next Steps at Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly: **Water Baptism**

Who Should Be Water Baptized?

Every person who has made the decision to believe in Christ. When Paul writes to the believers in Rome, he assumes that they all have been baptized (Romans 6). The only requirement for baptism is belief in Christ! (Acts 8:12)

We baptize any believer who is old enough to choose, understand and articulate (*to the ability of their age or mental capacity*) the spiritual acts of salvation and baptism.

When Should You Be Water Baptized?

As soon as you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour! Believers in the New Testament were baptized the same day. As soon as a person decides to believe in Christ, they can and should be baptized. (Acts 2:41, Acts 8:35-39)

If you have not made the decision to be water baptized, even though you have believed for a while, it is never too late to take this crucial step in your faith.

What Is Water Baptism?

Fact #1: Water Baptism Is God's Idea

Baptism might seem strange to people new to the faith, but it was God's idea in the first place. Jesus sent out his first disciples and commanded them to invite people to follow him. Anyone who accepted the invitation was to be baptized.

Jesus himself was baptized. Although he was not a sinner, he humbled himself in obedience to identify with us and give us an example to follow.

Mark 1:9 – *Christ's example*: “At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”

Matthew 28:19 – *Christ's command*: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

Because we recognize God as the Holy Triune God, we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Recognizing that each part of the Trinity holds significant and unique purposes within our lives.

Fact #2: Water Baptism Doesn't Save You

Though baptism is clearly commanded in the Bible, it's also clear that it is not a ritual that saves a person (Ephesians 2:8-9). We start a relationship with God by trusting Jesus, and no good work on our part can add to the completed work of Jesus through his cross and resurrection. We are saved entirely by grace. Baptism is our physical symbol to others of the inward change that Salvation has taken place in our lives.

Our English word "baptize" comes from the Greek word "baptizo", which means to dip something in liquid, to **immerse**, plunge or drench. This is why we fully immerse people as opposed to sprinkling or pouring water over a person to baptize them.

In water baptism, dipping in water does not cause a change in the spiritual condition of your soul. It symbolizes a change that has already taken place.

If you have made the decision to accept Christ's salvation but have yet to see any changes in your life, perhaps it is not yet time to be water baptized. Let's have a further conversation about this decision.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "God saved you by his special favour when you believed. You can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for our good deeds, so none of us can boast about it."

Fact #3: Baptism Is an Act of Practical Obedience

Water baptism is one of the first things we can do practically to show our desire to live to honour God. It's a humble sign that we choose to follow God on his terms, not ours. Today he wants us to be immersed in water; tomorrow, there will be more to obey. As we walk in Godly obedience, we are amazed at how He transforms us and works through us to accomplish His plans.

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago."

Fact #4: Baptism Identifies Us with Christ and His Church

Water baptism is also an act of identification. Through it, we are identifying with the death and resurrection of Christ. We are also identifying with his people, the church.

We must remember that if there is no inward change (genuinely accepting Christ as Lord and Savior of your life), then the outward ceremony of baptism is no different than taking a public bath.

Romans 6:3 "Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?"

1 Corinthians 12:13 " ...by one spirit we were all baptized into (or immersed, placed into) one body."

Fact #5: Baptism Is a Symbol of Our New Life

Water baptism is symbolic of the Christian life. It symbolizes death to our old way of living and resurrection to a new way of living. It is our public declaration of the inward change that has taken place in our lives. It is not a free pass to continue sinning, nor does it absolve our sin. Our sins are forgiven when we confess them to God and repent (turn away from sin or sinful lifestyles).

4 "...For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives..."

Extra Resources:

Questions to help you share your testimony of salvation:

1. Tell us a few highlights of your journey to faith in Jesus Christ. (How did you know that Jesus is the Truth? Who helped you on that journey?)
2. How has the Spirit been working in your life since you came to Salvation? (What has changed in your life since Salvation?)
3. Why do you want to be water baptized?/ What does water baptism mean to you?

Instructions for participating in water baptism at WPA:

1. Arrive at the church 30 minutes before the start of service, so you have time to change and prepare.
2. Bring your water baptism t-shirt, a full change of clothing, a towel and a bag for wet clothing (*also things like a hairbrush or hairdryer if you'd like*).

Instructions for participating in water baptism in the river:

1. Arrive at the river no later than 2:00 pm. Come in what you'll be wearing as there are no changing rooms.
2. Bring one towel to dry off and one towel to sit on in your car or on the bus (again, there are no washroom facilities for changing).
3. Wear water shoes or runners. The ground is very rocky, and flip-flops do not work well.
4. The location is called the Claude Dubrick Trailway at Kauffman Flats. It is just past the intersection of Lexington Rd and University Ave in Waterloo.