



BAPTISM

TRINITY
GRACE
CHURCH

PARK SLOPE

Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

ROMANS 6

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is one of the first acts of obedience to God that we find in the Scriptures for those who have trusted in Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection for salvation and welcome into the Kingdom of God. It is a public symbol in community with other believers of the whole life transformation that salvation through Jesus brings to those who trust and follow Him.

The act itself is an immersion in water that represents the believers union with Jesus. We go down into the water as a symbol of surrender to, letting go of, even dying to our old manner of living that was not connected to a relationship with Jesus. Going into the water is a physical representation of the humble release of control of our life to God. We acknowledge we have tried to meet the needs of our mind, body, heart, and soul in our own ways, in the patterns of the world apart from God that Scripture calls sin. We have sinned against God and one another. Going in to the water is a declaration we want to be done with a life of sin.

Coming up out of the water represents being raised with Jesus, by the very power of His resurrection, to a new kind of life. We are counting on the covering of Jesus grace because of his shed blood on the Cross to forgive and cleanse us from sin. We are committing to live our lives led by the Holy Spirit who fills those who call Jesus Lord.

We do this act publicly as a statement and confession before God and the church. It is not that the person being baptized has achieved some higher status than other Christians or is sure they will no longer have doubt or sin. Instead, we are confessing with this symbol of baptism that we are committed to a journey of following Jesus in the highs and lows of life with a community. We will need grace and the Holy Spirit everyday for this and we are not called to be alone, but woven into a church family. That is why baptism is done with the church witnessing. The one being baptized is committing to a relational journey with the church and church is committing the same to the person.

WHY IS BAPTISM IMPORTANT?

JESUS' EXAMPLE:

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 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 alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 3

Jesus began his public ministry by going to to baptized by John. In his own words, it was “proper to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus was not baptized as a symbol that he needed forgiveness from sin, but that He was fully submitted to the will of the Father. In a beautiful moment we see the Trinity, one God in three persons, at work. Jesus submits his life in full obedience to the Father, the Father declares his love and approval over the son, and the Holy Spirit is present and filling Jesus for his life and ministry. Jesus has left us with the example of baptism as a symbol of full surrender and commitment to God.

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28

In his last moments with his disciples before his ascension, Jesus gave clear instructions to those who had been following him about how his movement and the Kingdom of God would go forward. They were to go with the presence and power of God to make disciples. This would always include baptisms of conversion into the family of God and teaching and learning the way of Jesus. Baptism is a crucial part of the commission that Jesus left those who follow him.

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

Baptism is the pattern of obedience that we see in the Scriptures when people turn to trust Christ. It is often recorded immediately after someone hears the Gospel and responds in faith. Famously, Acts 2 describes the response to the first sermon given by Peter on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in power as the church was being born.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2

We see this pattern continue as the new church grew and shared the message of Jesus as good news. Those who responded to the message with faith and obedience were baptized.

34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. 36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” 37 Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 8

Later, when Peter went to preach the message the Gospel at the house of Cornelius we have another example recorded.

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” 48 So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

Acts 10

Each of these examples the reinforces the important and beautiful step of obedience that baptism is in the life of the follower of Jesus.

BOND OF COMMITMENT

Baptism, along with being an example we have from Jesus and an important step of obedience that God calls us to also has a unifying impact for Christians living in community together.

When someone is baptized we get to witness the deep encouragement of how God is adding to his church through salvation. Those stories of transformation serve to strengthen the faith of the church family. It also allows the person being baptized to make a public commitment to the church community and for the church to extend a commitment back. As baptized believers in Jesus we form his Body, to live as representatives of his character in our local contexts together. This beautiful and important unity is particularly seen in the sacraments of baptism and in the receiving of the Lord's supper at the communion table together.

IS BAPTISM FOR ME?

Baptism is for those who have trusted in Jesus as their Savior and Lord*. They have acknowledged God and admitted their need of Him, and placed their faith and hope in Jesus life, death, and resurrection. They have confessed their own sinfulness and brokenness in humility and been forgiven because of Jesus's death. They are filled with the Holy Spirit of God to live a life like Jesus. They are committed to a life of surrender to the grace and love of God and to consider Jesus the King of their life. (*See "What is the Gospel?" document separately)

We encourage you to take this step of obedience in baptism if you are a new believer in Jesus. We would also encourage you towards baptism if you have not been baptized in a community of faith since placing your faith in Christ even if that first happened a long time ago. Many people experienced baptism as a child and while that is not the practice of Trinity Grace Church we would not say you need be compelled to be re-baptized after coming to trust Christ as an adult. However, many people feel led to do that by the Holy Spirit as an important identification with their faith in Jesus and commitment to the community as an adult.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THE DAY OF YOUR BAPTISM?

- Please take some time to pray over this step in your life and to invite your friends and family to come and witness the important event.
- You will share the story of you coming to faith in Jesus with the church. We encourage you to write it out word for word and plan for about 3 to 4 minutes. You do not have to read the story word for word but it helps to have written out what you want to say
- You will step into the baptismal pool and then we will go through the baptism liturgy*. Then you will be baptized briefly under the water under the water "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ in Baptism and raised to walk in newness of life." (*See the Baptism liturgy below)
- People will clap and you will step out and dry off. Please bring a change of clothes and towel with you on that day
- You will receive a certificate of Baptism.

BAPTISM LITURGY

Question: Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Answer: I renounce them.

Question: Do you renounce the evil powers of this world, which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Answer: I renounce them.

Question: Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

Answer: I renounce them.

Question: Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Answer: I do.

Question: Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

Answer: I do.

Congregational response:

We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal family.