

BAPTISM

Frequently Asked Questions...

We're so glad you're considering getting baptized! In fact, we believe it's one of the most important things you will ever do. We regard baptisms as "*an outward declaration of an inner transformation*"; a public expression of faith that symbolizes how Jesus has, is, and will continue to change you from the inside out.

For the last 2,000 years, there has been much debate over the meaning and methods of this sacrament. While we sincerely respect the many different traditions among the diverse church of Jesus, our attempt is to be as simple and faithful to the Scriptures as the New Testament describes it. That being said, we know that good, natural questions still persist. Hopefully these thoughts will bring you one step closer towards declaring the incredible news of Jesus in you!



Q: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I AM BAPTIZED-LITERALLY?

- The baptism will take place @ Clinton Lake
- You will give a short public testimony of your faith in Jesus, how He is changing you and how you are choosing to repent of your sin and make Him Lord of your life
- As people line up along the shore, we'll invite you into the water. The Pastor and/or Elder will ask you something similar to: "*Are you today surrendering your life to Jesus, choosing to repent of your sin and confess Him as your savior and Lord, vowing to follow Him wherever He leads?*"
- You will say "*I am,*" and we'll respond, "*Then I now baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*"
- As we support your back, you will lean back, immersing fully into the water, then we'll lift you back up again
- Then all friends, family and the Vintage Community will celebrate this day with you, clapping and cheering this awesome thing that God has done

Q: WHAT DOES BAPTISM SYMBOLIZE?

- ***It's a declaration***...a public statement of the inner transformation God is doing in your life. Like a wedding ceremony, you are declaring – before friends, family and the Lord – that you are vowing to follow Jesus with and for your entire life (Acts 9:170-9)
- ***It's a sign***...a way of physically identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Being lowered into the water symbolizes you are no longer living for yourself; being raised out of the water symbolizes rising to new life in Jesus (Colossians 2:12-24)
- ***It's a sacrament***...a "sacred mystery" that somehow – despite being a symbolic expression of an inner reality – God uses it to effect a new level of grace in our lives, empowering us to live for Him on a deeper level. In the sacraments of baptism and communion, disciples of Jesus believe we are united with Him in a special, unique way – in a way only He can accomplish. We also believe Jesus commanded that his followers be identified by these sacraments (1 Peter 3:21)
- ***It's entrance into a new community***...locking arms with the community of believers who have also chosen to make Jesus the Lord of their lives. Baptism is a way of declaring His Church to be your new spiritual family, and that you will serve in solidarity alongside them, in unity and in love (Acts 2:41; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 and Colossians 3:12-14)

Q: IS GETTING BAPTIZED ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION:

- No. We do believe baptism is a necessary step of *obedience* for anyone who wants to follow Jesus; we do not believe it is essential for *salvation* (Luke 23:39-44)
- We do recognize baptism as a sacrament and a biblical command for all believers, one we take very seriously and celebrate intentionally

Q: WHAT SHOULD MY EXPECTATIONS BE FOR THIS TIME?

- We encourage you not to have too many expectations...some experience a powerful emotion, while others don't necessarily feel much at all. Some describe it as the most meaningful thing they've ever done, while others end up thinking, "What's the big deal?!" Either way, the validity of your declaration and commitment to Jesus isn't based on your emotions at the time, or the grace given by God in the midst of what is happening (Luke 10:27-28)
- Regardless of what you do or don't feel, something BIG is definitely taking place...you're crossing a line in the sand, choosing to leave your old life and committing to walking with Jesus and His people for the rest of your life. You're opening yourself up to Him in a new way, and inviting His Holy Spirit to move in and through on a new level. With that in mind, it's impossible for you not to change, whether you "feel" something or not.
- But don't be afraid – you won't become an "unrecognizable" person; instead, you'll actually more of the *you* that God designed and dreams for you to be (Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:27-28; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Q: IF I'VE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED AS AN INFANT, CAN I BE BAPTIZED AGAIN?

- If you would like to, absolutely!

Q: WHAT DO I DO NEXT? I'VE HEARD OF "DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS" & "MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES" – WHAT ARE THEY?

- Missional communities are "extended families on mission" where we learn how to live "UP" (in our relationship with God), "IN" (in our relationships with other believers) and "OUT" (as we love and serve the world around us)
- MCs are led by known, trusted leaders who have been trained and equipped to lead and care for those in their "extended family"
- These groups are usually informal, meeting in the leader's home and at "work sites" wherever the MC has chosen to do it's "OUT" (i.e. where they serve together)
- Discipleship groups may develop within the MCs, or through contact with leaders in other MCs; either way, we want to help you grow, so check out the MC info listed on our website (vintagelawrence.com) or let us know if you have questions and we'll point you in the right direction!