



BAPTISM

HOW GRABILL MISSIONARY CHURCH PRACTICES BAPTISM

CORPORATE BAPTISM

We highly value the ordinance of baptism at Grabill Missionary Church. As a corporate church, we baptize believers at our Sunday morning gathering. For information about these baptisms and the required baptism class, please email either Michael Miller (Michael@grabillmc.org) or Lynne Steiner (Lynne@grabillmc.org).

As a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ, one is called to be baptized, as instructed in Matthew 28:19. Baptism is a profound symbol of your commitment to follow Jesus and learn from Him. Just as houses are built on a strong foundation, your faith grows as you apprentice under the teachings and life of Jesus. Sharing in baptism as a church body not only encourages all of us, regardless of where we are in our faith journey, but it also deepens the level of commitment we extend to one another.

In the following pages, you will find biblical teachings on baptism, answers to frequently asked questions concerning baptism, and how our church approaches baptism.

What are some questions you have about baptism?



WHAT GRABILL MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES ABOUT BAPTISM

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

“All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were therefore buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3–4)

“Having been buried with Christ in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:12)

Every time a person enters into a new life with Jesus, the Bible tells us that all of heaven rejoices. Baptism is an outward proclamation of an inward reality that God has created new life within that person. Baptism is the new believer's testimony to the public of their belonging to Jesus. As they are immersed beneath the waters, they are proclaiming that their old self, enslaved to unbelief and sin, has died. And as the believer is raised up out of the waters, they are proclaiming that their new self, freed from sin and death, has been raised in the resurrection of Jesus. They are proclaiming that they now belong to Jesus.

WHY DO WE BAPTIZE?

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented.” (Matthew 3:13, 16–17)

“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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)



We baptize because Jesus modeled it Himself and made it part of His ministry and 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 all 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 holistically.

To Unbelievers:

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

PROCESSING QUESTIONS

Why do you want to get baptized?

Who will you invite to your baptism?

What do you want your baptism to say to others?



THE PRACTICALS OF BAPTISM

WHAT DOES BAPTISM LOOK LIKE?

“And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Mark 1:5)

“And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.” (Mark 1:10)

“John was also baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized.” (John 3:23)

At Grabill, we baptize by immersion. That’s the example we see throughout Scripture, and it’s the basis for the meaning of the word “baptize,” which means to immerse (or dip under) in water. We believe that physical submersion in water is the best way to symbolize the death and burial of the old self, and that physical emergence from the water best represents the new self being raised from the dead.

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you 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. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.” (Romans 6:1-10)

The word “baptism” in Greek means to dip or immerse. Going “into the water” and “coming out of the water” are common biblical phrases associated with baptism. Baptism by immersion was the universal practice of the early church.



WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

“He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” (Luke 3:3)

“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?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” (Acts 8:36-38)

“for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (Galatians 3:27)

Baptism is an outward proclamation of faith and is therefore only for believers. Being baptized is limited to those who profess repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Every time a person enters into a new life with Jesus Christ, the Bible tells us that all of heaven rejoices. (Luke 15:7)

“Or don’t you 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 6:3-4)

Baptism is the new believer's public testimony of their belonging to Jesus. As they are immersed beneath the waters, they are proclaiming that their old self, enslaved to unbelief and sin, has died. And as the believer is raised out of the waters, they are proclaiming that their new self, freed from sin and death, has been raised in the resurrection of Jesus. They are proclaiming that they now belong to Jesus.

Baptism is not in itself what saves, but is rather an outward proclamation of an existing faith, and is therefore only for believers. Being baptized is limited to those who profess repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Our understanding of the Bible is that every instance of baptism in the New Testament was preceded by confession of sin and repentance—acts that require personal faith and cannot be performed by an unbeliever or an infant. Because baptism symbolizes our union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, we practice believer's baptism only. Therefore, if you wish to become a



member of GMC, we kindly ask that you be baptized as a believer.

In corporate settings at Grabill Missionary Church, we will baptize those who, by faith in Jesus Christ, demonstrate repentance and make a promise to turn away from their sin. We believe in salvation by faith and not by works, so perfection is not required. However, demonstrating a lifestyle or belief that is contrary to the Scriptures, while maintaining no desire to repent or change by the power of the Holy Spirit, would indicate that the desire to be baptized is not in line with God, who has created new life within that person.

We understand that not everyone will agree with our view of biblical baptism. If you have a conviction that infant baptism is biblical and valid, please contact your Discipleship Pastor or any of the elders.

For anyone who is unsure about their beliefs regarding baptism, we recommend further reading and study on the matter. We can provide resources to assist you in your search of the Scriptures.

DOES BAPTISM SAVE YOU?

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Baptism is not in itself what saves us, but is an outward proclamation of an existing faith. We are saved solely by God’s grace, applied to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Nothing we do can save us, for our salvation is not a result of our works. We are, however, called to do good works and obey the commands of Jesus, baptism being one of them. Just as with all the other “good works,” we are baptized and baptize not to be saved, but because we are already saved. Just because a Christian has not been baptized yet doesn’t mean they are not a Christian. Baptism is an outward demonstration of what has already occurred inside of us. Similarly, if a wife is not wearing her wedding ring, she’s still married. The ring is simply an outward display that she’s married. Nevertheless, it’s good that she wears her wedding ring. We believe that, though baptism doesn’t save you, God is pleased when His child proclaims to the world that the salvation of Christ has come into their life.



PROCESSING QUESTIONS

What do you believe about baptism?

What about the Bible's depiction of baptism is difficult for you to believe?

Has this changed as you have studied the Scriptures?

REAP EXERCISES:

REAP (Read, Examine, Apply, Pray) through the following passages and see what God's Word has to say about your identity in Christ and why baptism is such a powerful message to the world. Along with each passage, there are questions to consider.

Romans 6:1-14

- How are Christians joined with Christ?
- Why are Christians joined with Christ?
- By what power was Christ raised from the dead?
- What does this passage say about Christ's life after death?
- What did you learn about your identity in Christ?
- What did you learn about baptism in this passage?

Colossians 2:9-15

- What does this passage say about the Christian's relation to sin?
- What does this passage say about faith?
- What did Christ accomplish? What does it mean for Christians?
- What are the two parts of baptism? What do they represent?



TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT BAPTISM

As your child grows and matures, surrounded by followers of Christ, they are likely to start asking questions about baptism and what it means. Here are some simple ways to discuss and explain baptism with your kids, hopefully facilitating meaningful discussions within your family.

First off, it is important for your child to understand that baptism is a picture of what it means to believe in Jesus Christ, who died and rose again. It is something that is supposed to remind us of what Jesus has done for us. It represents something that has already happened in our hearts as we believed the gospel, placed our trust in Jesus for our salvation, and were brought spiritually from death to life.

Here is some language that may help guide you as you talk with your child about baptism:

Baptism occurs only once in a person's life, when we first put our trust in Jesus. However, we get to rejoice and celebrate with others for the rest of our lives as we see people get baptized. Baptism is an outward symbol of what Christ has done in our hearts. When someone gets baptized, they are dipped under the water and then immediately raised back up. When one is dipped completely under the water, it is a picture of someone so close to Jesus that Jesus' death on the cross has now become their death. This means that as one goes under the surface of the water, they see that their sin was paid for when Jesus took their place by dying on the cross. They also realize that they have died and no longer live on their own. Being under the water symbolizes being buried. That is why you will often hear someone say, "Buried with Christ."

Now, when a person is baptized, they do not stay underwater for long; they immediately come back up. This serves as a reminder that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too are raised with Him from the dead. We have been given new life because Jesus paid for our sin, and when He rose from the dead, He showed us that He completely dealt with sin. That is why when a person is coming up out of the water, you will often hear someone say, "Raised to walk in the newness of life." We have a new life in Christ. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us. Sin does not have control anymore. You will also notice that a person is soaking wet when they emerge from the water. This is also a picture of the



cleansing of sin that happens when we are in a relationship with Christ. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ in His death and resurrection.

It is important to make sure that your child understands that being baptized does not save them. It is simply a picture of an inward spiritual transformation that has already taken place. People get baptized because Jesus commanded it, so that we may demonstrate our commitment to Christ to the world. And everyone else gets to rejoice and worship, remembering what Christ has done for them. That is why we cheer. Baptism is more than just watching someone get wet; it is a worship experience where we get to remember the greatest event in human history—the cross and resurrection.

Scripture References: Matthew 3:13–17, Romans 6:1–11, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 2:11–15

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD WANTS TO BE BAPTIZED

Be sure to teach your child about baptism and why it is practiced. Please see the previous section on “Talking with your child about Baptism” (Page 8)

Baptism should be your child’s idea, not your idea.

Sometimes suggesting baptism to your child means that they will only say yes because they want to please you.

Be sure your child understands the gospel.

Even though they may not fully understand all the implications of the gospel, be sure they understand that Jesus is the only way they can be saved, not by good works, not by attending church, and not by behaving well.

Is there evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in your child’s life?

Do you see any fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,



gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)? We want to ensure that this is not merely religious obedience for the approval of others. If you are unsure, it's okay to wait. Remember, baptism does not save your child; it is just an outward expression of what God has done.

To wait or not to wait? That is the question.

There is no set age or time that is right for a child to be baptized. That is up to you as your child's parent(s) and spiritual leader(s). But it is okay to wait. Some prefer to wait until they see more fruit in their child's life. Some want to wait until they know the child is old enough to remember their baptism. Waiting also allows the child to embrace and understand the commitments they are making as their own. Some want to baptize their child as soon as they know they are believers. All are okay options. Baptism is an act of obedience to Jesus and a testimony of what He has done. It is not a saving act, so waiting a little while cannot hurt your child. If your child can articulate what Jesus has done for them, you have seen fruit in their life, and you feel the time is right, then it sounds like your child is ready for baptism. You can do this in front of the church or with your missional community. Let us know what you decide so that we can help spread the word of the Lord's faithfulness.

Signing up for baptism.

A child who is mature enough to be baptized should also be mature enough to go through the same process for baptism as adults. Please see the "Practicals" section (Page 4) of this booklet or contact your discipleship pastor.



LOGISTICAL STEPS OF PERFORMING A BAPTISM:

Who can baptize at Grabill Missionary Church?

Witnessing someone begin their new life in Christ is a beautiful thing! Baptism is seen as an act of joining oneself to Christ and entering into the life of the Christian community, the Church. Therefore, it's generally understood that the one performing the baptism should be someone who is part of this community, a fellow believer, and acting in line with its teachings and authority.

Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Those who baptize are seen as continuing this commission, and therefore should be believers themselves, acting out of faith and obedience. Scripture is strangely silent regarding the prescription of requirements to perform the ordinance of baptism. Although this silence does not entail absolute indifference to the issue, it should prompt local churches to approach it with considerable caution when mandating a particular practice.

To perform baptism at Grabill Missionary Church, a person must profess faith in Christ and have been previously baptized following conversion.

Ordained or Not

Though historic tradition and practice have restricted the performance of the ordinance to males who have been formally ordained for ministry, such a restriction is not demanded by the Scripture. In fact, the biblical precedent is the equipping of the saints so that they may perform the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12) as lay “priests” (1 Peter 2:4-10).

Requirements

Though there are no explicit texts mandating certain restrictions, wisdom suggests that at least a few qualifications be placed upon those performing the ordinance. We might summarize the qualified individual as one who is:

- A believer in Jesus Christ
- Baptized subsequent to salvation
- In good standing with a local church, preferably, a member of Grabill Missionary Church



Again, although there are no explicit scriptural mandates, wisdom suggests that only believers who have publicly identified with Christ in baptism should be allowed to administer the ordinance to others. The person should also be considered to be in good standing with their local church. It would certainly seem inappropriate to permit someone to lead this sacred ordinance if they have not personally participated in it or are under formal discipline for unrepentant sin.

As a church, we are firmly committed to the sufficiency of Scripture and maintain traditions to the extent that they accord with clear biblical teaching and wisdom. In the area of performing baptisms, it seems that the only real requirements should be belief, baptism, and general Christian obedience. Therefore, it seems as though prohibiting those who do not meet these general conditions from performing the ordinance is most wise and faithful to the principles which we can glean from God's good Word.

We are excited to join you on this spiritual journey and to support your next step in ministry. In the Great Commission, Jesus commands His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Grabill Missionary Church baptizes, obeying this command. Would you prayerfully join us in being baptized and making disciples of all nations?