

PRACTICALITIES

If you need any help / clarifications / have concerns etc. - Just Say!

- 1/ Glyn will baptise the men, Emma will baptise the women. Please choose one other person to be in the water to help dunk you!
- 2/ Bring a change of clothes and a towel – you will be very wet! (have someone holding your towel for when you come out of the water – avoid clothes which turn see-through when wet!)
- 3/ Give yourself plenty of time to write out your testimony – Many people find this a positive personal exercise! It will probably take longer than you think! If you need help or advise, just ask – lots of people do!
- 4/ **BE BOLD!** Make sure you invite friends and family etc. It is a lovely, happy and powerful occasion!
- 5/ Get stuck in to your bible and pray! This will strengthen your relationship with God.



Baptism

@ OTCC



WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN ?

Being a Christian is more than just a name or label! According to the Bible, a Christian (or “disciple”) is someone who has made the decision to give their life to Jesus. When someone gives their life to Jesus, the Bible says (and we at Old Town Community Church believe) that God's Holy Spirit fills their whole life and that they will begin to think, act, and live differently. When we give our life to God, we enter into a relationship with Him and He becomes our constant companion. With His Holy Spirit within us, and through reading the Bible and being with other Christians we become aware of those things in our lives that need to change (often called 'sin'). We find that we want to become more like Jesus and live life as best as we can like He did. People around us will often notice the changes and be curious.

IS IT EASY TO BE A CHRISTIAN ?

It is a life changing and serious commitment to be a follower of Jesus - amazing but not always easy! As we read the Bible we see that we are required to “walk as Jesus walked” and as we look at the life of Jesus in the Bible we see that He was willing to go 'all the way' in following God's will. If we walk as Jesus walked we need to turn our back on our “old ways” the best we can. Love our enemies, care for all, forgive those who hurt us, serve and honour others as though they were Jesus, self sacrifice and denial when necessary (in terms of our desires, wants, and preferences).

It means being/aiming to be: generous, helping the poor and needy, fighting injustice, telling other people unashamedly about Jesus. We are commanded to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. It means trusting Him in all situations and not compromising God's way when there is an easier way out.

Following Jesus is a 24/7 commitment and means living a life that will be like “Salt and light” (full of distinctive flavour and light in a dark world). Deciding to follow Jesus and asking Him to be your Lord and saviour will be the most important and life changing decision you will ever make. No one becomes perfect (only Jesus was and is perfect!) but we make a decision to begin the process and journey of transformation. **Following Jesus is not a decision to be made lightly! (READ MATTHEW 16: 24 - 25)**

HOW DO WE BECOME A CHRISTIAN ?

Giving your life to Jesus (becoming a Christian) means asking Jesus into your life (some people say a prayer, others make a decision in their heart). We ask Him to forgive us our past wrongs, clean us up spiritually and direct, guide, and help us from

TESTIMONY

Another exciting part of a baptism service is hearing the testimony of those being baptised. A testimony is a short account (or story) of how you came to give your life to Jesus. **YOU DEFINITELY WANT THIS PREPARED IN ADVANCE AND WRITTEN DOWN!** You could lay out your story in the following way or be “interviewed” on the following sort of questions:

Tell a little about your life pre becoming a Christian (background information, some key life experiences - (be as honest as you want and/or can as this is a good opportunity to help people know you. It is also encouraging for others to hear stories of how people come to faith). We all have different stories and experiences and these can range from the everyday to the dramatic – everyone is unique and everything is valued!

How you came to church / met Jesus – how would you describe this?

What have you learned about God and yourself – have you (or anyone else!) noticed any changes?

Any bible verses that have particularly spoken to you / anything you feel God has said to you?

Why are you being baptised today? What would you say to those who don't know Jesus? What does it now mean to you?

FINALLY!

Enjoy this special event! It is a one off and certainly take the opportunity to invite family, friends and people to share it with you (baptisms are known to be a time when people are very moved and personally challenged to know Jesus!) So be brave and invite people!

that point on. It is a new way to live your life where the old way we used to live is replaced with God's way. We learn about God's way from reading the Bible and being with other Christians who are "journeying" with God.

Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved"

WHY BE BAPTISED ?

As Christians the Bible is our hand book – we believe it comes from God and gives us help and guidance on how to live.

Baptism is commanded in the Bible: e.g.

Matthew 28:18 Jesus said "all authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples (followers / believers) of all nations, baptising them in the name of the father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Acts 2:38 "Repent* and be baptised every one of you"

*Repent means to 'turn around' in this case, turning around from your old way of living and start living in a new way – God's way.

Baptism is a way of saying (showing) to friends, family, the church, the spiritual realm that a person identifies themselves as a follower of Jesus and believes in His death, burial and resurrection. We symbolically go through the same process. Making the decision to die to our old life, bury it (in the water) and come out a new person with a new identity. Literally a visible example of being "born again".

WHAT IS INFANT (baby or child) BAPTISM AND BELIEVERS BAPTISM ?

Infant baptism – an adult will choose on behalf of the child to have the child baptised making it their choice rather than the one being baptised deciding for themselves.

Believers baptism – the one being baptised will have made an intentional decision themselves to be baptised.

Old Town Community Church practices **believers baptism**. We do not baptise babies but dedicate them. Dedication is where a baby / child / young person is intentionally blessed and dedicated to God.

Even Jesus was baptised!

Read Matthew 3: 13

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTISED?

1/ It was to "fulfil all righteousness" – meaning it was right and good for it to happen and God gave His approval.

2/ At Jesus' baptism John the Baptist publicly announces that Jesus is the Messiah (saviour). You can read this in Matthew 3:11.

3/ Even though Jesus didn't 'need' to be baptised (As already said - He wasn't sinful, and is the only person ever to be without sin – as God's son he is totally pure). He was baptised in order to set an example to his followers.

WHEN IS SOMEONE READY FOR BELIEVERS BAPTISM?

The only command in the bible regarding baptism is "believe" there isn't a set standard, or certain 'level' of understanding, or time frame that has to be reached. **However**, it is very important that the person has made this decision for themselves, and has every intention of living their life as best they can as a disciple of Jesus.

In the same way a person would ideally enter into a marriage commitment with deep sincerity and certainty, it is the same with baptism. Being baptised is an important step in the life of a Christian. It is something that is taken seriously by the church and encouraged for every person who has decided to give their life to Jesus. Feeling nervous is quite normal!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ARE BAPTISED?

Baptism is symbolic of the death (on the cross), burial, and resurrection (raising from the dead) of Jesus. In baptism we act this out symbolically:

As we stand before the baptism water it represents our old way of life

As we then go into the water, we are completely dunked under for a second. This represents a liquid tomb and us dying to our old life.

As we come up from the water it is like leaving the old life behind and coming out cleansed and into a new life.

We are saying publicly through this act that we believe in Jesus - the son of God. That he died for our sins on the cross, was buried in a tomb then after 3 days was raised back to life. We believe that when we are baptised, it is a sign to God, the people who have come to witness the baptism, and all the spiritual forces that we are part of God's family and want to live our lives His way. We leave the old ways in the water and enter into a new life. It is a key, significant event and a great celebration on earth and no doubt in heaven too!