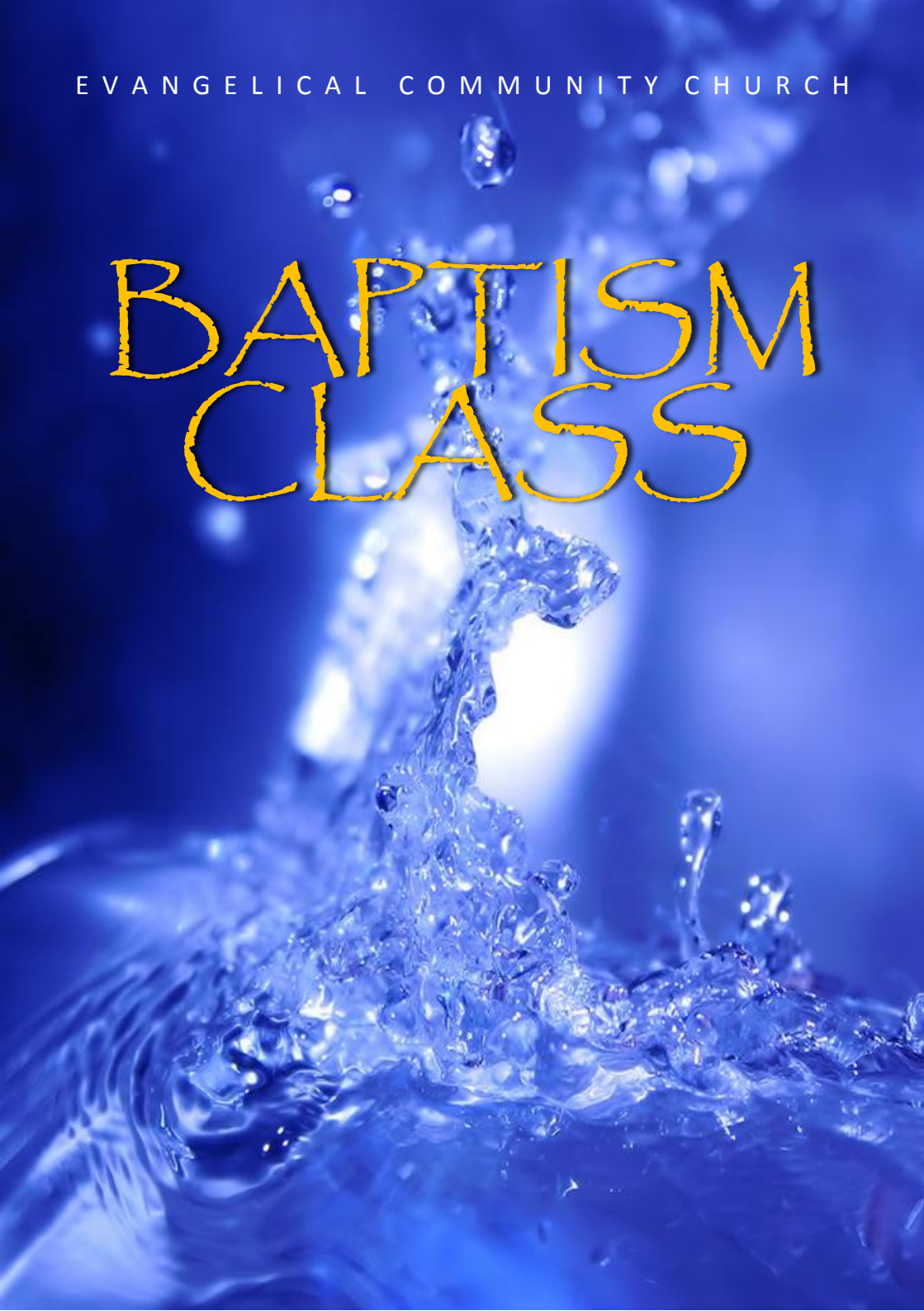


EVANGELICAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

BAPTISM CLASS



Welcome to the Baptism Class!

You are taking an important step in your journey with Jesus Christ. Perhaps you are a new Christian, or perhaps an old one who just wanted to be extra sure about your faith before getting baptized. Whatever your reason or circumstances, your decision to get baptized is so important that it is like your decision to marry. It is an event where you publicly make lifelong promises. These lifelong decisions should never be taken lightly.

And that is why your Christian brothers and sisters want you to take this class. We want you to be certain of your readiness to be baptized, your reasons for being baptized, and what to expect once you're baptized. We want you to enter the baptism event with great confidence and anticipation, so that it would be a most meaningful milestone in your life, as well as a time of great joy and celebration for your brothers and sisters in the church and in your family.

What Every Believer Needs to Know

God's Character

1. Romans 1:20 In nature, God's eternal _____ and _____ nature are clearly seen.
2. Romans 5:7-8 God has demonstrated His _____ for us.
3. Romans 2:5-6 Because God is also _____, He will give to each person according to what he/she deserves.

Our Condition

4. Romans 3:23 Each one of us – all – have _____, and _____ of God's standards.
5. Romans 2:14-15 Our attempts at doing good show that God's laws are written on our _____ and our own _____ confirm our guilt.
6. Romans 6:23 The Bible says that what we deserve (wages) because of our sin is _____, which is eternal separation from God.

Are You Sure You Need Jesus?

In view of what the Bible says about my condition, I know and believe that I am a sinner. Because of this, I repent of my sin, and I declare my desperate need for a Savior, to rescue me and restore me to fellowship with God.

Share with the class about the time, if any, when you first sensed that you needed Jesus.

God's Gift

7. Romans 8:3-4 But God sent His own _____, Christ Jesus, to be a _____ to pay the price for our sin so that God's righteous requirements would be _____ met on our behalf.
8. Romans 5:6-9 God's loving plan - sending Christ at just the _____ is all the more remarkable because while we were still _____, Christ gave His own life for _____.

Personal Application

9. Romans 5:1-2 We become justified - i.e., made just as if we never sinned – through _____, and our relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ is by _____ (see also Ephesians 2:8-9).
10. Romans 12:1-2 Biblical faith is a heartfelt, thankful response (an offering of ourselves as a _____) ...to Jesus' sacrificial death in our place (in view of God's _____ -- not getting what we deserve)...that is life changing (be _____ by the renewing of your mind). [See also Luke 14:25-33]

11. Romans 10:9 We are assured of our salvation if we have _____ with our mouths that Jesus is Lord, and _____ in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead.

After Knowing This, Are You a Believer?

I am a true believer and I am certain of my salvation because: I am ready to confess with my mouth that Jesus is Lord, that is, I am ready to publicly declare my faith in Jesus Christ through baptism and in my life. I wholeheartedly believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and because of this fact, I can trust in everything that the Bible says about Jesus, my own sin, His miracles, and His plan of salvation.

Yes. I'd like to continue with baptism.

Not yet. I'd like more time to explore the Christian faith through this class, an Alpha Course, or talking with someone. I'm not ready to be baptized yet.

New Life in Christ

12. Romans 6:11-13 As Christians, we are _____ to sin and _____ to God. As God (not sin) reigns in our hearts, He calls us to become instruments of _____ .

13. Romans 12:4-6 In Christ we who are _____ form _____ body, and are expected to use our individual gifts in serving others.
14. Romans 8:16-17 Since as Christians we are God's _____, we have the promise of eternal life with Him as _____ of God and _____ with Christ.

The Change Summarized

15. 2 Corinthians 5:17 The _____ has gone, the _____ has come.
16. Ephesians 5:8 You were once _____, but now you are _____.
17. Colossians 2:13 You were _____, God made you _____.
18. Galatians 5:22-23 The virtues of Christ such as love, joy, and peace, are the _____ of the _____.

Is Jesus Changing You?

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ has been changing me. I hate sin more and more, I delight in what is good, and I enjoy reading the Bible.

Share with the class about a time when you or someone else noticed a change in you after becoming a believer.

Teaching About Baptism

A man walks into a bar, and notices an attractive woman. He gets up to approach her. But as he reaches to pick up his beer mug, he sees his wedding ring on his finger. He immediately freezes, looks down at the floor, then remembers the promises he and his wife made to each other ten years ago. That ring! Each time he sees it, he thinks of his wife. He gets up and leaves the bar, and heads back home.

Baptism is like that ring. It reminds us of Jesus Christ's promise given to us when we entered in to God's family - that Christ's death on the cross surely washes away the believer's sins and gives new life. Now when you struggle with all the temptations of the world - drink, drugs, pornography, shady deals - and then you witness a new brother getting baptized on Sunday morning, that baptism reminds you of the enormous sacrifice that Christ paid to forgive your sins. You cannot help but to say, "Hallelujah, what a Savior! My guilt is gone! Now let me live for You!"

Biblical Introduction

Read the following key passages concerning baptism, then answer the questions on the next page.

Matthew 28:19: 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.

Acts 2:38: Peter replied, "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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Acts 8:16: *...because the Holy “Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Acts 8:36-38: *As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be 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 10:47-48: *“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

Acts 16:15: *When she [Lydia] and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home...*

Acts 16:33: *At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.*

Romans 6:3-4: *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.*

Colossians 2:11: *In Him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

1 Peter 3:21: *and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

- a. Which verse above does Jesus Himself command the church to baptize? _____
- b. Which verse shows that water baptism has no power to fill one with the Holy Spirit? _____
- c. Which verse shows a believer wanting a representative of the church to baptize him, rather than doing it by himself?

- d. Which verse shows an apostle commanding every believer in the audience to be baptized? _____
- e. Which verse shows that it is not the water but the power of Jesus Christ which saves? _____
- f. Which verse shows the close connection between baptism and Christ's death on the cross? _____

So What Does Baptism Mean?

From the above Bible verses, we should say first what it does NOT mean. It has no magical powers in and of itself in that it does not wash away your sins. Sin cannot be washed away by water; rather, "the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7)

Nor is baptism the means of becoming a Christian. The only way we do so is by grace through faith in the work of Christ alone

(Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7), not by having a ritual performed upon us.

Baptism, then, means four things:

Christ's Work _____ in us.

First, baptism is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible change that God has already worked in a believer's heart. Significantly, baptism always follows upon the personal confession of one's faith. This explains why we do not practice infant baptism, as a tiny baby cannot have placed his/her faith in Christ. (Act 2:38, 41).

An expression of our Union _____ with Christ.

Second, baptism illustrates our spiritual union and identification with the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; that we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. Being immersed in water symbolizes having died to our sin; and being raised out of the water that we have been raised to a brand new life in Christ. Again, salvation is not conveyed in baptism; it simply illustrates that spiritual transaction which has already taken place.

An indication of our Obedience _____ to Christ.

Being baptized is an act of obedience to His commands and submission to His Lordship. Jesus always qualified a true love for Him by a willingness to obey what He said (Luke 6:46-49; John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 5:2-3).

A look forward to our Future _____ with Christ.

Fourth, in baptism, a person says, "I'm going somewhere." The believer has an ultimate hope of being with Christ (Philippians 3:13-14; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 John 3:2-3).

Immersion or sprinkling?

At ECC, we practice baptism by immersion as we can see no other indication in Scripture of another practice, unless the believer is physically unable to be immersed. The act of being submerged into and then rising out of the water symbolizes our identification with Christ. Those who practice pouring or sprinkling do so with their own theological convictions, and we gladly accept into membership Christians who have been baptized in either of these modes.

Should babies be baptized?

In obedience to the Great Commission, we only baptize those who have made a profession of faith as Christ's disciples. We practice believers' baptism, not infant baptism. Churches that baptize infants tend to think more in terms of the covenant community, and therefore will baptize the children of confessing parents in order to set them apart for the Lord.

Should a person be re-baptized?

This depends on the significance of the first act of baptism. If someone was baptized as a child or as an adult for any reason other than a desire to identify with Christ (e.g. to go along with friends), he/she may sense that it is important to be baptized again. Baptism must be combined with faith in Christ for it to be effective. Such people need to decide for themselves what it is best; ultimately, it is a matter of conscience. If, on the other hand, someone has returned to the Lord after being away from Him for some time, that person need not be re-baptized.

Preparing to Publicly Declare Your Faith

An important part of baptism is your personal testimony of Christ's work in you. Just as a bride and groom publicly make their vows before their friends and family, so you will be publicly making your declaration of faith in Jesus. Your brothers and sisters from ECC will be there, as well as any non-believing friends and family who have been invited to the event. This is your opportunity to stand up for Jesus and boldly announce what God has done in your life.

A personal testimony need not be long, and it is not a biography. Rather, it is a simple story made up of three parts: 1) what your life was like before you came to trust in Jesus Christ, 2) how you came to put your trust in Christ, and 3) how Christ has worked in you since you trusted in Him.

Below is an example of such a personal testimony. See if you can identify all three parts.

As long as I can remember I have always had a fear of God and the desire to pray to Him. I thought about heaven and hell, wanting to go to heaven. As a young teen I went to church. After a few years I felt it was not relevant to my life and stopped going. When I was 22 years old, I was invited to a Christmas concert by the person who is now my wife. This church was different. For the first time in my life I heard that my sin had separated me from God and from going to heaven. They also said that Jesus Christ died for my sins. I knew I was a sinner and this gift sounded too good to be true. I immediately prayed and asked Christ to be my Savior and Lord. I spent the following year beginning to understand the commitment I made. The Lord has been helping me to grow in my faith since then. He has taught me through the preaching and study of His Word and fellowship with other believers. I count it a privilege to serve Jesus Christ.

Baptism Instructions

On the day of your baptism, please bring a towel, T-shirt (or tank-top), and shorts that you don't mind getting wet. Also bring a plastic bag for your wet clothes.

Out of necessity, ECC holds baptism events at either another church's building, a pool, or the beach. You will be informed of the location once it has been confirmed.

In public, you will be asked the following question: "Do you believe in Jesus Christ and do you love and trust Him as the Lord and Savior of your life? Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and do you believe in all the promises of God to you as revealed in the Scriptures and signified in your baptism? And finally, do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your commitment to the Lord Jesus, to obey and follow Him, and serve Him wherever He may lead you?" You will be asked to respond, "I do, Lord helping me."

As you are immersed in water, the pastor or assistant will say a few words, and then lower you backwards into the water. We suggest holding your nose with your fingers to keep the water from bringing you discomfort.

And now, get ready for the celebration!

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