

# **Baptism at Trinity Fellowship**

## **What Does Baptism Mean?**

Baptism is a physical reminder and an outward symbol of the salvation that a person has received by faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is not a means of salvation, rather it is an expression of the salvation that we have received through Christ. The moment someone trusts in Christ, their old self has been crucified and they begin a new life with God (John 5:24). Being immersed under water and coming up again is a vivid picture of how each believer has been identified with Christ's death and resurrection. The apostle Paul says in Colossians 2:12, "having been buried with him through baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead." Since baptism is such a strong reminder of our identification with Christ, we believe it is an important step in a believer's life of obedience to Christ. Jesus commanded for his followers to be baptized (Matt. 28:19-20). However, at Trinity Fellowship we do not require baptism as a prerequisite for membership in the church.

## **Who Should Be Baptized?**

The common pattern in the New Testament was for individuals to be baptized after they had repented and made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. After the apostle Peter shares the gospel message in Acts chapter two the text says, "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Also in Acts chapter eight we find, "But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Because of these and other examples, we believe that only those individuals who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized.

Some churches baptize infants, which explains why they would choose sprinkling or pouring as alternative methods rather than immersion. While we allow for the freedom of those who believe infants should be baptized, there are no clear examples of infant baptisms in the New Testament. And because we believe that baptism is not a means of salvation, we prefer to baptize only those who have made a decision to follow Jesus and are old enough to understand that decision. For infants we usually perform a child dedication. In this dedication we ask for the Lord's blessing on the child's life, and we emphasize the responsibility of the parents and the congregation to bring the child up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

## **How Should Baptism Be Performed?**

The Greek word used in the New Testament is baptizo, which literally means "to immerse". Mark 1:5 describes people being baptized by John "in the River Jordan." It is clear from this and other passages that baptism was practiced by full immersion into water, and also in a public place. Therefore at Trinity Fellowship we practice baptism by immersion (unless someone is physically unable), and we often perform baptisms in the Muskegon River, where individuals can proclaim their allegiance to Jesus for all to see.

## **How Do I Respond?**

Baptism is a great blessing to the family of God. It is a time to praise God for his grace in salvation and to affirm Christians in their faith. If you have made a faith-commitment to Jesus then you should be baptized. If you desire to be baptized, please contact the church office. 231.796.2600