

BAPTISM AT THE AVENUE

While being widely accepted as Biblical, many churches have different views on the methods & practice of baptism. By answering commonly asked questions we hope to give you a greater understanding of what The Avenue believes about baptism, what God's Word says and finally what you can expect when being baptized at The Avenue.

1.)What is Baptism & how does the Avenue practice it?

Baptism is an outward sign of the new life in Christ (Matt 3:11, 16). It is not required for salvation but is an indication of belief in Christ's birth, death and resurrection (Mark 16:16; Rom 10:9). Jesus himself demonstrated baptism when he was baptized by John the Baptist (Mark 1:9-10). Following this example the Avenue practices post-salvation baptism by immersion, which occurs when someone is dipped completely under water and then raised back up. The church is encouraged to celebrate baptism today (Matt 28:19) and we rejoice when those who have been saved by grace through faith choose to publicly indicate their belief through baptism

- **Mark 1:5** - 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 1:9 -10** - In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 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.
- **John 3:23-24** - John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison).
- **Romans 6:1** - What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore 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. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.
- **Colossians 2:11-12** - In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

BAPTISM AT THE AVENUE

2.)Who can be baptized?

Baptism is for Christians who demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ, after they experience salvation regardless of age, race, or gender. This includes new believers and those that were baptized before they became Christians but would now like to be baptized “post conversion”.

- **Acts 2:41** - So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.
- **Acts 8:12** - But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
- **Acts 10:47-48** - “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.
- **Galatians 3:27** - For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

3.)Is Baptism essential to salvation?

Baptism does not save anyone, but instead is an act of obedience that God commands of us once we’re saved by His free grace.

- **Galatians 5:4** - You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.
- **Ephesians. 2:8–9** - For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- **Matthew. 28:19** - Go therefore 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** - And Peter said to them, “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.

BAPTISM AT THE AVENUE

4.)What can I expect on the day of my baptism?

At our Avenue baptism services we will typically have a few songs, a message from God's word, and then a time of testimony or sharing as well as public immersion.

We ask all of those who are being baptized to line up a few things:

- Decide who you'd like to baptize you.
We believe in the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:5-9) and that any mature, faithful believer can baptize another. We encourage you to think about who has helped serve as a mentor in your relationship with Christ – whether it's a pastor, life group leader, parent, spouse or friend. A pastor from The Avenue would be very happy to baptize you.
- Pack a bag.
We recommend coming to the baptism service dressed in normal attire. Pack a bag with some shorts (swim trunks work for guys), a dark t-shirt or tank, a change of undergarments that can get wet, and flip-flops or shoes that can get in the pool if you desire. Also, please bring a towel. During the service, we'll ask you to change your clothes at the proper time. Immediately after you're baptized, you'll head back to the changing area and change back into the clothes you arrived in.
* The person who baptizes you will also need to prepare the same bag.
- Prepare your testimony.
Something that we LOVE to do at our baptism service is to help share your story. Because baptisms are a public profession of faith, we find ways to share your story with those who are your baptism witnesses! Now – we know that not everyone is a public speaker. We encourage you to give at least a short 2-minute story about your relationship with Christ. But, if you're extremely uncomfortable or unable to do that, we can also arrange a way to interview you (this especially works well for young kids), or even have someone come up and read your story on your behalf. We ask that testimonies be kept to about 4-5 minutes maximum. As you prepare what you'd like to say, or what questions may be asked, here are a few starters:
 - Tell us a short summary of your life before Christ, especially in regards to your relationship with God and sin?
 - Tell us about your journey of coming to know Christ. Who was there? How did you become interested in Jesus? What does the Gospel mean to you?
 - Tell us about how you accepted Christ. Where were you? How did you experience the miraculous saving work of Christ transforming your heart?
 - Tell us about how you feel now. Do you feel differently? Do you act differently? How has your decision to follow Christ changed your life?