

Baptism Overview at Parkview Community Church

Matthew 28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." NIV

We are excited you are interested in baptism. At Parkview we view baptism as an important step of obedience for every person who chooses to believe in and follow Jesus. For us, baptism is a distinctive of Christian discipleship.

This document is designed to help explain baptism at Parkview and the steps necessary to be baptized at an upcoming worship service. If after reviewing it, you have further questions, please contact the church office.

We consider it a privilege to walk with you as you take another step forward in your spiritual journey as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Who Should Be Baptized:

Christians are people who believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin. Therefore, salvation occurs only when a person places his or her faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the sufficient payment for his or her sin.

If you have invited Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior, then you are ready to be baptized. Just like a bride and groom show others their love for one another by wearing wedding bands, your baptism is your opportunity to publicly show others that you have asked Christ to be your Savior and are now walking with Him.

What Baptism Symbolizes:

Baptism is a way of showing others that a person has entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ. It symbolizes what took place in his/her heart at the time of salvation:

- That you have decided to follow Jesus Christ as your Savior, and placed your eternal hope in Him alone.
- Sharing in His death and resurrection illustrated by going under the water (dead to our old life), then rising again (new life).
- Being symbolically washed clean, our sins being forgiven by His death on the cross.

Because Jesus instructed us to be baptized, baptism is an act of obedience. While it is not necessary for salvation, it demonstrates submission to God. Those who are baptized at PCC are completely immersed under water because we believe Scripture shows that Jesus modeled that for us as the way to publicly acknowledge our faith in Him.

Baby Dedications

In some denominations, infant christening represents a decision made by parents that they are dedicating their child to Christ. In many ways, that's the same reason we do baby dedications at Parkview. It's a very important time for parents to commit to raise their children in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. It is important to remember that whether you were christened as a baby or your parents participated in a baby dedication, that doesn't make you a Christian. Only a personal acceptance of Christ's death on the cross for your sins can do that. While we recognize the right of other churches to practice infant christening, we understand Scripture to teach that only professing believers qualify for baptism.

Ready To Be Baptized?

Once we've scheduled your baptism, here are some of the logistics details, and how they generally work at Parkview.

For purposes of modesty and safety, please wear dark (black is preferable) colored clothing. Please bring a change of clothes. To ensure modesty, you may also want to wear a bathing suit under your clothing. Please also bring a towel to dry off after your baptism. You may also want to bring some water shoes or flip-flops to walk to the restroom to change clothes.

As one considers the walk down the public hallway leading to the "changing stations" (restrooms), the following wardrobe choices should be observed:

-Be certain to have dry clothes available to wear after the baptism. This includes fresh and dry underwear.

-Bring a large enough towel to completely encircle your entire bodily form. This could be a large bath towel, a large beach towel or even a terrycloth bathrobe. It's important to remember we often have multiple baptism candidates and sometimes children present.

-Dark colors really work best for everyone. If you have black available, that's great, but dark colors work the best to ensure modesty for everyone involved.

-Ladies: please wear a bathing suit underneath your clothing.

The Baptism Process

You may either have one of our staff pastors perform the baptism, or we'd be happy to talk with you if you would like to have someone else (for example a close friend or relative –either is OK, but must be a Christian) perform the baptism. If you wish to have someone else baptize you, we will need to talk with that person in advance. A pastor will meet with you 30 minutes prior to the service to discuss the specific logistics, where to walk, how the actual baptism works in the baptismal tub, etc.

Each baptism candidate normally has a "story" to tell about how they came to faith in Jesus, and how God has been working in their life since asking Jesus to be their Savior. You may tell this story personally, or have someone else relate/read your story during your baptism. We've seen these stories demonstrate very powerful movement of God in our people's lives, and are frequently a highlight for our congregation, and meaningful for those who are being baptized. If you're nervous about sharing your story – don't be – it doesn't have to be long or eloquent, but simply a truthful testimony of God's work in your life. We'd be happy to talk with you more about this part of the process.

Our services are recorded and published via both CD and our Parkview website. We will include your baptism story unless you specifically tell us not to.

During the service, when it comes time for your baptism, you will be escorted out to the tub, behind a curtain, and then someone will help you down into the tub. We'll introduce you, share your story (see above), ask you a simple question, then immerse you in the tub.

That's about it. You can find out more about what Parkview believes regarding baptism, or register for baptism at our website at <http://www.parkviewcommunity.org/baptism>

We're excited that you're considering this next step in your spiritual journey, and look forward to your upcoming baptism.