

LAKE POINTE BIBLE CHURCH
Plymouth, MI
POSITIONAL PAPER ON
BAPTISM

What we believe about baptism and how we practice it are based in Scripture, as follows:

Baptism is a command of Christ.

In His Great Commission, Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and 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” (Matthew 28:18-20). Following this instruction of Christ is at the heart of developing as one of His followers.

Baptism is for Believers.

Baptism is an act of obedience following a person’s profession of faith in Jesus Christ. It is an outward demonstration of saving faith. In Christ’s Great Commission and in the history book of the early church, baptism follows a profession of faith (e.g., Acts 2:41, 8:12-13, and 18:8). A person must first trust in Christ as Lord and Savior, and then be baptized. For this reason, we do not baptize infants. We do encourage parents to publicly dedicate their children to the Lord.

Baptism is a public identification with Christ and the church.

After a person has trusted in Christ, the physical act of baptism serves as a public symbol of identification with his or her crucified, buried, and risen Savior. The Apostle Paul explains that going into the water enables us to identify with the burial of Christ, and coming out of the water enables us to identify with the resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-11, Colossians 2:12). Baptism is also a public sign of fellowship and identification with the Church—the visible Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

Baptism is by immersion.

While some believers practice sprinkling or pouring, we hold to baptism by immersion for several reasons:

1. The meaning of the word “baptize” (Greek: *baptizo*) is to dip or immerse.
2. Where details are given regarding baptisms in the New Testament, immersion is implied. For example, Mark notes in his gospel that Jesus was baptized “in the Jordan” and that he came “up out of the water” (Mark 1:9-10). In the book of Acts, both Philip and the Ethiopian went “down into the water and Philip baptized him”; then they “came up out of the water...” (8:38-39). John the Baptist baptized “At Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming and being baptized (John 3:23).
3. The believer’s identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus implies immersion (Romans 6:1-11, Colossians 2:12).

Baptism does not add to salvation.

The Bible is clear that the act of baptism does not make a person a believer. Neither is it a “second step” that completes our position in Christ. Scripture states that a person is saved by grace alone through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). The moment a person trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he or she is and

will forever be a child of God (Romans 10:9, John 10:28-30, Romans 8:28-39). The thief on the cross was not baptized, and yet Jesus promised him, "...today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

Baptism is an act of obedience.

In short, baptism is an act of obedience. Based on our understanding of Scripture, we believe that the New Testament practice of baptism is for believers by immersion upon their profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Although it is not necessary for salvation, it is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior. It symbolizes the believer's union with Christ in death to sin and resurrection to new life. It is a public sign of fellowship and identification with the church.