



BAPTISM

is the outward
expression of an
inward decision to
put your faith in
Jesus Christ

Baptism Package

WESTWOOD ALLIANCE CHURCH

A Word of Welcome

We're excited that you are interested in baptism. We believe that baptism is an important step of obedience for every person who has accepted Jesus Christ as his or her Savior and Lord.

The following pages have been designed to explain baptism at our church and the steps necessary to being baptized at a designated Service. This package is designed to contain all that you'll need in order to initiate the process.

We consider it a privilege to walk with you as you take this next step on your life journey. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact your pastor at any time.

Our Mission

To make devoted followers of Jesus Christ
who love and live so as to lead all people to God

Who should be baptized?

Once a person admits that he or she is a sinner and turns to Jesus Christ for salvation, the Bible says that a person should proclaim the life change that has occurred: the watching world needs to know. Baptism has always stood as a public testimony for people who have moved from being a seeker to being a believer and committed to the ongoing journey as a follower of Christ.

Believers are those who have realized that their sin has separated them from God. They have given up all efforts to reach God through good works or religious activity. They have concluded that Jesus Christ's death on the cross for their sins is the only thing that can bridge the gap between them and God. A believer is someone who has decided to trust Christ alone for his or her salvation.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and you have decided to follow Jesus for the rest of your life, 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 show others that you have accepted Christ and are now walking with him

Why should I be baptized?

Jesus commanded that all Christians be baptized (Matthew 28:19). The apostles also commanded that all Christians be baptized (Acts. 2:38) and the New Testament church practiced it. Therefore, Christians should be baptized because their God and His servants command it.

What is baptism?

Baptism is a way of showing others that a person has entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9-10). It symbolizes what took place in our heart at the time of our confession of sin, repentance and acknowledgment that in Jesus alone we are saved. It also declares that we have a new life and a new Lord.

Baptism is also very symbolic, like a drama (Rom. 6:4-5). We share in His death and resurrection by going under the water (acknowledging death to our old life), then rising again (symbolizing our new life dedicated to Christ). Dying to self means surrendering our priorities and adopting the priorities of God.

While it is not for salvation that we engage in the act of baptism, it does demonstrate our submission to God.

Some frequently asked questions

Q. What about infant baptism?

A. In some denominations of the Christian faith, infant baptism (or christening) represents a decision by the parents to dedicate their child to Christ. The Bible speaks most often about believers being baptized – this is called believers baptism.

It is important to remember that if you were christened/baptized as a baby doesn't automatically make you a Christian. Only a personal acceptance of what Christ accomplished through His death and resurrection for the world, including you, can do that.

Q. What if I've already been baptized?

A. If you have been baptized as an infant, we would encourage you to consider being re-baptized as a sign of your personal decision to follow Jesus Christ. If you have been baptized as a follower of Christ before coming to Westwood Alliance Church, there is no need to be baptized again – baptism is to declare you are a follower of Christ, not a specific local church.

Q. Why do we baptize with total immersion?

A. In Greek (the language in which the New Testament was originally written), the word that is translated —*baptízō* means to dip, plunge, or immerse. This was the way that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, and it is the way that Christ's apostles and the new believers in Bible days were baptized. Immersion is the best mode that portrays the powerful signs of burial and resurrection that the Bible describes.

Q. Westwood does not perform baptism by sprinkling of water then?

A. Not necessarily, persons who are seriously ill and who cannot be baptized through immersion may be baptized through sprinkling of water subject to recommendation of the pastors and approval of the Board of Elders.

Q. How old does a person have to be in order to be baptized?

A. The issue is not age but a demonstration of belief and understanding. We baptize anyone who is able to demonstrate repentance of sin and an express of faith in Jesus Christ.

Q. What is the relationship of baptism and membership of Westwood?

A. Baptism involves a pledge and covenant with God. Membership is a personal commitment to a particular local body of believers. Baptism is one factor we require for membership, but they are not the same. We believe that a follower of Christ should also be committed to a local body of believers, i.e. be a member of a local church. If for any legitimate reasons that you are not able to fulfill the commitment of being an active member of this church, you have a choice to opt out to be a member when you submit your application.

Q. I was baptized as an infant and have never received “believer’s baptism,” how could I become a Westwood member?

A. We would encourage you to consider being re-baptized before joining as our member. Having say that, while affirming the practice of believer’s baptism as normative, the Board of Elders may discern on a case by case basis whether to extend membership to individuals who were baptized as infants and who now present a credible testimony of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before members of the Board.

Q. How long does it take from application to baptism?

A. Usually the process will take anywhere from 4-6 months. For Easter baptism, application should be submitted no later than end of November of the previous year. For Fall baptism (last Sunday of October), applicant should start applying no later than May.

The Process

The baptism process at Westwood Alliance Church is designed to be both simple and meaningful.

1. Read over the baptism information package.
2. Fill out the Baptism Application Form (download from church website or get a copy from the office).
3. Sign up a Baptism Class with your pastor.
4. Prepare for an interview to discern your readiness for baptism.
5. Once you have passed the interview, your application will be recommended for considerations by Deacons Board of the particular congregation that you have been involved with before submitted to the Board of Elders of the church for final approval.
6. Prepare your “story” - see “What to Say” below to help you prepare.
7. Get baptized! Baptisms usually take place either during Easter or the last weekend of October.

What will happen at the Baptism Service?

What to Wear: Besides what you would normally wear to church, also bring these items:

☒ Clothes to wear during your baptism (shirt/pants). We will be providing you with a gown on top of anything you choose to wear.

☒ Bath Towel

☒ Extra undergarments

☒ Plastic bag for wet clothes

☒ Comb, hair dryer etc.

We ask that you arrive at the church at least 30 minutes before the start of the Service where you will meet with the pastor in charge and other candidates at the front of the church. You will be in your baptism clothes during the worship service, and your “dry” clothes will be at your change location.

At the Service, once you are introduced, you will come to the front of the church and we will ask you to share your testimony.

What to Say

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Your life before accepting Jesus Christ.
3. How and when you accepted Jesus as your personal Saviour.
4. How Jesus has affected your life —*this should be the bulk of your testimony.*
5. Thank one or two people who have helped you in your walk (optional).

6. Your public profession (e.g. "I'm here today to let you all know that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour.")

When your time of baptism comes, you will make your way to the tank and slowly enter the water. At this point you can kneel, and the pastor baptizing you says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit." Now lean forward and the pastor will immerse your head in the water.

You will leave and slowly walk back up to the back stage to change. Once you are changed, you can enter the worship service by the main door and take your seat. Closer to the end of the Service, baptism certificate and a gift from the church will be presented.

[After the Service](#)

Your family and friends in the church would come to congratulate you. Thank the people who came to share your joy. Find a spot to take some memorable photos.

Congratulations! You can consider the date of your baptism as a "new" birthdate - your spiritual birthdate! This is not the end of fulfilling a religious requirement but rather the beginning of a journey to becoming a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. May God bless you!