



TCC
TULARE COMMUNITY CHURCH

FAQ: Baptism & Profession of Faith

Q: What is baptism?

A: Along with Communion, Baptism is one of the two “sacraments” that churches in the Reformed tradition, like TCC, partake in. Baptism is a physical marker indicating that a person belongs to Jesus Christ. Baptism is like an invisible tattoo we carry with us all of our lives that says: “I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, rose from the dead, and offers me eternal life, and I live for Him.”

Q: Who gets baptized?

A: Throughout the history of the Christian Church, new Christians and/or their children are baptized.

Q: Why get baptized?

A: There are two primary reasons that people get baptized. The first comes out of the life-changing decision to say, “I believe Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.” Historically, this newfound faith is followed by the public act of baptism as a sign of new life in Christ. The second reason for baptism takes the form of “paedo,” or infant, baptism. In this case, Christian parents decide to have their child baptized as a promise of His faithfulness over and through the life of the child as the child ages.

Q: What does baptism do?

A: We do not believe that anything happens during baptism. That is to say, there is nothing magical that occurs during baptism, and we do not believe that you are any more or less saved depending on when, how, or if you have been baptized. Instead, we call baptism “a visible sign of an invisible grace.” The water of baptism physically represents the active presence of God’s grace in and through our lives, even if we can’t see it.

Q: Do you need to be baptized to go to heaven or to be forgiven of your sin?

A: Many people hunger for baptism as a “washing away” of one’s sin, but as Christians, we believe that the blood of Jesus, alone, washes us clean, saves us from our sin, and makes us new. Baptism doesn’t accomplish these things—instead, baptism is our response to being washed, to being saved, to being made new.

Q: How come some churches baptize infants while some churches dedicate infants and baptize teenagers/adults?

A: The global Christian Church has many different traditions and emphases and many different expressions of those traditions and emphases. Some traditions emphasize personal commitment (me saying “yes” to Jesus) and dedicate infants. Others, like the

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Reformed tradition that TCC is a part of, emphasize God's sovereignty (Jesus says "yes" to us) and baptize infants. There is a biblical basis for both understandings and such differences are meant to be respected between churches.

Q: What else should I know about infant baptism?

A: When God makes a covenant (agreement, contract, promise, etc.) with Abraham and Abraham's descendants in the book of Genesis, He says that their covenant will be represented by the physical sign of infant circumcision. In this way, the people of Israel would be known as belonging to the Lord and the Lord alone. In a similar way, the Church has entered into a new covenant with God through Christ, and the physical marker of our belonging to Him is no longer circumcision, but the waters of baptism. In this way, God is making a promise to baptized infants that He will care for them, pursue them, and that they belong to Him.

Q: What is profession of faith?

A: Profession of faith is an act of stating publicly ("professing") faith in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is usually done by a teenager or adult who has already been baptized but wants to personally, and publicly, acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

Q: What is the connection between infant baptism and profession of faith?

A: Profession of faith is essentially the opportunity of someone baptized as an infant to look back at their life and see that the promise God made at their baptism has held true. It is a completion and a celebration of God's faithfulness throughout the entirety of one's life.

Q: How should I/my child begin the process of baptism/profession of faith?

A: If you're an adult interested in first-time baptism, please contact Pastor Ryan for an initial conversation. If you have an elementary, middle, or high school student, then please have your student speak directly with their respective staff leader to begin the process.

Q: I got baptized when I was a baby, but I want to get baptized again. What should I do?

A: Our baptism, whether we were baptized as babies, adolescents, or adults, is ultimately a promise from God that He will be faithful to us throughout the entirety of our lives. When we make profession of faith, we are saying: "God has kept His word to me and has been true to His promise." In this way, our profession of faith is a celebration of our baptism, a completion of our baptism. To re-baptize would be to say that the first baptism didn't count.