

# Fort Macleod Alliance Church



*Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada*

## Introducing Believer's Baptism

***“Those who accepted his message were baptized....”  
Acts 2: 41a***

***“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.....” Matthew 28: 19***

## Welcome to “Introducing Believer's Baptism”!

Believer's Baptism is an exciting part of a Christian's spiritual journey – trustfully of your spiritual journey. It is a practise that was established by the Lord Jesus Himself as an important way in which we publicly identify ourselves with both Christ and with His Community of faith – the Church. It is a public celebration that affirms & encourages our faith as we participate together in the Story of God in & through our lives.

So what exactly is Believer's Baptism? Why should I be Baptized? How do I go about getting Baptized? These are a few of the questions that we will explore in the pages that follow.

### 1) What is Believer's Baptism?

Believer's Baptism is one of two symbolic acts that Jesus specifically asked Believer's to do within the context of Christian community. The other is the Lord's supper.

The word “Baptism” means to immerse or dip and usually involves being momentarily immersed in water and symbolically represents the beginning of a new life in Christ.

**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5: 17**

Going down into the water symbolizes the death and washing away of the old while coming out of the water speaks of the new that has come.

**“Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were therefore buried with him through baptism into**

**death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”**

**Romans 6: 3 – 4**

The act of Baptism symbolizes the grace we have received through receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who has rescued us from sin and given us a new life in Him. It publicly proclaims our decision to be a Christ-follower, a disciple who desires to follow Jesus.

**Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”**

**John 1:12**

**“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”**

**1 John 5: 11-12**

## **2) Who Should Be Baptized?**

All who believe on Jesus Christ, that is, all those who by faith believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (God in flesh) and that His death on the cross is for the forgiveness of our sins and that He rose from the dead bringing us new life in Him.

**“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time...”**

**1 Corinthians 15: 3 – 6a**

To believe is more than intellectual agreement. It is a desire to know a new life in Christ through the power of His Resurrection and live life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament, this faith is normally followed by Believer’s Baptism.

**“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ.....” Acts 2: 38**

**“Those who accepted his message were baptized...” Acts 2:41**

**“But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and woman.” Acts 8:12**

Now, Believer’s Baptism does not make a person a Christian. It is not a requirement to be part of God’s family. That comes through a decision of faith. But, Believer’s Baptism is a regular and expected part of Christian discipleship. The New Testament carries the expectation that Believers’ will follow through with Baptism. This fulfills the command of Jesus to the Church in the Great Commission

**“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.” Matthew 28: 19**

As such, following faith with Baptism is in keeping with Jesus’ instructions to the Church. If you are a Christian, the normative experience for the follower of Christ is to follow faith with Believer’s Baptism.

## **3) When Should I Get Baptized?**

Ideally, one should get Baptized soon after their decision of faith in Jesus Christ. It is not a mark of Christian maturity or something that requires lengthy waiting. The New Testament

often shows new Christians getting baptized on the same day as they came to faith. In fact, the Bible describes “instruction about baptisms” as part of the “elementary teaching about Christ” from which we are to go on to maturity (Hebrews 6:1)

As Baptism is a testimony of our decision to be a follower of Jesus Christ, a person should be able to understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. This is why our church does not practise Infant Baptism. Within FMAC (Fort Macleod Alliance Church), infants and children of Believing parents often participate in a church tradition called Child Dedication. This is an extra-biblical church practise (meaning it is a tradition not specifically described in the Bible) in which parents commit themselves to raising their child in such a way as they will have opportunity to personally chose faith in Jesus Christ for themselves. Child Dedication anticipates a child’s future decision of faith that will then be followed by Believer’s Baptism. If you have not yet made a personal decision to be a disciple (follower) of Jesus Christ, then you should not yet participate in Believer’s Baptism.

#### **4) Why Should I Get Baptized?**

Reasons for Believers Baptism are as follows:

- i. Jesus was Baptized. (See Matthew 3: 13 – 17).

Baptism was what formed the beginning of Jesus’ New Testament ministry and is an example for His disciples (followers) to follow!

- ii. Jesus commanded the church to baptize.

**“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.” Matthew 28: 19-20a**

As such, our participation in Believer’s Baptism is in obedience to Jesus’ command.

- iii. The Early church practised Believer’s Baptism (see Acts 2: 41; Acts 8:12; Acts 8: 36-38; Acts 9:18; Acts 16:14 – 15; Acts 18: 8)

#### **5) How Should I Be Baptized?**

Although different churches may practise different modes of Baptism – sprinkling of water, pouring of water, full immersion in water, the usual method of Baptism at FMAC is through full immersion. This was the method through which Jesus was baptized (Mark 1:9-10) and is the example given in the book of Acts (Acts 8:34-39).

Through this method, a person is briefly immersed completely in water in a Baptismal tank or a lake or pool. This method best symbolizes the experience of new birth in Christ as has been described previously (section 1).

If this method is not possible, due to medical or physical limitations, then an alternative method for Believer’s Baptism may be discussed and explored.

#### **6) What if I’ve Been Baptized Before?**

For some people, the question arises “What if I have been previously baptized?” Well, if as a follower of Jesus Christ

you have been previously baptized, there is no need to be baptized again. This is not a regularly repeated practise like Communion / The Lord's supper is. As a believer, it is only asked of you one.

For others, though, the baptism they experienced was something that took place as an infant or child prior to their decision to believe on Jesus Christ. This practise may have different meanings with different denominations. In some churches, Infant Baptism is your introduction to the Christian faith and is required for salvation. This is not consistent with what the Bible teaches. Rather it is only the work of Christ that brings salvation and it is something a person must embrace for themselves. No matter how well meaning, no parent can ensure our position with God through infant baptism.

**“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2: 8 - 9**

Where Infant Baptism holds this meaning, one should seek to participate in Believer's Baptism after their own decision of faith in Jesus Christ.

For other church denominations, baptism is an extra-biblical practise (meaning it is a tradition not specifically described in the Bible) in a similar way that FMAC practises Child Dedication. It is about a Christian parent anticipating a future time when their child will come to faith in Christ and covenanting with God to parent in a way that will lead to this end. It comes from a good heart and a good desire.

That being said, this form of Baptism is not the Baptism that Jesus commanded or that the New Testament describes. That is why FMAC describes this as “Believer's Baptism”. Although, in this case, Infant Baptism comes from a good place and can be a positive church tradition, FMAC recommends that after a person comes to personal faith in Christ they follow through with Believer's Baptism as it is formally commanded by Jesus and described in the New Testament. This is not invalidating what good hearted Christian parents have done in the past, rather it brings it to fulfillment.

In Acts 19, the Apostle Paul came upon some who had previously been baptized with what was called “John's Baptism”. This had been practised by John the Baptist prior to Christ's institution of Believer Baptism. As they were taught about Jesus, they were baptized again “into the name of the Lord Jesus.” (See Acts 19: 1 – 7). Paul did not criticize their previous experience, but led them into Believer's Baptism as a fulfilment of that which their previous Baptism had anticipated.

In a similar manner, FMAC encourages Christians to participate in Believer's Baptism after coming to faith in Jesus regardless of their previous experiences with Baptism prior to personal faith.

## **7) The Next Steps**

It's important to understand that Baptism is a public event involving the local church community. We do not baptize ourselves, rather we are baptized by the local church. Even as we are making a public profession of our faith – publicly identifying ourselves with Christ and the church, the Church

is also identifying itself with us, affirming our faith in Christ and our place as part of the Church. Baptism is not only about Believing in Jesus, it is also a public affirmation of Belonging within His Church.

As such, if you desire to move forward in Believer's Baptism:

- i. Seek to understand the material in this booklet and ask any questions you may need for further clarity.
- ii. Fill out the application for Believer's Baptism form at the end of this booklet and return it to the pastor or other church Elder. (Elder is the name our church uses for a person in church leadership)
- iii. The application will ask you to write an approximately 1 page story about how you became a follower of Jesus Christ (a Christian) and why you want to participate in Believer's Baptism
- iv. After this is received, the Pastor or other Church Elder will meet with you to discuss your application.
- v. A date will then be picked for a Baptism service. Part of this service will include either sharing or reading your story (or asking someone to read it for you) prior to your Baptism. Although this is scary for some, it is your public testimony of what Jesus has done in your life and is an encouraging time for both you and the church.
- vi. Further instructions will be given for the Baptism day regarding what to expect and what will take place during the Baptism service.

### Application For Believer's Baptism

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Members of Your Immediate Family:

\_\_\_\_\_

My family is supportive of my participation in Believer's Baptism: (yes/no)

I have concerns about being Baptized by Immersion:(yes /no)

Briefly describe your spiritual journey and how you came to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

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