

Baptism at ABAC



What is baptism?

Essentially, baptism is an ordinance of the church that outwardly demonstrates the internal reality of a follower of Jesus.¹ The symbolism of baptism can be understood as putting to death the sin nature (going under the water) and being made alive in Christ (emerging from the water).² At ABAC, we practise believers' baptism by immersion.

What is the significance of baptism?

It is a public proclamation of faith in Jesus as saviour and submission to his Lordship. Because of the public nature of baptism, it is a significant event that can be referenced as the moment when a person confirmed their discipleship before the world by demonstrating their participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Upon doing this believers also enter into a relationship of continuing discipleship and ministry with the church.

What's the basis for baptism?

There are a few reasons why we practise baptism:

1. It was modelled for us by Jesus. Before entering into his ministry, Jesus was baptised and affirmed by the Father.³ As followers of Jesus, we should desire to do the things that he did.⁴
2. It is a part of the Great Commission that Jesus instructed his followers to carry out.⁵
3. It is affirmed in other parts of scripture.⁶

Who can or should be baptised?

Anyone who has decided to believe in Jesus for salvation from sin and committed to following his teachings.

How does baptism work at ABAC?

As mentioned above, we offer believers baptism by immersion at ABAC in line with the normal practices of our denomination.⁷ If you want to be baptised, your first step is to contact the pastor (pastor@aballiancechurch.com). You will be given some additional information to read over. Once you have done that, a brief meeting with the pastor and two members of the Elders Board will be arranged so that we can hear your story and help answer any questions you may have. We will then set a date with you to hold the baptism service.

¹ George P. Pardington, *Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine*, (Camp Hill: Wingspread Publishers, 2010), 342-43.

² Romans 6:1-4, Colossians 2:12

³ Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22

⁴ John 13:15-17

⁵ Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15-16

⁶ Acts 2:41; 8:36-38; 10:47-48, Galatians 3:27, 1 Corinthians 12:13, etc.

⁷ *Manual of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, updated January 2023, Article 5 - Ordinances.

Prior to the service we arrange a time for you to come to the church so that we can walk you through the process and do a dry run (no pun intended).

Our church baptismal font is in the sanctuary beneath the stage. Depending on the time of year and condition of the lake, you may choose to be baptised outside at the beach.

During the baptism ceremony you will be asked to share the story of how you came to faith in Jesus and why you want to be baptised. You may choose to pre-record this part if you feel nervous about public speaking. If you elect to be baptised in the lake we cannot support a pre-recorded testimony.

Once you come out of the water a towel will be available and you will have a chance to change into dry clothes. After that it is time to celebrate this affirmation of your faith with the rest of the congregation.

I was baptised as an infant/confirmed in another tradition. Now what?

If you were raised in a tradition that practises infant baptism and follows up later with the process of confirmation, you may be curious about how that affects your status in our fellowship. Because of the cultural heritage of our area and the nature of our denominational makeup, it is not uncommon for people from other Christian faith traditions to become part of our community. Infant baptism and confirmation have a significant history in Christianity and have long been the practice of sincere believers. Because of this, we at ABAC do not wish to cause consternation or doubt in the mind and heart of anyone who confesses Jesus as Lord by calling into question the validity of different modes of baptism or the salvation of someone who has been baptised in a different tradition.⁸

Because our denomination holds that baptism is an ordinance of the church and not a sacrament, it is the opinion of ABAC that the critical component intrinsic to baptism is public proclamation of faith and submission to Christ. Because of the public nature of confirmation, this threshold has been met provided there has been an authentic confession of faith.⁹ To that end, we believe that modes of baptism do not need to be a cause for disunity in the church.¹⁰

With all that being said, it is possible that you may feel that it is necessary to be baptised as a believer. If that is the case, it is important to discern if this is a prompting from the Spirit or if it is something else.¹¹ If you are conflicted regarding your own baptism or the matter of being baptised as a believer, it is our suggestion that you submit the matter to prayer and study. Our pastor and elders are available to help you in this process. If it is discerned that believers' baptism is God's call on you, it would be our privilege to walk with you into the waters.

⁸ Romans 14:2-13, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

⁹ *Manual of the Christian and Missionary Alliance*, Article 6–Membership.

¹⁰ Ephesians 4:1-6

¹¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:19-24