

***It is patterned after the Biblical example ...***

*“The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them.” Mark 10:13 (Msg)*

***Child Dedication is an opportunity ...***

1. To give parents of young children the chance to recognize God’s gift of a child to them.

*“Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a real blessing.” Psalm 127:3 (TEV)*

2. To allow parents to declare their intent to raise their child in a Christian environment.

*“Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that’s in you, love him with all you’ve got! Write these commandments that I’ve given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night.” Deut. 6:5-7 (Msg)*

3. To challenge parents to lay a Biblical foundation by providing guidance and support to their child.

*“And now a word to you parents. Don’t keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice.” Ephes. 6:4 (Living)*

As parents you cannot ‘decide’ your child’s salvation for them. Each person must make their own decision about their relationship with Christ. When your child becomes old enough to understand the concept of sin and their responsibility for that sin before God, they are then ready to make a decision about salvation.

Child Dedication is not a Baptism. It is not a sacrament and does not impart salvation to a child. We do not baptize children until they are old enough to understand and believe. We believe that babies should be dedicated but do not need to be baptized.

Babies are totally under God’s spiritual care until they make their own decision in older childhood. Yours is the task to commit yourself to raising your child in God’s love.

Further, we believe that salvation is granted to children who die in infancy or before the age of accountability (understanding). This belief is based not on specific Scripture, but on an understanding of the nature of God as revealed in Christ. Since infants do not have the power of self-determination, they do not have personal guilt. They have not yet come to the age when they can of their own free will accept or reject Christ. Therefore, Christ’s atonement covers all who die young before reaching the age of accountability.

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# BAPTISM

**Riverside**  
community church

## WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM?

Water baptism is a ceremony that symbolizes the beginning of our spiritual lives. It is a way to publicly say goodbye to our life outside of Christ.

*“Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more kindness and forgiveness? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we became Christians and were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus, we died with him? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”* Romans 6:1-4 (NLT)

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR WATER BAPTISM?

The New Testament consistently speaks of water baptism in the context of a saving faith in Christ. Only those who have committed their lives to Christ are to be baptized.

*“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 (NIV)

*“Anyone who believes me and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe me will be condemned.”* Mark 16:16 (CEV)

*“... Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* Acts 2:38 (NLT)

*“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”* Acts 2:41 (NIV)

*“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 women.”* Acts 8:12 (NIV)

## DOES WATER BAPTISM SAVE ME?

Baptism does not save you. Only your faith in Christ saves you. Baptism simply demonstrates that you are already a believer and follower of Jesus.

*“God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”* Ephes. 2:8-9 (NLT)

## WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

We believe that water baptism is one of the two ordinances or commands (the Lord’s Supper being the other) given to the church by Christ. Although obedience to these are commanded, they are to be understood as memorials, a way of remembering our connection with the sacrifice of Christ. There is no saving power in simply participating in the event. Any spiritual benefit comes out of the faithful obedience of our hearts.

## HOW AM I TO BE BAPTIZED?

“Baptize” comes from the Greek word *baptizo*. This word was used throughout the ancient world to convey the idea of an object being dipped or plunged.

Baptism by full immersion in water is the mode that best conveys the sense of this term.

*“As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.”* Acts 8:36-38 (NASB-U)

*“Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John didn’t want to baptize him. ‘I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,’ he said, ‘so why are you coming to me?’ But Jesus said, ‘It must be done, because we must do everything that is right.’ So then John baptized him. After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him.”* Matthew 3:13-16 (NLT)

## SHOULD I EVER BE REBAPTIZED?

There is nothing in Scripture to prohibit being rebaptized, although several reasons may cause you to want to be baptized again:

1. After having returned from an extended time of disobedience to Christ.
2. Upon recognizing that you have entered into a new dimension in your walk with Christ and you feel it calls for an outward expression of your new commitment to Him.
3. If you were baptized as an infant and are now desiring to be baptized again, having made a new commitment to Christ as an adult.

If you have been baptized as an infant you are not rejecting the love and sincerity that prompted your earlier baptism. But you must come to the place where your faith is your own, not that of your parents or grandparents.

Rebaptism must be resolved in your own heart. It is not an issue of a certain law or Biblical decree. What is important is to answer the question: “Is the Holy Spirit asking me to do this?” If it is the result of the Spirit’s prompting, it can be very meaningful. If it is the result in some superstition about baptism, it will be fruitless.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO THE WATER BAPTISM SERVICE?

1. A testimony of your faith in Jesus.
2. A towel and change of clothes.

You will need to wear a modest bathing suit underneath your clothing.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILD DEDICATION AND BAPTISM?

The dedication of children is actually a promise of parents to offer their child (usually in infancy) to the Lord and to dedicate themselves to the rearing of the child for the glory of God.