

If I was baptized as a child, then left the church, and now have experienced a conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, can I be re-baptized?

The Bible tells many stories of conversion to the Christian faith, but not one story of re-baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If you have already been baptized, a second baptism will not change God's love for you. You can, however, participate in a "recognition of baptism" service if desired.

Does baptism serve as an "insurance policy" for salvation?

The Bible does not say that we are saved by baptism. It clearly says that we are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ (see Ephesians 2:8). The assurance of salvation comes when the promises proclaimed at baptism are claimed and confirmed.

If I was baptized in another denomination, should I be baptized now as a Lutheran?

No. Christian baptism that happens with the words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is the same, regardless of where it takes place. Provided you were baptized in the trine name of God, you do not need to be baptized in a Lutheran church to become a part of this Christian community.

Why do some churches immerse the people who are baptized, and other churches don't?

When the church originated in the warm climates of the Middle East, immersion baptism was the preferred means. When Christianity expanded into parts of Europe, immersion ("dunking") became a major problem in the winter. Consequently, the practice of "sprinkling" water emerged. Both practices are acceptable for us as Lutheran Christians.

Who can baptize?

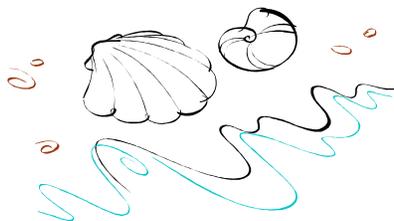
For the sake of order in the church, ordained pastors who are called to the public ministry of Word and Sacrament preside at a baptism. In extraordinary circumstances or in the case of an emergency, any Christian person can baptize someone with any kind of water in any kind of setting "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

What if I want a private baptism?

Baptism is a public event for the whole family of God to celebrate, and all of our brothers and sisters in Christ (the whole church) should be welcome to participate and be present. If, however, being baptized in a public setting is the only thing preventing you from being baptized, please contact Pastor Brian King to discuss this.

How do I schedule a baptism at Nazareth?

A meeting with a pastor is required before a baptism can be scheduled at Nazareth. You can schedule a meeting and your baptism by contacting Nazareth Membership Secretary Deb Rhoades at 266-7589.



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**Nazareth
Evangelical Lutheran
Church**



**Baptism
Questions & Answers**

There is one Lord, one faith,
one baptism,
one God and Father of all.

Ephesians 4:5-6

Why do Christians baptize?

Jesus commands his followers to “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). This is not a polite suggestion. This is a command from Jesus spoken as his last words before ascending into heaven.

How did the first Christians baptize in response to this command?

The Book of Acts tells nine stories of baptism as practiced by the early Christian church:

2:14-42	3,000 people on Pentecost
8:12-13	Simon and the Samaritans
8:35-40	Ethiopian eunuch
9:1-19	Paul (formerly Saul)
10:44-48	Gentiles in Caesarea
16:11-15	Lydia and her household
16:31-34	Jailer at Philippi and his family
18:5-11	Crispus and all his household
19:1-10	Some disciples in Ephesus
22:6-16	Paul's conversion/baptism story retold

What can I learn about baptism from the Book of Acts?

One important thing we learn is that the early Christians baptized entire households, including women and Gentiles, people who were often overlooked by the religious leaders of Jesus' day. The Book of Acts (and the entire Bible for that matter) offers no age, gender or ethnic restrictions for those who are baptized (see Galatians 3:27-28).

Baptism is a gift from God offered to all as a “mark” of faith in Jesus Christ.

Is that why Lutherans and many other Christian denominations practice infant baptism?

Yes, and there are other reasons too: Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs” (Matthew 19:14)

In the Bible, time and time again, God initiates our relationship with him. God chooses us first and then waits for our faithful response. The practice of circumcision for eight-day-old boys in the Old Testament was a sign of God choosing the male offspring of Abraham and Sarah (see Genesis 17:10-12). An eight-day-old infant cannot choose to believe in God or accept him as personal Lord and Savior. Instead, God chooses these infants to be included as a part of his family. So it starts with God.

Isn't faith a pre-requisite for baptism? How can an infant have faith?

In the Book of Acts, adults are baptized after coming to faith. For adults who wish to be baptized in the church today, this still holds true. Come to faith first (repent; turn back to God), then be baptized to mark the conversion and be cleansed of all sin.

An infant certainly cannot deduce that Jesus is Savior and Lord, or believe in him. Yet for infants and children, a public statement of faith is not a requirement for baptism. Instead, parent/s, sponsor/s, and the church speak on behalf of the infant regarding faith.



If infant baptism is nothing more than something we do for the sake of family tradition or because we think it's the “right thing to do” and then forget about it, it loses its significance and becomes a hollow ceremony. Baptism is not an end in itself. It is a starting point. It is the planting of the seed of faith which will be nurtured by parents, sponsors and the church over the days, months and years to come.

Is there something the church does, then, to “mark” the event when baptized children do come to faith in Jesus Christ?

Yes. As baptized infants grow, faith grows through the hearing of God's Word. When they mature spiritually to the point of making a public affirmation of the Christian faith (saying “yes” to God) young people confirm their faith during the Rite of Confirmation. At Nazareth, Confirmation takes place following participation in a three-year confirmation program for junior high school students.

I'm an adult and have never been baptized. Is it too late for me to be baptized?

It is not too late. Lutheran Christians baptize infants, children, youth, and adults regardless of age, gender, race, or ethnic background.

Jesus tells the story (Luke 15:11-32) of a father whose son runs away from home. After some time, the son realizes how lost he is without his father and decides to return home and beg to become a slave in his father's house. But once the father sees his son, he immediately celebrates and welcomes him back into the family with open arms. So it is with our Heavenly Father and his love for those who return to him.