

WATER BAPTISM

Christian water baptism was established by Jesus when He called His apostles to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18–20).

Christian and Missionary Alliance churches encourage all followers of Jesus to be baptized.



In 1923, Alliance workers brought the gospel to Colombia, where a Paez woman follows Jesus in baptism.

DECLARING CHRIST

In the Early Church, baptisms were conducted in public places and identified the person as a follower of Christ. Today, baptisms are often performed inside church buildings, yet a public demonstration of faith in Jesus remains part of the practice. The person who is baptized publically declares Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

REPENTING OF SIN

Baptism followed repentance and faith for the Early Church. The apostle Peter invited his listeners on the Day of Pentecost to:

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
—Acts 2:38

Three thousand people responded to the invitation, and those who accepted his message were baptized (Acts 2:41). Alliance churches follow the same practice of baptism for those who have repented of sin and put their faith in Jesus Christ.

For centuries, believers entering into baptism were asked to make three renunciations as a demonstration of their commitment to the faith:

*Dost thou forsake the devil
and all his works?*

*Dost thou forsake the vain pomp
and glory of the world, with all the
covetous desires of the same?*

*Dost thou forsake the carnal
desires of the flesh, so that thou will
not follow or be led by them?*

To each question, the respondent would answer,

I forsake them all.

—From *The Book of Common Prayer*

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

The apostle Paul explained that baptism also represents the believer’s union with Christ (Romans 6:3–4).

Immersion in water symbolizes the end of the old way of life. Coming up out of the water represents the new life found in Christ. The person who was previously dead in sin has been made spiritually alive by the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. United with Him, the believer is released from the power of sin.

Paul portrays this life change as putting on new clothes (Galatians 3:27).



In Italy's Adriatic Sea, an Alliance believer emerges from baptism in joyous celebration of his new life in Christ.

Water baptism identifies a person as a disciple of Christ and celebrates passage from the old life into new life in Christ. **Simply stated, it is an outward sign of an inward change.**

... for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
Galatians 3:27

We 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 6:4

A young lady from Grace Church in Middleburg Heights, Ohio celebrates after declaring her commitment to follow Jesus through baptism.



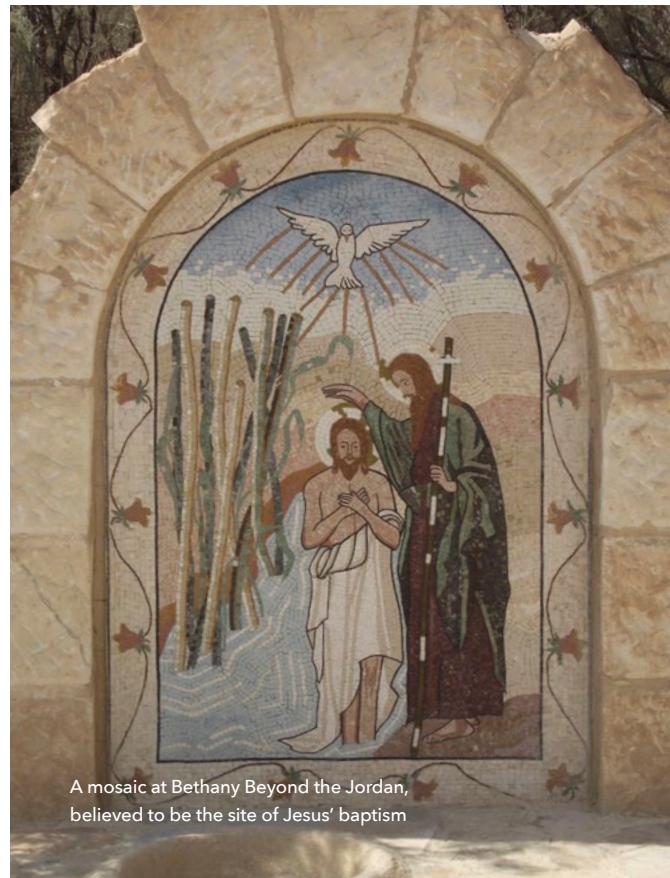
IMMERSION

The Bible's word for "baptize" means "immerse, douse, or saturate." In the two full accounts of baptism found in the New Testament, believers were immersed in water.

1 Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River to identify Himself as God's Son, and after He was baptized, he went up out of the water (Matthew 3:16).

2 The apostle Philip baptized the Ethiopian by going down into the water and coming up with him (Acts 8:38-39).

In both of these examples, a large enough body of water was required to immerse the person. Because of the meaning of the word "baptize" and the mode of the first baptisms, Alliance churches practice baptism by immersion.



A mosaic at Bethany Beyond the Jordan, believed to be the site of Jesus' baptism

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Although the Bible does not state a minimum age at which a person may be baptized, the believer should be old enough to understand the significance of baptism.
2. Baptism is not required to receive God's salvation. However, all who have trusted Christ are encouraged to follow Him in baptism as a step of obedience.
3. People who were baptized as believers before affiliating with an Alliance church need not be re-baptized.
4. In cases where immersion is impossible due to physical limitations, an alternate mode is acceptable.

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



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15M 5/15

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