

### 3. Baptism

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*The Ordinances of the Church—Her two ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer as a confession of his faith in Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:4) and is prerequisite to church membership and participation in the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42)...Both ordinances must be administered by the authority of a New Testament church (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).*

**(BMA Doctrinal Statement Section IX, Part D)**

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances sovereignly instituted by God for the benefit of the local church.

**Baptism is a means of grace:** Both church ordinances serve as a means of grace to believers either through identifying with Christ in baptism or remembering Christ through the Lord's supper. Neither ordinance, however, contains within itself the power to save anyone, as they are both works. They serve as a means of grace by drawing the regenerate closer to Christ through reflecting on (Lord's Supper) and identifying with (baptism) Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

**The Proper Reason for Baptism:** Baptism is a holy ordinance in which immersion in the water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit signifies our being joined to Christ and our sharing the benefits of the covenant of His grace, and our privilege to be the Lord's servant (Romans 6:3-5, Matthew 28:19).

**The Proper Participant for Baptism:** Baptism is only to be administered to professing Christians who have repented of their sins and submitted themselves to the authority of Jesus Christ through faith in his victorious death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 8:12, 10:47). Because of this fact and in light of the clear teachings of Scripture, infant baptism in any form is not to be administered. All Christians are to be baptized, as this is a command from God himself (Matthew 28:19).

**The Proper Administration of Baptism:** Since baptism is an ordinance of the local church, only a local church body has the authority to administer the ordinance of baptism (Acts 2:41).

**The Proper Mode of Baptism:** Scripture is clear that baptism is to only be applied through immersion (the follower being fully submerged in water) to signify the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. No other mode is found in scripture (John 3:23).

**The Proper Name in which to Baptize:** In accordance with Jesus' command, it is clear that baptism is to be in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. No other baptism is to be administered under the authority of the church (Matthew 28:19).

**The Responsibility of those Rightly Baptized:** To visibly join oneself to a biblical church and place oneself under the authority of that church, to the end of following God in His commandments and rightly worshiping God in the fellowship of the church and the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's supper (Acts 2:47).

**Suggested Scriptures:**

- Matthew 3:16
- Matthew 28:19-20
- Luke 3:21-22
- Acts 8:36-38
- Romans 6:3-5
- Galatians 3:27-28
- Ephesians 4:4-6
- Colossians 2:12-13
- 1 Peter 3:21

**Suggested Hymns:**

- How Firm a Foundation
- Lift High the Cross
- Come thou Fount
- Blessed Assurance
- In Christ Alone
- Be Thou My Vision

## **How to administer Baptism**

1. Bring the candidate for baptism before the church to affirm their profession of faith. (This can be done in several ways: A public sharing of their testimony, an affirmation of doctrines, or a simple affirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.)
2. Prayer of Commitment. (This can be prayed by a minister, family member, friend, etc.) This prayer should contain an appeal for God to give the candidate faithfulness in their pursuit of God and also an appeal to give the church faithfulness to minister to the candidate for baptism.
3. Immerse the candidate fully under the water.
4. As you are immersing, say, “I baptize you, my brother/sister, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”
5. A prayer of thanksgiving can be said after the baptism is completed.
6. A hymn can be sung either in anticipation of the baptism or in response to the baptism.