

# BAPTISM CELEBRATION 2017

## ***AS YOU CONSIDER BAPTISM***

We are so glad you're considering getting baptized. The information on these pages will give you an explanation of Baptism, as well as the steps you will need to take to be baptized at Cypress Meadows Community Church.

**If you have any questions**, feel free to e-mail [cypressmeadowschurch@gmail.com](mailto:cypressmeadowschurch@gmail.com) or call the church at (727) 725-4570. We'd be happy to help you!

## ***GETTING READY***

The Ethiopian asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the Ethiopian said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"... Then they went into the water and Philip baptized him. — Acts 8:34–38

Once a person admits that he or she is a sinner and turns to Christ for salvation, the Bible says the watching world needs to know. Baptism has always stood as a kind of public test for people who have moved from being a seeker to being a believer.

Believers are those who have realized that their sin has separated them from God. They have given up all efforts to reach God through good works or religious activity. They have concluded that Jesus Christ's death on the cross for their sins is the only thing that can bridge the gap between them and God. A believer is someone who has decided to trust Christ alone for his or her salvation.

If you have come to this point in your spiritual journey, then you are ready to be baptized. Just as a bride and groom tell of their love for one another through the symbol of rings, you should also want to show the world, through Baptism, of your union with Christ. Let the miracle that has happened in you show through the sacred ordinance.

## ***BIBLICAL PASSAGES***

In **Matthew 28:19–20**, Jesus commands his followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..." Baptism is the means by which followers of Christ are identified.

In passages such as **Acts 2:41, 8:12 and 10:47–48**, it is evident that Baptism follows an individual's decision to trust Christ alone for salvation. The New Testament records the Baptisms of adult believers only. Baptism was never intended to provide salvation for an individual, but rather to publicly identify a person with Christ. In **Romans 6:1–11**, the apostle Paul explains how the immersion mode of Baptism identifies the believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Going under the water represents Christ's death and coming out of the water illustrates His resurrection.

You do not have to be baptized to have Christ in your heart any more than you must exchange rings to be pronounced man and wife. But if the inner commitment to trust Christ alone for salvation has been made, then the outward symbol of Baptism should be as valued and as visible as the gold ring on a newlywed's finger.

# BAPTISM

Cypress Meadows Community Church understands Scripture to teach that only professing believers qualify for Baptism.

Scriptural teaching on Baptism may be summarized as follows:

1. Baptism is an act of obedience to the command of Christ, fulfilled by individuals who have submitted themselves to His sovereignty.
2. Baptism symbolizes the spiritual cleansing through divine forgiveness and the newness of life experience by believers by virtue of their identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.
3. Baptism provides an opportunity for believers to make a formal profession of their faith before the church.
4. As a biblical rite of initiation into the body of Christ, Baptism of believers may be considered a prerequisite for joining the membership of the church.

Because the symbolism of Baptism requires a somewhat more mature level of cognitive and developmental readiness, it is advised that children be at least 12 years old to be baptized. Proverbs 20:25 issues a significant caution against the danger of making a vow before adequate knowledge, forethought and reflection have been given. In an effort to prevent young people from making a premature commitment that they may not fully understand, this counsel is offered.

## ***A Word Concerning Infant Baptism...***

If the purpose of Baptism is to publicly identify a believer in Jesus Christ, you may well be asking yourself, "What was the significance of my Baptism as a baby?" In the Bible, we find parents bringing their children to Jesus. He held them and prayed for them and told us to welcome them. But He did not baptize them, and He did not tell anyone else to baptize them. Baptism is for those who have made a personal decision to trust Christ alone for their salvation.

Although the old covenant practice of infant circumcision is sometimes given as a rationale for infant Baptism, the biblical definition of the functions of circumcision and Baptism shows that those two institutions fulfilled different purposes in their respective covenants. The equation is never made in the Bible between the circumcision of male infants, in the old covenant, and the Baptism of born-again believers, much less of infants, in the new covenant. However, Cypress Meadows Community Church encourages Christian parents to present their children for the ceremony of dedication, whereby God's blessing is formally invoked upon the children, and the parents publicly commit themselves to raise the children in accordance with the teachings of Scripture.

If you were baptized as a child, it was the intent of your parents that you would one day be a follower of Christ. Your Baptism as an adult can be viewed as the fulfillment of your parents' wishes. It in no way repudiated the Baptism you received as a child.

## ***WHAT'S THE PROCESS?***

If you are ready to get baptized, you will need to complete the following three steps:

**Step 1** – Completely fill out the registration materials and return them to the church

### ***Step 1 — Baptism Registration Form***

We ask that anyone intending to be baptized at Cypress Meadows complete and return a Baptism registration form. The registration form is included in this packet. Please fill it out and return it to the church. Completed forms may be submitted one of three ways:

- 1) **Mail:** Please send completed forms to:  
Cypress Meadows Community Church  
2180 McMullen Booth Road  
Clearwater, FL 33759
- 2) **Fax:** Please fax completed forms to: (727) 726-2213
- 3) **Drop-off:** Drop off completed forms at the information booth in the main lobby or in the church office.

## ***SERVICE INFORMATION***

### **Pond Services**

Following the Baptism services in the auditorium, we will continue celebrating at the immersion services.. (Because of the short time frame between the indoor and outdoor service, please come to the indoor service in the clothes you will wear to be baptized in.)

Go directly to the pond where a guide will tell you where to stand and when to enter the water. If your small group leader, ministry team leader or significant person in your spiritual journey is entering the water with you please have them by your side at this time.

When it is your turn, the Pastor will ask you two questions regarding your decision to trust Christ. For example, "Bill, have you trusted in Christ as your Lord and Savior?" and "Is it your intention to die to self and raise to a Christ transformed way of living of which this baptism is a symbol?" After you say "yes" the Pastor will immerse you.

## **BAPTISM REGISTRATION FORM**

Please detach the registration forms and return them to the church.

### ***HOW TO REGISTER***

To Register By Mail:

Mail completed forms to:

Cypress Meadows Community Church  
2180 McMullen Booth Road  
Clearwater, FL 33759

To Register By Fax:

Fax completed forms to (727) 726-2213

To Register by Drop-off:

Drop off completed forms at the information booth in the main lobby or in the church office.

We will contact you if there are any problems with your registration form. You may assume your form has been processed if you do not hear from us.

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### **1. Please Print**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Age as of 5/16/17\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Because the symbolism of Baptism requires a somewhat more mature level of cognitive and development readiness, it is advised that children be at least 12 years old to be baptized.

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### **2. At which service will you be participating in Baptism?**

6:00 p.m.

9:15 a.m. (1<sup>st</sup> service)

11:00 a.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> service)

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### **3. Will any guest be accompanying you on stage?**

Yes

No

If yes, how many (If no, please mark 0): \_\_\_\_\_

You are welcome to come on stage by yourself. Some Baptism participants ask a close friend, family member or small group members to accompany them on stage for their Baptism.

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### **4. Do you have any special needs or disabilities that we should be aware of?**

Yes

No

If yes, please describe:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **BAPTISM REGISTRATION FORM**

5. **With which Cypress Meadows ministry are you most connected (attending, serving, participating in a small group)?** Select only one.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's (Kid's Connection & Nursery)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connections                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Students                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon's (Pastoral Care & Facility Maintenance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extension                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Not currently connected<br>in any ministry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production/Programming                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups                                    |   |

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Please respond to the following questions:

1. **How long have you been attending Cypress Meadows services?**

- Less than 12 months  
 1-2 years  
 3-5 years  
 More than 5 years

2. **Who most influenced you to first attend Cypress Meadows?**

- Family member  
 Friend  
 Co-worker  
 Media  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Where would you describe yourself spiritually when you first started attending Cypress Meadows?**

- Cynic – Disbelieving  
 Skeptic – Doubting  
 Spectator – Observing  
 Seeker – Searching  
 Nominal Believer – Unsure  
 New believer – Recently Received Christ  
 Growing Believer – Maturing

4. **Approximately how long ago did you receive Jesus Christ as the one and only forgiver and leader of your life?**

- Less than 12 months  
 1-2 years  
 3-5 years  
 More than 5 years

5. **Who, besides the work of the Holy Spirit, most influenced you to become a Believer?**

- Family member  
 Friend  
 Co-worker  
 Church Service  
 Small Group  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **BAPTISM REGISTRATION FORM**

6. **Did you ever participate in a seeker small group?**

Yes

No

7. **Are you currently in a small group?**

Yes

No

8. **Were you baptized as an infant?**

Yes

No

9. **What, besides the work of the Holy Spirit, has mostly motivated you to get baptized at this time?**

- Family or Friends
- Pastoral Teaching
- Small Group
- Membership Process
- Church Announcement
- Bible Study



