

## FOOTHILLS FELLOWSHIP BAPTISM / CANDIDATE GUIDE

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### DETAILS AND GENERAL INTRUCTIONS

**TIMING:** Please meet the pastor in the kitchen lobby area (south side of the sanctuary) five minutes prior to the service for final instructions and prayer. You should be dressed for baptism at this time.

**WHAT TO WEAR (MEN):** Wear a shirt and washable pants without a belt. Be sure your pockets are empty.

**WHAT TO WEAR (WOMEN):** The church has three baptismal robes (sizes small, medium & large) which may be worn over your underwear or bathing suit. If you choose not to wear one, then wear pants and a top that will not be see-through when wet. The robes are in a cubby in the area behind the baptistery.

### WHAT TO BRING:

1. One or two large bath towels
2. Flip flops or slippers so you will not slip and slide in the hallway on your way to the restroom.
3. *A complete change of dry clothing.*
4. A container or plastic bag to carry home your wet clothing.
5. Ladies may wish to bring a hair dryer to dry their wet hair.

**WHAT TO SAY:** You may give a testimony of your salvation experience if you so choose. If so, please plan on speaking no more than 3 minutes. After you have spoken, the one baptizing you will say to you: "Based on your confession of faith in Jesus Christ, I now baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." If you choose not to give your testimony, the one baptizing you may say a few words about your testimony.

**POSITION IN THE BAPTISTRY:** After you have spoken in the baptistery, you will turn and face the direction from which you entered the water. Then, you will sit down on the ledge directly below you. The ledge is partially submerged under the water. Then, you will cross your arms over your chest. If you need to plug your nose, do so with one of your hands. The one baptizing you will then grab your crossed arms with his right hand and place his left hand on your back. He will then gently push you back into the water, fully submerging your entire body. Because you are in the sitting position, it is very easy for the one baptizing you to bring you back up out of the water. Let him! Don't panic! You will only be under the water for a brief moment, and then you will be gently brought back up out of the water.

### THE BAPTISM CEREMONY

*The pastor will give brief explanation of baptism and will explain the role of the congregation. He will then introduce the candidates. At this time, they will enter the worship center from the side door and stand on the ramp in front of the baptistery. He will then ask the candidates the following questions.*

PASTOR: Do you desire to be baptized?

**CANDIDATES: We do.**

PASTOR: Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

**CANDIDATES: We renounce them.**

PASTOR: Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

**CANDIDATES: We renounce them.**

PASTOR: Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

**CANDIDATES: We renounce them.**

PASTOR: Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

**CANDIDATES: We do.**

PASTOR: Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

**CANDIDATES: We do.**

PASTOR: Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

**CANDIDATES: We do.**

*Then, the pastor addresses the congregation, saying...*

PASTOR: Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

**ALL: We will.**

PASTOR: Let us join with those who are committing themselves to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant.

*The pastor then asks the congregation the following questions...*

PASTOR: Do you believe in God the Father the creator of heaven and earth, the Lord Jesus Christ who suffered, died, was buried and three days later rose from the dead victorious over Satan, sin, and death, and the Holy Spirit who leads, unites, and seals his people?

**ALL: We do. We believe in God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Three-in-One...to whom be Glory and Honor forever and ever.**

PASTOR: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

**ALL: We will, with God's help.**

PASTOR: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

**ALL: We will, with God's help.**

PASTOR: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

**ALL: We will, with God's help.**

PASTOR: Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbor as yourself, and striving for justice and peace among them?

**ALL: We will, with God's help.**

*The pastor will then pray over the candidates and offer thanks to God for the gift of water.*

*After prayer, the candidates will then move to the baptistery by exiting the worship center through the side door and entering the baptistery from the hallway. They will share their testimonies of faith in Jesus and be baptized. The one baptizing will ask them to share a brief testimony of faith in Jesus Christ and then say the following words as the candidate sits down and prepares to be baptized...*

**Based on your confession of faith in Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*After being baptized, the candidate may exit the waters, grab their towel, and make their way to the bathroom to change. The one baptizing (if not the pastor) will also exit the baptistery at this time. When baptism has been completed for all candidates, the pastor will close in prayer.*

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WATER BAPTISM**

### **Jesus' Instructions**

Water baptism is one of the main things that the church has been instructed to do by Jesus. He gives us these instructions in Matthew 28:19-20:

*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,<sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

In this passage, Jesus tells believers to make disciples (followers of Christ) by teaching people to obey everything Jesus commands us to do in His Word and by baptizing them. So, according to Jesus, baptism is an essential piece of the disciple making process.

### **Baptism Explained**

Trying to explain the beauty and significance of baptism is like a trying to play a beautiful Beethoven composition on a harmonica! The music is just too majestic...too powerful...to complex...and too beautiful. In the same way, any words on baptism must be seen as a feeble human attempt to explain and understand an incredibly holy event.

Our danger is to swing to one of two extremes: we make it either too important or too unimportant. If we make it essential to salvation; if we think that by being baptized, our sins are forgiven; if we say, "I'm saved because I was baptized," then we're in error. If we trivialize it; if we see it as no big deal; if we see it

as unimportant to the process of becoming a disciple of Christ; if we say, "I'm saved so I don't need to be baptized," then we're in error as well.

The challenge is to let the pendulum stop somewhere between the two viewpoints. The truth is: baptism does not save us, but we're commanded in the Scriptures to be baptized. As we survey the New Testament, we see that baptism immediately followed conversion in almost every case. The early church leaders saw baptism as a vital step in the disciple-making / disciple-becoming process.

The word "baptize" literally means, "to dip, to immerse, to plunge." That's why we fill up a tank of water and "dip" people. It's what the original Greek word means. Plus, "dipping" people under water was the New Testament practice as well. Even Jesus was "dipped" under the waters of the Jordan River by John the Baptist!

Dipping people under the water makes sense when you understand what baptism represents. Baptism symbolizes *death*, *burial* and the *resurrection* from a grave. This is exactly the pattern of Christ's crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Paul explains this clearly in Romans 6:3-5:

"That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land! That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. <sup>4</sup> **When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus.** <sup>5</sup> Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country. <sup>6</sup> Could it be any clearer? **Our old way of life was nailed to the Cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call!"** (The Message)

Baptism is the outward symbol of what Christ has done inside of everyone who has confessed their sin and – who by faith – have placed their trust in Christ for their salvation. Those who are baptized are saying that they are identifying with Christ. They have put their faith in Him, and they're relying on His death and resurrection for their salvation. They are saying that they will NEVER be the same again, and they're agreeing with the words of Paul in Galatians 2:20:

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

This is why we baptize believers at The Foothills. It's commanded by our Lord; it's a major part of the discipleship process; and it is an outwardly symbolic act of what the Lord has already done inside of the one being baptized.