

Baptism at Mountain View Community Church¹

1. The Command: Baptism is a command of the Lord (Matthew 28:19) and along with the Lord's Supper is one of two ordinances of the church.
2. The Meaning: Baptism symbolizes the believer's new life and identification with Christ (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism is not salvific in any sense (it does not save or help someone get into heaven). Faith alone in Christ saves (Ephesians 2:8-9).
3. The Mode: At MVCC we will practice the mode of immersion whenever possible for the following reasons: (a) the literal meaning of baptize is "to dip, to plunge under water²," and (b) immersion best pictures the new life of the believer (dying to the old life, rising to new life) as taught in Romans 6:3-4, which water baptism is meant to symbolize.
4. The Subjects: Baptism is expected of all believers in Christ according to the example of the book of Acts (2:41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 10:44-48; 16:14-15, 32-33; 18:8; 19:4-5). Believer's baptism (as opposed to infant baptism) appears to be the norm in Scripture (Acts 2:38).
5. The Officiants:
 - a. In the book of Acts we see the apostles primarily taking the lead in baptizing the believers,³ however it is not clear if only the apostles baptized. It seems unlikely that only apostles baptized the 3000 who were saved on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Moreover, it appears that Ananias, who is simply called a disciple (Acts 9:10,17-18), baptized Paul. In the epistles, Paul claims that he did not baptize many of the believers at Corinth and asserts that preaching the gospel, not baptizing, is his primary call from God (1 Cor. 1:14-17). It seems clear from 1 Cor. 1:11-17 that Apollos also baptized.
 - b. Since baptism is an ordinance of the church, those who conduct baptisms should also be recognized by the church. Scripture does not say if these individuals must be pastors or elders. At Mountain View, baptisms will be performed by pastors, elders, or approved home group leaders. Baptisms that are conducted by home group leaders, must however take place in a duly authorized baptismal service of the church⁴, with one of the pastors or elders of MVCC present.

The Elders of Mountain View Community Church
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¹ This paper addresses baptisms performed under the authority of MVCC. It does not seek to address baptisms that take place outside of the local church.

² Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford:Clarendon, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 305-06.

³ Philip (Acts 8:12-13, 38), Peter (Acts 10:44-48), Paul (Acts 16:14-15, 32-33; 18:8; 19:4-5)

⁴ A duly authorized MVCC baptismal service may consist of: (1) church-wide baptismal services, (2) an MVCC home group or combination of home groups holding a baptismal service, (3) a small group gathering of family and/or friends or (4) a church sponsored ministry outing such as a missions trip or a spiritual retreat. We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the church, to be carried out primarily by the local church.