

How do I join Ebenezer Baptist Church?

That is a question often asked of staff and members at EBC. The first step in answering this question is clarification between **Church** membership and **Sunday School** membership.

Becoming a member of a **Sunday School** class is a simple procedure. First, find a Sunday School class that meets your needs. Obtaining membership in such a class is as simple as asking the class teacher to add you to the class roll. There are no pre-requisites for joining a Sunday School class: However, we hope that you will attend and participate as much as possible once you have found a class.

Becoming a member of the **Church** is also a simple procedure, but it does include a couple of pre-requisites. Ebenezer Baptist Church (and most other Baptist churches) require that the candidate for membership has made a **public profession of faith in Christ** (that he or she has accepted Christ as Savior and will stand before the church to publicly signify that fact). Ebenezer also requires that this candidate experience **"Believer's Baptism"** (that he or she has been baptized or will submit to being baptized by immersion AFTER accepting Christ as Savior and Lord).

Some ask the question **"Why Baptism?"** Baptism is an act of OBEDIENCE: When a believer submits to baptism, he or she is being obedient to the Great Commission, in which Jesus said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . ."* Baptism is SYMBOLIC: When a believer is baptized, he or she is making a public profession of the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. Baptism can also be seen as a symbol of death to the old life and resurrection to a new life in Christ. We believe that baptism does not impart any additional grace: You do not have to be baptized to be saved. However, baptism is an important step of obedience in the life of a believer.

A person can join the church at the end of any worship service during the Public Invitation. This usually occurs immediately after the sermon has been delivered in a worship time. The invitation is a time for people to respond to God however He leads them to respond.

During this time, some will respond with prayer needs. Some people will respond asking to receive Christ into their hearts. Some will respond and request Church Membership. Our Pastor (or whoever is offering the invitation) will usually be standing down in front of the pulpit and will be ready to receive anyone who walks the aisle and to assist them with any decision and/or pray with them about any needs.

When a person requests to join the church, the Pastor will ask how he or she is seeking membership: If the candidate has been a member of another Baptist church and is moving his or her membership, this is usually done through a **"Transfer of Letter."** This would mean that the person has accepted Christ as Savior at a previous date, made

a profession of faith in Christ, and has already experienced Believer's Baptism. Our constitution states that we will accept church membership from another church of like faith and order, another church that believes that Jesus is the ONLY way of salvation. Occasionally we do have candidates for membership who are coming from other denominations and have been immersed after accepting Christ as Savior. If this was done as Believer's Baptism, in obedience to the words of Christ in the Great Commission, we do accept this as fulfillment of the baptism requirement. We will gladly contact the previous church to secure a church letter.

Occasionally we receive candidates who were members of Baptist churches that are no longer in existence. If they have accepted Christ as Savior and been immersed in Believer's Baptism, we do accept them by **Statement** of those facts (even though their church letter might be unobtainable).

When a person responds who has recently accepted Christ as Savior, we rejoice in the decision and accept him or her as a **Candidate for Baptism**. We have baptism services as the need arises (around every two or three months) and will give you plenty of notice to allow family and friends an opportunity to come and celebrate this momentous occasion in your life.

We also accept people into our membership who have been Christians for some time but have never been immersed as **Candidates for Baptism**. This occurs when people join our church who have been active in denominations that do not practice Believer's Baptism, or when someone accepts Christ but does not follow through with Believer's Baptism until later in life.

We welcome anyone and everyone to the church family . . . Membership is required to vote in any church business meeting and to serve as an officer or in any position of elected leadership in the church. With church membership, there is an expectation of regular attendance, stewardship (with money, time, AND talent), and service.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the church office at (843) 669-1802. We will be happy to answer any questions or provide you with more information about Ebenezer Baptist Church!