

## ALDAN UNION CHURCH POSITION PAPER ON BAPTISM

1. Baptism is one of two ordinances recognized in the *Doctrinal Principles of Aldan Union Church* that is divinely enjoined on believers. We do not make church membership contingent on having been baptized, but strongly encourage all believers at Aldan Union Church to be baptized.
2. We believe that baptism is a means of a believer publicly confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is an identification with Christ – Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-38; 19:4-5.
3. Baptism by immersion pictures a believer identifying in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It pictures the death of the old nature, the death of sins, and the believer's walk in newness of life – Romans 6:1-7; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21.
4. We therefore practice believer's baptism only. An individual believer who is baptized does so by his own choice, not that of his parents or guardians or anyone else. There is no prescribed minimum age for one to be baptized – but one must be old enough to understand salvation and baptism in an age- appropriate way.
5. Baptism is commanded of all believers, but it is not a means of securing one's eternal salvation. In other words baptism does not save anyone - Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-10.
6. Baptism is a public testimony of obedience to a specific command of the Lord Jesus. It is not necessary for salvation, but it is necessary to be obedient to Christ and the biblical pattern as set forth in the New Testament Scriptures – Matt. 28:19-20.
7. That encouragement is to be baptized as soon as possible after having personally received the Lord Jesus Christ as one's Savior. That is the biblical pattern - Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:36, 38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47, 48; Acts 16:33-34; Acts 18:8; Acts 22:16.
8. Aldan Union Church practices two modes of baptism.
  - a. **Immersion** – The Greek word for *baptism* is *baptizo*. It always means to dip or immerse. There is a Greek word *rhantizo* which means, “to sprinkle” but it is never used in connection with the ordinance of baptism. Indications are that immersion was the mode of baptism in the early church. John 3:22-23 – “...because water was plentiful...;” Mt. 3:5-6 – baptized *in* the Jordan. Early church fathers unanimously referred to baptism as immersion. Early architecture of the meeting places had tanks or pools suitable for baptism.
  - b. **Sprinkling** – For those who physically have a problem being immersed or whose church backgrounds result in their conviction that is the preferred mode of baptism, we offer sprinkling as well. As a *union church* our policy has been that we will not make an issue about the amount of water that is used to baptize. Scriptures cited by those who prefer the mode of sprinkling include Hebrews 10:22 and 1 Peter 1:2.

*Revised 10/24/16*