

Baptism Weekends

Dear CG Leader,

Thank you for helping people find community. We are so thankful for your care and leadership of the people in your cg. Leading a cg is a great opportunity to rally people to 'GO' - to pray for and reach into the world of others to bring the love and transforming power of Christ.

Please remember to ask your cg members how they are reaching out to people in their world who don't yet know Jesus and discuss any actions they are taking. We love to hear stories of this so please let us know in the "GO" textbox of your UCare report.

- Connect Team

Dates: Sunday 27th April to Sunday 4th May 2025.

Announcements:

<p>Holy Spirit Baptism 4th May</p>	<p><i>The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit fills and empowers believers for life and mission. He brings conviction, transformation, spiritual gifts, unity, and strength for every season. This moment is for anyone who has never been filled with the Holy Spirit, or for those who are hungry to be filled again.</i></p> <p><i>After the service, there will be prayer available for anyone who would like to be filled with the Holy Spirit.</i></p>
<p>Foundations 14th May</p>	<p><i>Our online Foundations Course starts on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 6.30pm and runs weekly for 5 weeks. Please encourage any new believers in your connect group to attend this significant course to help them establish strong foundations, even if the course runs on your connect group night.</i></p> <p><i>Please stay in touch with them to help them plug into community, gather them to church, answer any questions they may have and then resume attending your cg once the course finishes. (Of course, if your cg meeting doesn't clash with the Foundations course, and the new believer is up for it, they could attend both meetings – Foundations and your Connect Group.)</i></p> <p><i>The Sunday following the last week of the Foundations Course will be a Holy Spirit Baptism Sunday at all Locations.</i></p> <p><i>Here's a link to the website for more information:</i> https://c3syd.church/next-step-foundations/</p>

Connect Questions

○ *Week 1: Water Baptism Sunday: No Turning Back*

27th April 2025

Please choose questions from the below selection that you feel would most benefit your group discussion:

1. Baptism is important in the life of a Christian. Share any stories of the power of baptism. For those who have been water baptized, share what it meant to you.
2. Baptism is a public testimony that one has entered faith union with Christ. They are brought into the covenant by baptism, but they need to accept Jesus as Lord to be considered a covenant member. How does it make you feel when someone close to you decides to get water baptized?
3. The disciples baptized everyone who got saved and baptism as a public declaration and immersion into community. Why is it important to baptize people at church gatherings with all of us cheering them on?
4. Jesus was baptized as our example. Share any moments when you have experienced the affirmation of your heavenly Father the way Jesus did that day.
5. Baptism is for the believers. It is an outward expression or sign of an inward spiritual reality that the believer has already experienced by faith in Christ. How can you support any members of your connect group who have not yet been water (or Holy Spirit) baptized?
6. The Holy Spirit gives life. Just as water baptism symbolizes our rebirth in Christ, the Holy Spirit can breathe new life into the dry areas of our life. Discuss which areas of your spiritual life you think can dry out.
7. The Holy Spirit purifies, cleanses and prunes God's people. Sometimes there are things we'd like to do or like to stop doing but we need God's empowerment. Share some of the things that the Holy Spirit has helped you overcome in the past.
8. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to equip the Church. What are the spiritual gifts you have been using to build up the church? Are there any that members of your group would like to receive or revive?

Week 1: Water Baptism Sunday: No Turning Back

Date: Sunday 27th April 2025

Key Point of this week: For our people to understand the importance of water baptism in the community of God and to encourage those who haven't been baptized to get water baptized. To celebrate Water Baptisms, the power in being Water baptised and baptism as a public declaration and immersion into community.

Key Scripture: Acts 2:38-41

Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

Supporting points to key point:

Baptism is for the believers. It is an outward expression or sign of an inward spiritual reality that the believer has already experienced by faith in Christ. Baptism is a public testimony that one has entered faith union with Christ. They are brought into the covenant by baptism, but they need to accept Jesus as Lord to be considered a covenant member.

WHY DO WE BAPTISE PEOPLE?

1. Jesus was baptised as our example

Matthew 3:13-15

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

¹⁵ But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

2. Baptism was a sign of discipleship and a disciple

"The preaching of the gospel would be the means of making disciples, and such discipleship would be signified by baptism"

The disciples baptised everyone who got saved:

Acts 8:34-39

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" ³⁷ ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the

water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.
Paul expected that water baptism would be the normal experience of all those who had become disciples of Christ

1 Corinthians 1:13

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Acts 18:8

⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

Acts 19:4-6

⁴ Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues^[b] and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all

The sign of a disciple of Jesus was that they baptised people:

John 4:1

⁴ Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact, it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

3. Jesus commanded it

Jesus Great commission includes the water baptism:

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Week 2: Holy Spirit Baptism Sunday: Be Filled

Date: Sunday 4th May 2025

Key Point of this week: For our people to understand the importance of being baptised in the Holy Spirit and continually filled. To understand that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to the believer to be used for His glory.

Key Scriptures: Acts 2:38-29 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Historical Context, Commentary + supporting references:

Supporting points to key point:

PART ONE: THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is a part of the salvation process, the sanctification process, and the glorification process. He is an essential part of the process from beginning to end. David Garner puts it this way, “No-one enjoys the benefits of Christ’s saving life, death, and resurrection apart from the Holy Spirit. He is the vital Bonding agent, the glue of the gospel, securing sinners immediately and permanently to Christ Jesus.”

Michael Bird in *Evangelical Theology* explains that the work of the Spirit in the Church can be broken into five categories: vivifying, empowering, sanctifying, revealing, and unifying.

Vivifying:

The Spirit gives life: John 6:63, Romans 8:10-11, 2 Cor 3:6. This means the Holy Spirit is the participant in the regeneration and new birth of the believer. The process of the sinful heart being changed so that the person can respond to the call of faith and live in accordance with the will of God is done by the Holy Spirit (Matt 19:28, John 3:3, 5-7; Titus 3:5). The Holy Spirit enlightens the blinded mind to discern spiritual realities (1 Cor 2:14-15; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 3:10) and liberates the enslaved for obedience to God (Rom 6:14, 17-22; Phil 2:13).

Sanctifying:

The Holy Spirit purifies, cleanses and prunes God’s people. He brings conviction of sin (John 16:8-11, Acts 7:51). When we come to faith, we are washed, sanctified, and justified by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11). The washing of new birth shows that the Holy Spirit is a vital part of our initial salvation (1 Cor 1:2, 2 Thess 2:13).

The new life produces the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; Rom 7:4; Phil 1:11). Through the Spirit we put to death the flesh and grow in personal holiness (Rom 8:13).

Michael Bird states, “A healthy Christian life is one that begins with the Spirit (Gal 3:3), walks in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25), and cultivates righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17).” (page 697 Michael Bird Evangelical Theology)

Revealing:

The Holy Spirit illuminates the revelation of God to human beings.... The Holy Spirit is the mouthpiece by which God speaks his Word into the world, he is the agency by which the Word is made flesh, and he is the chief author of the word of salvation through the church.” (page 697 Michael Bird Evangelical Theology)

Unifying:

The Holy Spirit binds the community of God together with a common mission, message, shared experience and one Spirit (Acts 2:44-47). They have fellowship together and oneness in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14, Phil 2:1-2, Eph 4:4-5).

Empowering:

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit empowered Joshua with leadership (Num 27:18), the Judges to deliver the nation (Judges 3:10, 13:25, 15:14), came on Saul and David as part of the kingly office (1 Sam 11:6, 16:13). He came upon the prophetic vocation through the Spirit (2 Kings 2). Jesus the Messiah was empowered by the Spirit (Luke 4:14) and empowered the Church for its mission to preach the gospel (Acts 1:8). Stephen was filled with the Spirit (Acts 7:55), Saul was filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17-18), Barnabas was a good man, full of the Spirit (Acts 11:24).

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to equip the Church, the gifts are distributed as he determines (1 Cor 12:11) and according to his will (Heb 2:4).

PART TWO: GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

TYPES OF TONGUES

1. Speaking in another language, unknown to the speaker, but known to the hearer

Acts 2:5-11

And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”

God started to reach the world through the 17 people groups present on that day. The miraculous ability to speak non-Jewish languages was also to make it clear to the disciples that the Holy Spirit's power came with the goal to evangelise all people groups, not just the Jews. Understandably, it took them a while for them to grasp this.

It is a possible that the Roman church, whose origins are obscure, may go back to some of the visitors from Rome who heard the gospel in Jerusalem that day and carried it home. By the beginning of the Christian era, it is estimated that there were between 40,000 and 60,000 Jews in Rome. This one event spread the Gospel to all over the world using the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues! Although very rare this gift of tongues still happens today.

Kenneth Hagin

In his book, "*Prevailing Prayer to Peace*" he writes there was a Jewish boy who had been befriended by one of the boys in the church he was visiting, and he had asked the Jewish boy along to church. At first, he refused saying that he didn't believe in Christ. However, he began thinking that he shouldn't be so critical, because this Christian boy was the only one who had been kind to him, and so he agreed to go one day. During the service, a woman stood and gave a message in tongues. No interpretation was given (if tongues are used in a public meeting, they must be accompanied by interpretation).

The pastor said "I waited for a few minutes, but finally when there was no interpretation to the message in tongues, we went on with the service. As I was shaking hands with the people at the end of the service, the Jewish boy asked me, "Who was that lady who was talking to me? That lady, who got up in the service and talked to me, spoke my language (Hebrew) and even called my name. She told me what I had been thinking. She told me that Christ was the Messiah and that I should believe on him."

He seemed to resent her talking directly to him in front of the crowd. The pastor told him that the lady was a widow who only had a fifth-grade education and took in washing for a living. She spoke no language but English. The following week the Jewish boy gave his heart to the Lord.

2. There are tongues that are directed to God alone to assist us in prayer and communication with the Lord, to assist worship and to build up our spirit – unknown tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:2

¹⁴*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

Moffatt's translation says that he speaks "*divine mysteries*". When we pray in tongues, our spirit is in direct contact with God, who is Spirit. We are talking to Him in a divine,

supernatural means and able to communicate with Him at a far deeper level than we could have otherwise.

1 Corinthians 14:14

¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit (by the Holy Spirit within me) prays but my mind is unproductive.

Edifies you spiritually:

1 Corinthians 14:4

⁴He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

The word “edifies” means to build oneself up. Greek scholars tell us that we have a word in our modern language which is much closer to the original meaning than the word “edify”, and that is “charge” i.e. you charge yourself up like a battery. This is a spiritual edification, not mental.

Jude 20

²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

It doesn't give you faith, because faith comes from hearing the Word, but it builds your spirit man so that you are stronger in that area, and this helps you to live in the Spirit and by faith better.

Helps you to pray when you don't know what to pray for:

Romans 8:26

²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Holy Spirit, who knows everything, can pray through us for things about which our natural mind knows nothing.

Kenneth Hagin – once the Lord woke him up one night and he, knowing that something was wrong, prayed in tongues for an hour until he felt a release (when praise came upon him, and he began to sing). He then dreamt that his brother was ill, and the doctor told him he was dead and Hagin said “*No, doctor he is not dead. The Lord told me that he would live and not die.*”

In the dream, he went into his brother's hospital room and pulled back the covers and he was alive. This actually did take place at the same time that Kenneth Hagin had been praying – his brother had an attack and nearly died and for 40 minutes the doctor thought that he actually was dead.

Praying in tongues refreshes you and brings a spiritual rest:

Isaiah 28:11-12

"For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, 'This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,' And, 'This is the refreshing': Yet they would not hear.

Acts 3:19

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

4. Tongues that are used with interpretation in the church as a means of prophecy

In church, tongues given out loud (i.e. not in prayer or praise) need to be interpreted or the congregation wouldn't be edified. The gift is designed to convince the unbeliever of the reality of the presence of God, so that they may turn and be saved (1 Corinthians 14:22-25).

Rick Shelton – in a meeting he had an experience where he spoke to the congregation in a tongue unfamiliar to him (i.e. was not his normal tongue that he used in prayer). Then, he was aware of two angels, one on either side of him, and alternately, after each outburst of the tongue, one of the angels would whisper in his ear, and then he gave the interpretation in English (this could be the type of angelic tongues referred to in 1 Corinthians 13:1).