



The statement of faith of the
EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
affirms:

“We believe that water baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are however, not to be regarded as a means to salvation.”

The absence of any reference to the mode of water baptism offers difference of opinions concerning the practice of the ordinance.

Hope EFC affirms baptism by immersion following a confession of faith in Jesus. Baptism by sprinkling is usually reserved for the infirm and aged.

SESSION 1 : An Introduction to Baptism

1. What is baptism?

The word **baptism** is not an English word, but a Greek word and it means “*immerse*” or “*plunge into*”. We take baptism to mean immersing a believer into the water and bringing him up again.

- Matthew 3:16 “...*he went up out of the water*”
- John 3:23 “...*there was plenty of water*”
- Acts 8:38-39 “...*went down into ...came out of the water*”

2. Why do we have baptism?

- Matthew 28:18-20 (*It is a command from the Lord.*)
- Romans 6:1-11 (*It signifies death to self, burial with Christ and a resurrection to newness of life in Christ, because in baptism one is identified with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.*)
- Colossians 2:9-16 (*It is a triumph over the principalities and powers of darkness.*)
- Romans 10:9-10 (*It is a public confession of faith in the Lord.*)

3. The significance of baptism

- Acts 2:38 (*It is an act of obedience to the Lord's command.*)
- Acts 22:16 (*It is an outward sign of an inward cleansing by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.*)
- 1 Corinthians 12:12,13 (*it marks our incorporation into Christ's body, which is the church*)
- Matthew 28:19 (*it is submission to the authority of our Triune Godhead of Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*)

4. When should someone get baptized?

- Acts 22:16 *“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized...”*
- Acts 2:41 *“Those who accepted his message were baptized...”*
- Acts 10:47-48 *“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? ...So, he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”*
- Acts 16:33 *“...then immediately he and all his family were baptized.”*

Baptism must take place immediately after or with the minimum delay, following repentance and faith in the Lord, as exemplified by the Christians of the early Church.

5. What should a person do on coming for baptism?

A. You must **repent** (Acts 2:38)

Repentance involves:

Our thoughts

To repent is to change our minds; a firm decision to turn from sin to God. It means acknowledging our sins as we come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:18) and the desire to put things right.

Our words

Confess our sins to God (Matthew 3:6 – Note the connection between confession and baptism).

Our deeds

This involves severing all ties with previous religious practices, removal of religious idols and occult objects (Acts 19:18-19). It includes making restitution of our wrongdoings (Luke 19:8) and living a life that is consistent with repentance (Luke 3:8).

B. You must have **faith**

It is in a Person The object of our faith is the Person of Jesus Christ, a Person attested in history.

He is the Incarnate Son of God. In His life and ministry, He pointed man to God. He died a cruel death by crucifixion for the sins of the world but was vindicated by God who raised Him up from the dead. Only He alone can save us (Acts 4:12)

It is personal You must have personal faith in Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. Somebody else cannot believe for you (John 3:16).

It must be confessed To confess your faith is to express openly what you believe in your heart (Matthew 10:32-33, Romans 10:9)

C. You must **acknowledge** Christ's Lordship in your life (Rom 10:9,10)

The risen Christ is the exalted Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). Therefore, confessing one's faith in Jesus includes bowing before Him as Lord and Sovereign King. In this way a believer acknowledges they live as subjects under Jesus' gracious rule

D. You must be **baptized** in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

The believer's baptism is carried out in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our Triune Godhead.

Just as the Trinity is inseparable, the believer's position as child of God denotes secure possession and protection of God whose name they bear.

Jesus: "I and the Father are one."
John 10:30

SESSION 2 : What God Has Done and What You Did

1. THE PROBLEM

God made mankind to enjoy fellowship. But man's rebellion against God. brought separation and dislocation in the following ways:

Spiritually Relationship between God and man was broken

Socially Relationship between man and man was strained

Psychologically Relationship within man and himself was fractured

Ecologically Relationship between man and creation was rifted

2. GOD'S INITIATIVE

The Bible declares that the redemption of sinners is first and last the initiative and the gracious act of our God. Read Romans 5:1-10

3. THE SOLUTION

Only God could provide the answer and deal with the problem. He made and loved you, but He could not disregard your sins.

God provided Jesus Christ as a sacrifice and substitute for our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). The punishment for sin is death. Jesus became death for us while His righteousness became ours. See John 3:16.

The proclamation that Jesus came to save sinners and reconcile them to God our Creator is called the Gospel (from the Greek, *euangelion*), or Good News (Mark 1:15).

4. THE BENEFIT

The word "*justified*" appeared twice in the reading above and means the very act by which God declared sinful man righteous.

Romans 5:9 "*justified by his blood*" is the part that God had done. The proof that God accepted the sacrifice of Jesus to justify you is in Jesus's resurrection from the dead (Romans 4:25).

5. THE CALL

John 6:37 says God calls persons to redemption. By the grace of God our hearts are opened to the Gospel of salvation (Acts 16:14).

6. THE RESPONSE

In Acts 2:36,37 many people who were gathered on the day of Pentecost were “cut to the heart” by Peter’s message about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Peter invited those who were convicted to respond and 3,000 believed and were baptised. Just as the prodigal son in Luke 15:18 was decisive (he said, “*I will*” twice), we too must be decisive when convicted by the Gospel of Jesus.

Romans 10:9-10

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” JOHN 14:6

What the Bible says about our conversion.

The word in Scripture that underlines all that Jesus has done to save us is, *redemption* (Ephesians 1:7-8a). To be redeemed in the Old Testament is to be delivered from captivity or bondage following the payment of a price or a ransom by a redeemer.

Jesus our Redeemer is the long-awaited Messiah of the Old Testament who freed us from sin and death at the cost of his own death on the cross (Romans 5:8 ,11; Titus 2:11-14).

A. Justification

Justification is God’s declaration that the sinner is legally not guilty before God and therefore treated as holy. We cannot make ourselves right before God nor can we earn it. We are justified on the basis of the sacrificial death of Jesus alone (**Romans 3:21-26**).

A. Adoption

John 1:12 tells us that a believer enters into a new relationship with the Creator through Christ and is now identified as a child of God, his Heavenly Father. This change in status is further described as spiritual adoption (Ephesians 1:5).

B. Transformation

The Christian life is a 'new' life, one that Paul calls a "new creation" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). This spiritual transformation is evidenced in a new mindset and direction – the believer no longer lives for themselves or seek only their own agenda but that of Christ who lived and died for them (**2 Corinthians 5:14,15**).

C. Sanctification

Christ lives in every child of God in the person of the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:9**). In **1 Peter 1:2**, we are told that the Spirit sanctifies the believer, or makes them holy.

This work of the sanctification takes a lifetime and is described as a transformation from 'glory to glory' (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

D. Identification

In the letters of Paul in the New Testament, the phrase "*in Christ*" occurs a significant number of times. This union *in Christ* or *with Christ* through faith refers to our new identity in Christ.

This identification describes our participation in Christ's saving benefits (Romans 6:3-5). The Christian therefore identify themselves as one in whom Christ lives, and He is in every way the centre of life's focus (**Galatians 2:20**).

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

SESSION 3 : LIFE IN GOD'S FAMILY

1. INTRODUCTION

The family of God is likened to the earthly family that each of us belong to. When a child is born, he is born into a family. This is equally true in a Christian family, the Church. The New Testament never teaches anything about an isolated Christian.

2. COMMITMENT TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

The Christian is a member of Christ's Body and a child in God's family. This new spiritual status introduces you to a fresh perspective about everything God is doing in you and through you - not just on a personal level, but as a member in His family.

Our commitment to Christ is seen in our commitment to each other, to serve one another and build them up.

Love is relational. We relate to each other in the love of Christ. The love of God is the cement that holds the Church, the family of God together.

1 John 4: 7-8; John 15:12-13

Love must be expressed. God's love is not just a warm feeling inside us. It is both words and works that deepen in shared lives and mutual submission. Love is best seen in self-sacrificial service.

1 John 3:18; Hebrews 10:24; Ephesians 5:21;
Colossians 3:12-17

Love will be tested. It is not only your actions that you need to watch. It is also your reactions to what others say and do. Jesus has given us the supreme example in loving and serving others

John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:2,10; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. PHILIPPIANS 2:3

3. COMMITMENT TO GENEROSITY

Under the Mosaic law, the Israelites were expected to tithe, or give one tenth a tenth of their produce and livestock as a form of worship (Deuteronomy 14:22-23). Tithes were given as *'first fruits'* to God the Creator of all things (2 Chronicles 31:4-5).

It taught God's people to be thankful to their Creator, as well as acknowledge that their sustenance came from God alone. Therefore, tithing was an expression of faith in God.

In the New Testament, tithing was set aside as were most ceremonial laws. Instead, God's church was to be generous and freely share, each person giving according to their conviction (2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Hebrews 13:16). This practice of generosity was first noted after Pentecost as the first church began to meet (Acts 2:44,45).

4. COMMITMENT TO OBEY YOUR LEADERS

Jesus exemplified servant leadership when he set aside his glory to serve humankind in humility (Philippians 2:6-8).

It is God who gifts the church with leaders, whether, pastor, bishop, elder, or deacon. It is a responsibility that is often compared to a shepherd who is primarily involved in leading, protecting, and feeding the flock.

Church leaders model their service and ministry after their Lord Jesus. As their responsibility comes with much accountability, Scripture calls on the church both to support their leaders and submit to them.

- 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- Hebrews 13:17

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” MARK 10:45

SESSION 4 : Sharing Your Testimony

1. What is a testimony?

It is not about yourself not your past, primarily.

It is testimony concerning Jesus.

- It is simply telling in your own words the life changing reality of Jesus
- The focus is on Him and only incidentally on yourself

2. What is the value of a testimony?

- It is simple and natural
- It is intriguing (John 4:28-30, 39ff)
- It brings Christianity into the real world
- It opens conversations
- It is irrefutable (John 9:25)

3. Using scripture in your testimony

- Be selective
- Be relevant
- Be personal
- Avoid jargon, complexity, and irrelevance

4. Things to remember in giving your testimony

- Be disciplined
- Be joyful
- Be bold

The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. LUKE 8:38-39