

The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



A Brief Defense of **INFANT BAPTISM**

by Kevin DeYoung

It sounds like the beginning of a joke or a support group introduction, but it's true: some of my best friends are Baptists. I speak at conferences with and to Baptists. I read books by Baptists (both the dead and the living). I love the Baptist brothers I know—near and far—who preach God's word and minister faithfully in Christ's church.

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I went to a Baptist church while in college and know that there are many folks of more credobaptist persuasion in my own church. I imagine the majority of my blog readers are Baptist. You get the picture. I have thousands of reasons to be thankful for my brothers and sisters in Christ who do not believe in baptizing infants.

And yet, I do. Gladly. Wholeheartedly. Because of what I see in Scripture.

One of the best things I get to do as a pastor is to administer the sacrament of infant baptism to the covenant children in my congregation. Before each baptism, I take a few minutes to explain why we practice infant baptism in our church. My explanation always includes some—but rarely is there time for all—of the following:

It is our great privilege this morning to administer that sacrament of baptism to one of our little infants. We do not believe that there is anything magical about the water we apply to the child. The water does not wash away original sin or save the child. We do not presume that this child is regenerate (though he may be), nor do we believe that every child who gets baptized will automatically go to heaven. We baptize infants not out of superstition or tradition or because we like cute babies. We baptize infants because they are covenant children and should receive the sign of the covenant.

In Genesis 15 God made a covenant with Abraham. This covenant was sealed with the sign of circumcision in Genesis 17. God promised to bless Abraham. For Abraham this meant two things in particular, offspring and land. But at the heart of the covenant was God's promise that he would be a God to Abraham and his children (Gen. 17:7, 8).

Circumcision was not just a physical thing, marking out ethnic Jews. Circumcision was full of spiritual meaning. The circumcision of the flesh was always meant to correspond with circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:25–29). It pointed to humility, new birth, and a new way of life (Lev. 26:40–42; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 6:10; 9:25). In short, circumcision was a sign of justification. Paul says in Romans 4:11 that Abraham “received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised.” God's own interpretation of circumcision is that it was much more than just a physical sign for national Israel.

Remarkably, though, this deeply spiritual sign was given to Ishmael as well as Isaac, even though only Isaac was the continuation of the promised

CALVARY HOME FOR CHILDREN

Missionary of the Week

Calvary Home —FOR CHILDREN—

1. Administration Office and Counseling Center
2. Our growing cul-de-sac of foster homes
3. Calvary Home's rental properties
4. Our foster home cottages
5. The covered pavilion
6. The Solar Panel Field
7. The Vocational Arts Center (AKA "The Barn")



The mission of Calvary Home for Children is to provide help, hope, and home to abused and neglected children in Upstate South Carolina. Our goal is to build an exceptional community of nurturing foster homes for displaced children in the Upstate. We strive for every child to be nurtured in a welcoming, reliable, and Christ-centered home and be united with their family as a more physically, emotionally, relationally, and academically stable individual. ♦



Emotional and trauma counseling to help children grieve and heal from their past abuse



Personalized life-skills classes and education-focus support to prepare students for the competitive workforce



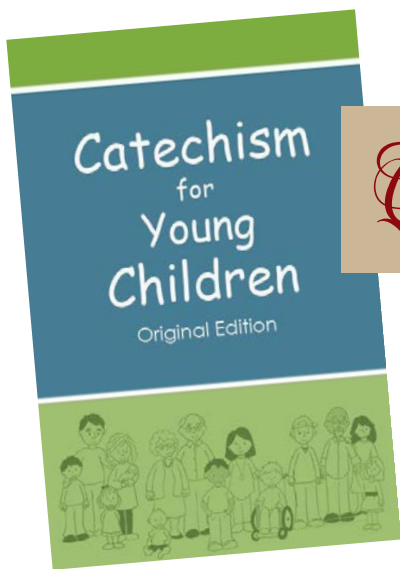
Wrap-around support services for foster families to ensure their success in parenting and long term commitment to the children



Hope of Christ through spiritual discipleship and growth

Visit their website for more information and to see how you can partner with them in ministry to children and families. ♦

<https://www.calvaryhome.org>



Question 121:

What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

Answer:

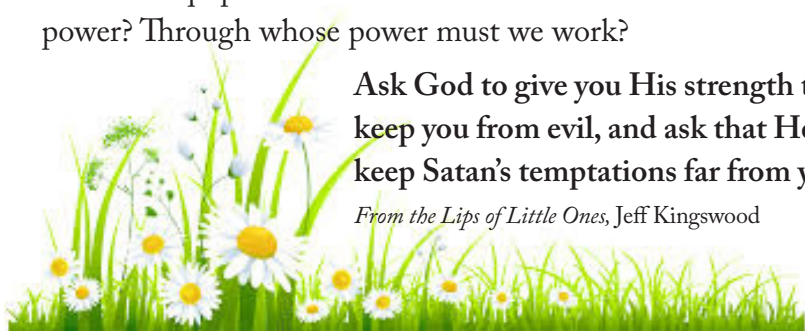
That God would keep us from sin.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21

These verses are sometimes used as the benediction at the end of the service of worship. The writer of Hebrews prays that God would keep us from sin, and that we would be able to do what is right. We cannot simply not sin; we must do what is right! Who is able to equip us for that work? Can we do the work in our own power? Through whose power must we work?

Ask God to give you His strength to keep you from evil, and ask that He may keep Satan's temptations far from you. ♦

From the Lips of Little Ones, Jeff Kingswood





at the corner of

River & Rhett

A Note from our Church Treasurer, Ron Babington:

2024 was a record year for overall giving, with \$2.8m of total contributions coming in across the General Fund (\$1.81m), the *A Time To Build* campaign (\$880k), and designated giving towards diaconal needs and missionary partnerships (\$110k).

Despite beginning the year with a \$1.95m budget, actual total operating expenses were \$1,817,358 against \$1,807,435 in giving, resulting in a shortfall of \$9,923 for 2024. These expenses are expected to increase by 7% to \$1.95m for 2025, so we ask that you prioritize giving towards the general budget ahead of other offerings or pledge fulfillments. We're pleased to note that at \$121k, general giving in January was up \$30k from last January.

Thanks to your participation and the Lord's kindness and blessing, Second Church continues to see growth in giving, involvement, and interest in the faithful ordinary means of grace ministry happening here week in and week out. Thank you. ♦

march birthdays



Have a
great
day!

9 Afton Babington

10 Steve Burch, Diana Carey, Leslie Martin,
Jennifer Youngblood

11 Henry Harrison

14 Mike Chivers, Susan Harmon, Tammy Looper,
Remington Siemen

15 Carol Larson, Judy McGoldrick, Mark Smoker

NEW MEMBER RECEPTION AND LUNCHEON

The church family and visitors are cordially invited to a luncheon honoring our new members. (New members will be introduced to the congregation at the 11:00 A.M. Worship Service.)

DATE: Sunday, April 6, 2025

TIME: Following the 11:00 A.M. Worship Service

PLACE: Gymnasium

FOOD: Meat and drinks will be provided. Church members are asked to bring generous portions of sides and desserts.

This Week

MORNING SERMON

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

THE KINGDOMS OF EARTH

Daniel 2:31–45

EVENING SERMON

Rev. Andrew Young

THE GOSPEL IN ACTION

Philemon 1–25

Sunday, March 9

- 8:30 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 9:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 10:00 A.M. Sunday School
- 10:00 A.M. Membership Class (*Room C-209*)
- 11:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP
- 7:30 P.M. Worship & Music Committee (*Conference Room*)

Monday, March 10

- 6:30 A.M. Men's Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 6:30 P.M. Session Meeting (*Conference Room*)

Tuesday, March 11

- 10:00 A.M. WIC Circle 3 (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 1:30 P.M. WIC Circle 5 (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 7:00 P.M. WIC Circle 2 (*T. Looper Home*)
- 7:00 P.M. WIC Circle 4 (*L. Martin Home*)
- 7:00 P.M. WIC Circle 6 (*T. King Home*)

Wednesday, March 12

- 5:30 P.M. Missions Committee (*Conference Room*)
- 5:30 P.M. FAMILY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SUPPER (*Gym*)
- 6:15 P.M. Hope Choir (K4–K5); Covenant Choir (Grades 1–6); Youth Choir (Grades 7–12)
- 6:45 P.M. Missions Moment (*Gym*)
- 6:45 P.M. WIC Circle 1 (*Conference Room*)
- 7:00 P.M. CAT Kids (Ages 3–Grade 4); Covenant Kids (Grades 5–8)
- 7:00 P.M. Jr. & Sr. High Bible Studies
- 7:00 P.M. Adult Prayer Meeting & Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 7:30 P.M. Chancel Choir

Friday, March 14

- 9:15 A.M. Raising Up Mothers (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 12:00 P.M. Men's Luncheon and Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 1:30 P.M. Mission to Main
- 6:00 P.M. Friday Night Alive (*Phillips Home*)

Saturday, March 15

- 8:00 A.M. Masculine Mandate (*Gym*)

Upcoming Events

spcgreenville.org/calendar

March 7-8	WIC Ladies Conference
March 9	Daylight Saving Time Begins
March 10	Session Meeting
March 14	Friday Night Alive
March 15	Masculine Mandate
March 16	Communion in the Morning Services
April 6	New Member Luncheon
April 13	Baptism Sunday
April 20	Easter Sunday

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line. The spiritual sign was not just for those who already embraced the spiritual reality. It was to be administered to Abraham and his sons. Circumcision was not a simple equation. It didn't automatically mean the recipient of the sign was in possession of the thing signified. Circumcision, like baptism, also pointed to belonging, discipleship, covenant obligations, and allowed for future faith that would take hold of the realities symbolized. Just as there were some in Paul's day who were circumcised but not really circumcised (Rom. 2:25–29), some children of Abraham who were not truly children of Abraham (Rom. 9:6–8), so in our day there are some who are baptized who are not truly baptized. Children should be marked as belonging to the covenant, but unless they exercise saving faith, they will not grab hold of the covenant blessings.

Children today are baptized based on this same covenant with Abraham. Paul makes clear in Galatians 3 what Peter strongly suggests in Acts 2, namely that the Abrahamic covenant has not been annulled. It is still operational. In fact, we see the basic promise of the Abrahamic covenant running throughout the whole Bible, right up to the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21.

Because sons were part of the Abrahamic covenant in the Old Testament and were circumcised, we see no reason why children should be excluded in the New Testament sign of baptism. Admittedly, there is no text that

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Announcements

Time Change!

Remember to change your clocks
AHEAD one hour before you go to bed
on Saturday, March 8.



Friday Night Alive

All singles are invited to the Phillips Home for a meal, fellowship, and teaching time on Friday, March 14, beginning at 6:00 P.M. Please contact Sharon Phillips if you need a ride or have questions.

Men's Meeting, Saturday, March 15

All men (high school age and above) are invited to this important time of teaching with Pastor Richard Phillips. Enjoy breakfast together at 8:00 A.M. in the Gym followed by a lesson from Pastor Phillips' book, *The Masculine Mandate*. Books can be purchased in the church bookstore. There is no need to register and food will be provided.

Youth Summer Conferences

Please ask the Lord to bless these upcoming important youth events:

Sr. High @ Pawleys Island **June 16–21**

Jr. High @ Ridge Haven **July 21–25**

Sign up on the SPC website: spcgreenville.org/signup

Everyday Evangelism Interest Meeting

On Tuesday, March 25, at 6:00 P.M., meet in the Conference Room to hear about an upcoming course on how to effectively share your faith.

says “Hear ye, hear ye, circumcision replaces baptism.” But we know from Colossians 2:11–12 that baptism and circumcision carried the same spiritual import. The transition from one to the other was probably organic. As the Jews practiced proselyte baptism, that sign came to be seen as marking inclusion in the covenant people. For awhile circumcision existed along baptism, but as the early church became more Gentile, many of Jewish rites were rendered unnecessary, and sometimes even detrimental to the faith. Thus, baptism eclipsed circumcision as the sign of renewal, rebirth, and covenant membership.

Although not conclusive all by themselves, there are several other arguments that corroborate a paedobaptist reading of the New Testament.

ONE, the burden of proof rests on those who would deny children a sign they had received for thousands of years. If children were suddenly outside the covenant, and were disallowed from receiving any “sacramental” sign, surely such a massive change, and the controversy that would have ensued, would be recorded in the New Testament. Moreover, it would be strange for children to be excluded from the covenant, when everything else moves in the direction of more inclusion from the Old Covenant to the New.

TWO, the existence of household baptisms is evidence that God still deals with households as a unit and welcomes whole families into the church to come under the Lordship of Christ together (Acts 16:13–15; 32–34; 1 Cor. 1:16; cf. Joshua 24:15).

THREE, children are told to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1). Children in the church are not treated as little pagans to be evangelized, but members of the covenant who owe their allegiance to Christ.

FOUR, within two centuries of the Apostles we have clear evidence that the church was practicing infant baptism. If this had been a change to long-standing tradition, we would have some record of the church arguing over this new practice. It wasn’t until the sixteenth century that Christians began to question the legitimacy of infant baptism.

So we come to administer the sacrament of baptism to this child today with the weight of church history to encourage us and the example of redemptive history to confirm our practice. We baptize in obedience to Christ’s command. The sacrament we are about to administer is a sign of

inclusion in the covenant community as circumcision was, and the water we are about to sprinkle is a sign of cleansing from sin as the sprinkled blood of bulls and goats in the Old Testament was. We pray that this little one will take advantage of all his covenant privileges, acknowledge his Lord all the days of his life, and by faith make these promises his own. ♦

Recommended Reading:

John Murray, *Christian Baptism*

The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism, edited by Gregg Strawbridge.

Baptism: Three Views, edited by David F. Wright, with contributions from Sinclair Ferguson (infant baptism), Bruce Ware (believers only baptism), Anthony Lane (dual practice)

Daniel R. Hyde, *Jesus Loves the Little Children: Why We Baptize Children*

Bryan Chapell, *Why Do We Baptize Infants*

Kevin DeYoung is senior pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina. He is an author, speaker, and seminary professor. He and his wife Trisha are the parents of nine children.



2025 **EASTER WEEK** Services

SUNDAY April 13 Palm Sunday / Evening Choral Presentation, 6:00 P.M.

WEDNESDAY April 16 No Wednesday Night Activities

THURSDAY April 17 Maundy Thursday Service, 7:00 P.M. (Sanctuary)

FRIDAY April 18 Good Friday Luncheon, 11:45 A.M. (Gym)
Good Friday Service, 12:30 P.M. (Sanctuary)

SUNDAY April 20 Sunrise Service, 7:00 A.M. (Mountain View Baptist Church)
Mountain View Baptist Church, 111 Cagle Street, Greenville
Breakfast, 8:00 A.M. (Second Presbyterian Church Gym)
Sunday School, 9:00 A.M. (Second Presbyterian Church)
One Worship Service, 10:00 A.M. (Second Presbyterian Church)
Sunday Evening Service, 6:00 P.M. (Second Presbyterian Church)

