

Baptize Lakeland: A Citywide Invitation to Faith and New Life Public Baptism Event

A citywide baptism event where lives are changed, faith is renewed, and hearts are warmed — with heated pools this December in Lakeland.

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-- On Saturday, December 13, 2025, at 2:30 PM, hundreds of people from across the greater Lakeland community are expected to gather for [Baptize Lakeland](#), a citywide [baptism](#) event hosted by [City Central Church](#) at

310 Frank Lloyd Wright Way. This powerful gathering is more than just an event — it's an invitation to begin anew, a public celebration of changed lives, and a visible declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.

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Pastor Jay Dennis

The service will be led by Senior Pastor Jay Dennis and the pastoral team at City Central Church, including Associate Pastor Lonnie Lawson. All are invited to attend — whether to be baptized, support friends and family, or simply witness the power of faith transforming lives in real time. Because this event is being held in December, the baptism pools will be heated.

A Step of Faith, Not Just a Ritual

“Baptism is not about religion or joining a church,” said Pastor Jay Dennis. “It's about obedience. It's about saying to the world, 'I've decided to follow Jesus, and I'm not turning back.' Baptize Lakeland is about that moment — when faith becomes public, personal, and powerful.” Baptism represents the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's a picture of leaving behind an old life and rising to walk in a new one. For many, this moment marks a turning point — one that solidifies their decision to live for Christ.

“Jesus Himself was baptized,” Pastor Jay continued. “He told us in Matthew 28 to go and baptize



Baptize Lakeland

others in His name. Baptism doesn't make you a Christian, but it declares that you are one. It's your wedding ring of faith — your public confession of love and loyalty to Jesus Christ."

For Anyone Ready to Say 'Yes' to Jesus Baptize Lakeland is open to everyone — children, teens, and adults — who have made a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ. The event welcomes participants from all backgrounds, churches, or even those who are just beginning to explore faith.

"There's something profoundly moving about seeing a father and son baptized together, or watching someone who's carried guilt for years find peace as they come up out of that water," said Pastor Lawson. "We believe God is

already stirring hearts across Lakeland — people who have been waiting for the right moment to take that next step. This is that moment."

Anyone interested in being baptized can register in advance at www.BaptizeLakeland.org. Same-day registration will also be available. City Central Church will provide everything needed — towels, changing rooms, and a caring team of volunteers ready to walk participants through each step of the process.

The Biblical Call to Baptism

Pastor Jay points to examples in Scripture where new believers were baptized immediately after putting their faith in Christ.

"In Acts 8, the Ethiopian official heard the Gospel and said, 'Look, here's water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" Pastor Jay explained. "That's the kind of obedience God calls us to — immediate, joyful obedience. When God calls your name, don't delay."

He went on to say, "Baptism is a beautiful picture of what Jesus has done for us. Going under the water represents the death of your old life; coming up from the water symbolizes being raised to new life in Christ. It's not just symbolic — it's deeply personal and profoundly spiritual."

A Community United in Faith

Baptize Lakeland is more than an event hosted by one church — it's a moment for the entire community to come together. City Central Church is inviting individuals and churches throughout Polk County to participate and celebrate together.

"This is not about one congregation," Pastor Jay said. "This is about the Church — capital C —



coming together to glorify Jesus. We're praying for a day when hundreds will say 'yes' to Jesus and take that step of faith publicly."

City Central Church is providing opportunities for participants to invite family and friends to witness their baptism. The event will include worship, testimonies, and moments of prayer designed to help people experience the presence and love of God in a real way.

"Every person who gets baptized that day will represent a story of God's grace," Pastor Jay added. "Maybe it's someone who grew up in church but never took the step. Maybe it's someone who wandered far and found their way home. Whoever they are, we want them to know — God has not forgotten you, and He is still calling your name."

The Heart Behind the Event

Pastor Jay Dennis, who led First Baptist Church at the Mall for 21 years before founding City Central Church in 2022, has a deep passion for seeing lives transformed by Christ. After overcoming personal health challenges, he returned to ministry with renewed energy and vision. His heart for the city of Lakeland and his decades of preaching the Gospel have positioned him as a trusted voice in Central Florida.

"Baptize Lakeland is not about numbers," Pastor Jay emphasized. "It's about obedience. If one person decides to follow Jesus that day, it will have been worth it all. But I believe God is going to do something much bigger — something that will ripple through families, neighborhoods, and this entire city."

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