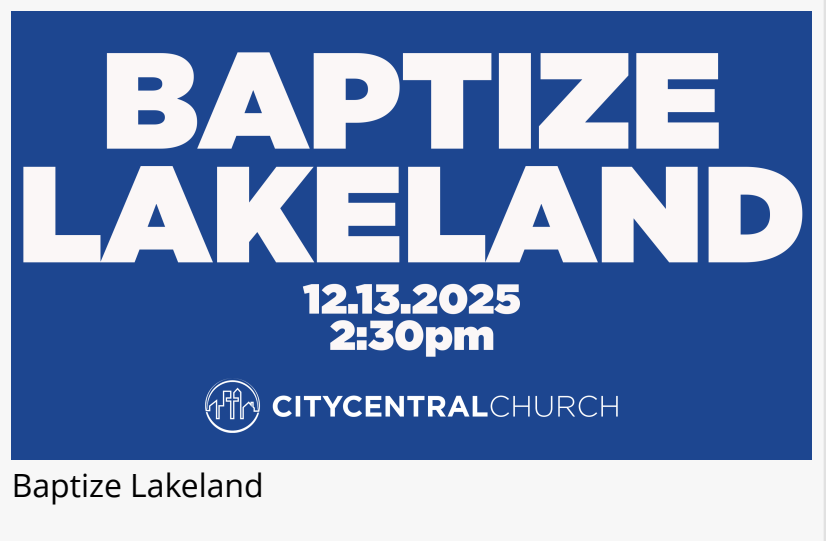


Countdown Begins: Lakeland Prepares for Massive 'Baptize Lakeland' Event on December 13

With just ten days remaining, City Central Church finalizes preparations—including fully heated pools—for a historic citywide declaration of faith to end 2025.

LAKELAND, FL, UNITED STATES, December 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the calendar turns to the final month of the year, a palpable sense of anticipation is building within the faith community of Lakeland. On Saturday, December 13, 2025, at 2:30 PM, residents from every corner of the greater Lakeland area will converge at 310 Frank Lloyd Wright Way for [Baptize Lakeland](#).



Hosted by [City Central Church](#), this is not merely a scheduled service; it is being positioned as a monumental "spiritual milestone" for the city. Organizers are preparing for hundreds of attendees who are ready to make a public declaration of their faith before the year ends.

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Pastor Jay Dennis

A Significant Date for a New Beginning The timing of the event—mid-December—is intentional and deeply symbolic. As 2025 draws to a close, many individuals are in a period of reflection, looking back on the trials and triumphs of the past year and looking forward to the

promise of 2026. Baptize Lakeland offers a unique opportunity to "finish strong" and start the new year with a clean slate.

Senior Pastor Jay Dennis believes the December 13th date serves as a crucial line in the sand for believers.

"We often wait for January 1st to make changes or set resolutions, but spiritual renewal doesn't need to wait for a calendar flip," said Pastor Dennis. "Baptize Lakeland is about seizing the moment now. It represents a definitive break from the past and a bold step into a future walked with Jesus. There is no better way to close the chapter on 2025 than by stepping into the waters of baptism."

Removing Barriers: Comfort in the Cold - Organizers are acutely aware of the logistical challenges of hosting an outdoor water event in December, even in Florida. To ensure that physical discomfort does not stand in the way of a spiritual decision, the church has announced a significant investment in attendee comfort: Every baptism pool utilized for the event will be fully heated.



City Central Church Lakeland

"We want the focus to be entirely on the spiritual significance of the moment, not on the temperature of the water," said Associate Pastor Lonnie Lawson, who is helping coordinate the logistics of the day. "Whether it's a crisp December afternoon or a warm Florida winter day, the water will be warm and inviting. We have removed every barrier so that when people feel that tug on their heart to make this decision, nothing stands in their way."

More Than a Ritual: The "Wedding Ring" of Faith The event aims to demystify the concept of baptism for the general public. In a cultural climate where religious rituals can sometimes feel abstract, City Central Church is clarifying exactly what this act represents.

Pastor Dennis frequently utilizes a powerful analogy to explain the ceremony: the wedding ring.

"Baptism is not about religion, and it certainly isn't about just joining a social club or a church roster," Dennis explained. "It is the wedding ring of the Christian life. Wearing a wedding ring doesn't make you married; the vow does. But the ring tells the world that you are taken. Similarly, baptism doesn't make you a Christian—faith does. But baptism is the public declaration to your friends, your family, and your city that you belong to Jesus. It is a moment of saying, 'I have decided to follow Him, and there is no turning back.'"

Theologically, the event highlights the believer's identification with the narrative of Christ. Going

under the water symbolizes the death and burial of the old self and old ways of living. Rising out of the water pictures the resurrection—walking in the newness of life. For many in the Lakeland community who have faced personal struggles, addiction, or loss in 2025, this symbolism offers a tangible hope.

A Community-Wide Invitation, while hosted by City Central Church, Baptize Lakeland is explicitly designed as a kingdom-focused, citywide event. The invitation extends beyond the congregation of City Central to anyone in the Lakeland area who has yet to take this step of obedience.

The pastoral team, led by Jay Dennis and Lonnie Lawson, emphasizes that this is a "come as you are" event.

For the Decided: Those who have already made a private commitment to Christ but have never gone public are urged to sign up.

For the Seekers: Those curious about the Christian faith are invited to witness the joy and transformation of their neighbors.

For the Supporters: Friends and families are encouraged to fill the grounds to cheer on those taking the plunge.

The Atmosphere of Celebration On December 13, the grounds at 310 Frank Lloyd Wright Way will be transformed into a center of celebration. The atmosphere is expected to be electric—a stark contrast to somber religious ceremonies. Attendees can expect music, the cheering of crowds, and the shared joy of a community witnessing lives being changed in real-time.

"We are expecting a powerful gathering," added Lawson. "There is something undeniable about seeing hundreds of people gather for a singular purpose. When you see someone rise out of that water with a smile on their face and tears in their eyes, you realize that faith is still very much alive in Lakeland."

How to Participate With the event date quickly approaching, City Central Church is asking interested participants to visit the official website for details on what to bring (towels, change of clothes) and to register their intent, though walk-ups will be welcomed warmly.

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