

# Pinelake Church baptizes over 250 people across five campuses

*By Tony Martin*  
*Associate Editor*

Pinelake Church baptized over 250 people Sept. 12 in a mass outdoor baptism through the church's campuses at the Barnett Reservoir, Madison, Oxford, Starkville, and Clinton.



Schmelzer

“This is an incredible opportunity for people to identify with Christ through the outward sign of baptism, in an outdoor body of water, Oxford campus pastor said Jody Schmelzer. “It’s something our staff and faith family at every Pinelake campus is very excited about because it is such a great picture of our vision, which is. ‘To See Mississippi Changed One Life Change Story at a Time.’”

The annual event, called Identify Baptism, is in its 15th year. “Most of the people awaiting baptism knew what Identify looked like from the previous years,” Schmelzer said. “There were some who’d never seen it before and they were incredibly encouraged by what they experienced.”

Schmelzer noted multiple baptism candidates and their families felt Identify Baptism was an “incredible” picture of God at work in the lives of so many people. “They were blown away by

the stories, the environment, and the spirit of celebration that was taking place amongst everyone that was there.”

At the Oxford campus, a team was responsible for getting candidates signed up, receiving their personal testimonies, giving instructions for the day, casting the vision, and praying over the candidates. Other detail work included setting up the audio/visual equipment and reserving a caterer for food after the baptism ceremony. Around 25 volunteers served in some capacity.

“I’d love for the community to see that this is an awesome opportunity to see the work God is doing in the lives of His people,” Schmelzer said. “He is still moving in powerful ways and changing lives for His glory.

“I also want people to see there is nobody who is out of God’s reach. Jesus came to heal those who are broken – that’s us – and there is nothing that God cannot do with a heart that is willing to give everything to Him.”

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*Jody Schmelzer, Pinelake Oxford campus pastor*

Pinelake members are beneficiaries of the encouragement Identify provides, Schmelzer pointed out. “It reminds our faith family that God is at work in incredible ways within the life of the church. This outdoor baptism encourages people who are seeking or asking questions to consider taking a step of faith like those who were bold enough to be baptized.”