

# Temple Church celebrates 47 outdoor baptisms this year

*By Lindsey Williams*

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Since August 2013, Temple Church, Hattiesburg, has held annual outdoor baptisms on the church property or at the local football stadium, where large tanks are filled with water.

“We recognize that many individuals have anxiety about getting in front of the entire congregation,” explained David Whitten, senior pastor of Temple Church, “but being baptized in front of a smaller group of people is something they are more willing to do.”

“We have also learned that individuals coming from another denomination or faith background feel more comfortable with the outdoor baptism service than one of our Sunday morning services. Having a baptism ‘day,’ if you will, also allows our church and staff to focus our efforts on following up with those who need to be baptized, as well as (focus on) preaching and teaching on the importance of following Christ in believer’s baptism.”



Austin Bahm (left), college pastor at Temple Church, Hattiesburg, baptizes a member during one of the church’s

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“We were blessed to see a lot of adults baptized this year,” Whitten said. “Typically, the older a person gets the less likely (statistically) they are to be baptized, so that was exciting to see.”

Whitten shared about a few individuals who stepped forward. “There was a 74-year-old lady who expressed her heart was not right when she was baptized 50 years earlier. God convicted her of it this year and she knew she needed to be obedient to follow through.”

“We had three married couples who all were baptized together as husband and wife.”

“One lady has received pushback from her family about following Jesus and being baptized. It is costing her relationships with family members, but she knows it’s what God is asking of her,” Whitten expressed.

“I know several people who were baptized because they were joining Temple from a different denomination who have experienced persecution from their family for doing so. This has been hard (and confusing) for them to go through, so it’s presenting a great opportunity to teach them and remind them of the suffering that Jesus endured for our salvation. Jesus warned us that if people hated and persecuted Him then they would also hate and persecute us.”

Through 47 people obeying Christ in believer’s baptism, and God’s faithfulness through Temple Church’s efforts for the Kingdom, Whitten has seen the Spirit opening doors in their community.

“We had people in the community stop and watch our outdoor baptism service. It’s also created a buzz as people continue to talk and post pictures and videos of those being baptized.”

As Mississippi Baptists have seen from church baptisms to great revivals, obedience to Christ causes a stir.