

Tennessee Church Sees 1,000 Baptisms in Less Than Four Months

The spark that ignites the flame isn't always all that bright at first.

That has certainly been true for Robby Gallaty, the senior pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, where 1,048 people have been baptized since Sunday, Dec. 20, following nearly a year of what Gallaty described as "silence and solitude" in his own life.

"Here's what happened," the pastor told *Faithwire* during a recent Zoom conversation, leaning into the camera after taking his glasses off. "I began sitting with the Lord for 10 months. Then, finally, Dec. 15, 2020, I'm on the porch, and I hear as clear as day these words in my head, after a season of silence and solitude: 'Spontaneous baptism.'"

"I thought, 'Spontaneous baptism?'" Gallaty said. "First of all, I had never done spontaneous baptism—I'd only been a Christian for 18 years at that time. I'd never seen spontaneous baptism. I'd heard of abuses of spontaneous baptism. But I was obedient."

The following Sunday, the preacher recalled, was the lowest attended service in his five-year tenure at Long Hollow. The country was, after all, still in the throes of a pandemic, and Tennessee was seeing a spike in COVID-19 infections at the time.

Gallaty said it felt as if everything was working against what he was confident God had so clearly instructed him to do.

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