

# BAPTISMS

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our hearts cry out, **“MORE LORD!”**

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By Lynn Green



**Believers' baptism is foundational to our movement, writes Lynn Green. Wouldn't it be amazing if in 2025 every single one of our baptistries is used right across our Union?**

**B**elievers' baptism has always been a bit of a no-brainer for me. After I had encountered the living God in my teens, I read in my Gideon New Testament that baptism was the way to demonstrate faith in Jesus Christ and my commitment to follow him. Jesus himself was baptised and so many different passages of Scripture showed that as people discovered who Jesus was they responded by being baptised.

*"Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Acts 2:41*

Following the example of Jesus, then, I too was baptised on 18 January 1981. I vividly remember my nervousness at sharing my testimony with the whole church! A more profound memory that has stayed with me over the years is the sparkling water folding over my face as I went beneath the water. The experience and imagery were so precious and powerful, particularly as our church had a traditional baptism under the floor where you entered one side, were baptised and left the pool a new creation in Christ by the steps on the other side.

Baptism has also served as an anchor point in my life and

discipleship when things have been challenging. After all, such a public and dramatic declaration of faith is hard to explain away, especially to yourself, when doubts creep in and there is the temptation to give up.

While baptism is fundamentally a personal response to Jesus, baptismal services are also an amazing corporate moment in the life of any church. The worship, the testimony, the promises, the drama of baptism itself, the prayer and laying on of hands, the welcoming into membership and sometimes the sharing of communion; all these things create the opportunity to rekindle faith and for the hearts and lives of others to be changed too. The Holy Spirit is very definitely on the move in all sorts of ways!

Believers' baptism is also foundational to our movement, of course. Our Declaration of Principle, which is the basis of our Union includes: 'That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who 'died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day.'

This is part of the DNA that we share as a movement of churches, Associations and Colleges. We are Baptist churches and believers' baptism is close to our hearts.

As I have travelled and met people across Baptists Together recently, I have been encouraged to hear so many reports from

our ministers, pioneers and chaplains of people finding faith and getting baptised. From the **79 per cent** of our churches that completed their annual return for 2024, we can celebrate **2845 baptisms**, up by more than 800 from 2023. God is at work and growing his Kingdom right here, right now!

Whatever your experience is at the moment, I hope you are inspired by all that we have been able to capture in this edition of the magazine. I say this because I recognise that, despite the overall figures, some of our churches will have had no baptisms for some time.

As a local minister I had seasons when there were no baptisms and it was certainly disheartening and prompted some prayerful heart searching. But whether you are in a fruitful season or a barren season at the moment, I hope your faith will be raised and your prayer deepened as you hear about what God is graciously doing across his church. In the end, our hope is we might see more and more people declaring they are followers of Jesus through the waters of baptism, and that God's Kingdom will grow.

So, as you read this magazine, I want to leave you with some questions to ponder...

- ▼ **When was the last time you had a baptism at your church?**
- ▼ **Are you praying for God's Holy Spirit to be touching and changing lives?**
- ▼ **Are you sharing Jesus with your friends and family, colleagues and neighbours?**

- ▼ Are you prepared?
- ▼ Have you planned a baptismal service?
- ▼ Is your baptistry baptism ready?
- ▼ Have you preached about believers' baptism recently?
- ▼ Have you offered opportunities to 'Explore Baptism'?
- ▼ If you are a minister, pioneer or chaplain, are you praying in your clusters and encouraging each other; celebrating what God is doing and building each other up in faith?

It is important we ask ourselves, and each other, these questions and do so without judgement.

Our shared purpose across Baptists Together is to be growing healthy churches... We can measure numbers of members and attendees and those who are engaging with our churches and communities, and these are all good and valuable things. But baptisms are much more closely matched to new believers - and surely this is significant.

If our hearts are committed to responding to Jesus' Great Commandment and Great Commission, we will be praying and living in ways that see people coming to faith in Jesus and becoming his followers.

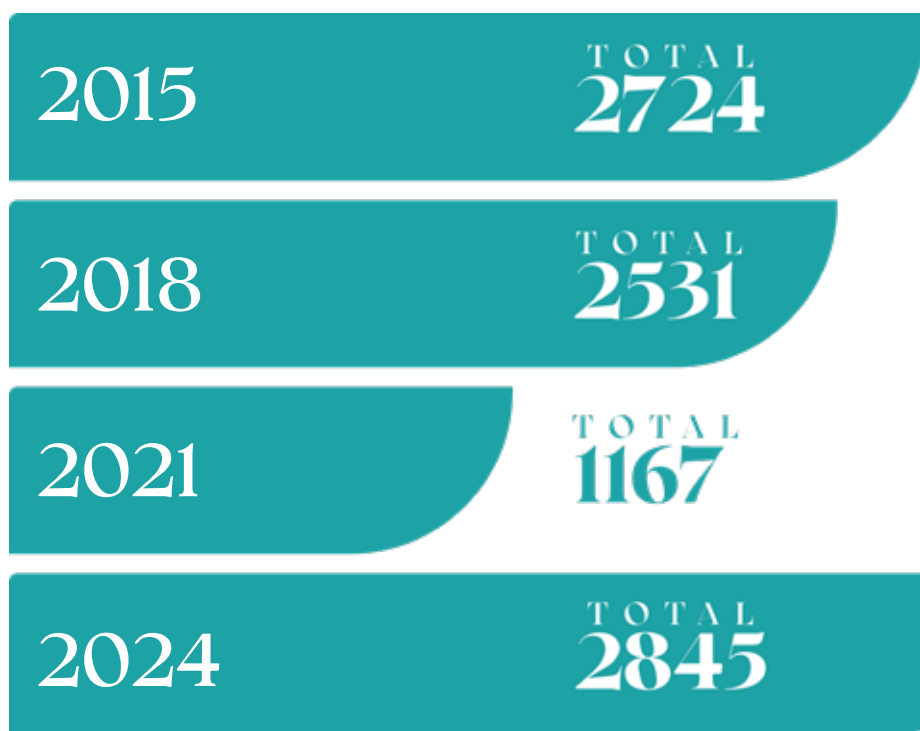
Wouldn't it be amazing if in 2025 every single one of our baptistries is used right across our Union?

Baptism is the beautiful and powerful outward sign of this inward work. It is a divine rendezvous with the Living God. It is a moment of empowering by the Holy Spirit. And so our hearts cry out, "More Lord!", for the glory of his name.



**Lynn Green is General Secretary of Baptists Together**

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Numbers of baptisms sourced from the churches that completed their annual return: 2015: 81%, 2018: 92%, 2021: 82%, 2024: 79%

Church attendance has risen by 50 per cent over the last six years, with 2 million more people attending church in England and Wales, according to a new survey commissioned by Bible Society  
<https://ow.ly/8REL50Vxxti>