

# On a leap of faith, we opened up our baptistry

Chenies Baptist Church hadn't conducted a baptism in almost a decade - but without a candidate in sight, decided to open its baptistry on Easter Sunday. Minister Jon Bishop explains more



**O**n Christmas Day 2023, we wanted to inspire and encourage our church family to be hopeful and have a vision for Kingdom growth. And so, on a slight whim and a definite leap of faith we said we'd be having baptisms on Easter Sunday 2024, and if anyone was interested to please come forward. We were also seeking to encourage people to share their faith in the hope that again we'd be able to share the love of Jesus with more people.

I had been at the church since the summer of 2022 and really wanted to encourage people who have faithfully followed Jesus. As I prepared for Christmas 2023 I was convicted that opening up the pool on Easter Sunday was the way forward. Our connections and outreach are small, but something deep down told me we could see God at work.



Throughout the early months of 2024 we kept reminding and offering people the chance to come and talk about baptism. We had a few conversations, but nothing led me to believe we would have anyone. Finally Palm Sunday came and we still didn't have any candidates.

I was naturally disappointed and started to question whether I had heard right from God. On the Wednesday I took one of our deacons, Andy, for a walk along the canal in Hemel Hempstead and we talked through our options. We could open it but not fill it, and just repeat the invitation for a later date. Maybe we could partly fill it, just in case someone comes forward on the day, or not do anything and just accept this time round it wasn't to be.

The more we talked, the more strongly I felt it was still right to go ahead and plan to fill the baptistry in the early hours of Easter Sunday. We can't fill it which makes the process quicker, although I was not looking forward to getting up at 5am (which was actually an hour earlier due to the clock change that day). But at the end of the walk that was the decision.

At the end of our Good Friday service, one gentleman, Ray, who has been on the edge of church for some time, but well known to us, was sat in front of the now open, but not yet filled pool.



For many years he had been aware of Jesus in his life, sending him help through the kindness of strangers. Although he had made a commitment as a youngster, this Good Friday he was convicted that he needed to get baptised.

And what a joy it was to baptise him on Easter Sunday morning and share in his desire to follow Jesus with his life in new ways.

A year on, it has been a joy to see Ray grow in faith and walk with Jesus more deeply. Reflecting on the whole process, it was exciting and a roller coaster because of the lack of candidates until Good Friday, but as a church it has inspired us to be hopeful and to believe God is at work.

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