



# Captivated

The people of **River Oak Church** are living every day captivated by Jesus and the work He is doing there.

What is the cause for this captivated living? Could it be the new building that was just completed in February? Or what about the new 1,200-seat auditorium? Or maybe it's the inviting lobby and coffee bar? Although all are improvements made possible only through the work of God, none are the cause of the captivation.

The church was captivated by the sight of new believers following the Lord in baptism! On the first Sunday in the new worship center, the church family watched 25 being baptized. Because of the pandemic, baptisms had to be done a little differently—staggered over several days with just the family present, but recorded to show the congregation that Sunday.

“We had to be strategic,” said executive pastor Dave Velloney. Using a galvanized steel water trough and adding water purifying tablets between each use, baptisms were conducted in several locations: inside the new worship center, in the previous worship center, and even outside on the sidewalk. “It didn't matter *where* we were doing it, just that it was done.

It worked very well, and we plan to continue to use [this method],” he added. In fact, if you search the new structure, one thing you will not find is a traditional baptistry. Funds that would have been used for a baptistry were directed elsewhere, and the church will continue to use the trough. Why not? It works!

As the leadership of River Oak seeks God's will for the best use of this new building (which essentially doubled the existing footprint), they do so with joyful anticipation. Senior Pastor Heath Burris said, “I love that even when we are all gone if the Lord chooses to tarry, it will always be a place where the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be proclaimed. That's pretty cool. I also love how it frees us up to use the gym as a gym—great opportunities to serve our community in a fresh and unique way.”

River Oak Church is looking past a pandemic and into a future of reaching more and more people for Jesus Christ. Now, *that's* captivating! ■

*Photos courtesy of Sarah Vanderford Photography*

#### RESOURCE:

Want to view the baptism video? You can see it on YouTube at:



[tinyurl.com/roc-baptisms](https://tinyurl.com/roc-baptisms)