

Cedar Hill church baptizes 31 students on one Sunday

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When Community Missionary Baptist Church issued an open invitation for high school and college students to be baptized, Senior Pastor Oscar Epps and other leaders at the church's Cedar Hill campus didn't know what to expect.



Senior Pastor Oscar Epps (right) and NextGen Pastor Jeremiah Austin baptize 15-year-old Alayna Hadnot and 30 other students. (Courtesy Photo)

Epps, the church's founding pastor, and Jeremiah Austin, the congregation's NextGen pastor, baptized 31 students at the same Sunday worship service.

"It's the first time we've ever done anything like this," Austin said.

The church began by letting its high school and college students know all who had committed their lives to Christ could be baptized at an upcoming worship service.

But first, they needed to complete an online baptism class and pass a test to demonstrate they understood what baptism symbolizes.

"It was a great thing to see how our students responded," Austin said.

Most students completed the class and took the exam within a week after it was announced, he noted.

“Most of the test was multiple choice, but there was one question—‘Why do you want to be baptized?’—where they had to write a paragraph,” Austin explained.

Doubly significant date

The church scheduled the baptism for a particular Sunday for two reasons, he noted.

“It was the last Sunday before the college students went off to school,” Austin said. “It also was the Sunday we already were scheduled to observe the Lord’s Supper. So, after being baptized, the students could ‘seal the deal’ by taking communion.”

Deacons and deaconesses helped the students prepare for their baptism. On that high-attendance Sunday, more than 900 people attended worship at the church’s Cedar Hill campus, in addition to those who worshipped at its DeSoto location.

“We had reserved seating for the students, along with their family and friends,” Austin said.

The atmosphere in the worship service was “dynamic,” he noted.

“The congregation already has said they hope we do this as an annual thing,” Austin said. “We didn’t know how many we would see baptized, but God was faithful to us.”