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Kentucky Baptists Report More Than 11,000 Baptisms at 189th Annual Meeting

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Together for the Mission."

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Kentucky Baptist churches baptized more than 11,000 people over the past year, Executive Director-Treasurer Todd Gray told the convention's 189th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, 10 November 2026, at First Baptist Church of Richmond. The meeting drew 751 messengers and 400 guests under the theme "Together for the Mission." Since 1980, Kentucky Baptist churches have baptized 659,831 people.

Now picture the man who brought that number to the stage. Todd Gray has knocked on doors in 78 of Kentucky's 120 counties, and he told the messengers that almost every knock ends the same way - in a conversation with someone who does not know Jesus yet. That is the whole story behind the 11,000: not a program, not a campaign, but pastors and ordinary church members walking up front doors and talking to their neighbours.

"We cannot control what they do with the Gospel, but we can control what we do in preaching and sharing the Gospel," Gray said. It was the plainest sentence of his report, and the one that explains everything else that happened in Richmond.

Kentucky Baptists 11,000 Baptisms: Hillvue Heights Leads With 864

One church carried more of the harvest than any other. Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green led the state with 864 baptisms, Gray reported. It was followed by New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville with 192, GracePointe in Louisville with 152, and the host church, First Baptist Richmond, with 88.

Hillvue Heights has been baptizing people at this pace for a long time. Its pastor, Steve Ayers, celebrated the church's 15,000th baptism during his 35 years of ministry in May 2026 - a milestone Gray pointed to as proof of what he called Kentucky Baptists' evangelistic DNA. "Jesus didn't tell them to come to us, but He did tell us to go to them," Gray said.

The baptisms are part of a wider wave of faith breaking out across the state. In a Kentucky jail, 99 inmates were baptized in 2026 as revival spread behind bars, as we reported in 99 Inmates Baptized in Kentucky Jail as Jailhouse Revival Spreads Across America. The same hunger is showing up in sanctuaries and in jail cells alike.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

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