

Rice Patch Christian Church Blessed With a Unique Service in 2020

Rice Patch Christian Church in Islandton, SC is being blessed with spiritual uplifting. The church has begun a series of "drive-in" services on the front parking lot situated on Highway 63 between Walterboro, SC and Hampton, SC. The Lord has blessed us with outstanding attendance from a group of people who treasure their worship and fellowship each week at Rice Patch. We had a wonderful drive-in service at Rice Patch at 10:00 AM on Easter Sunday. We had more than 20 cars parked in the parking lot and several people across the two streets bordering the building in vehicles and one family at their home. On a previous Sunday, we even had cars stop during the service from Highway 63 and park with us for the duration of the service. The audio visual team at Rice Patch constructed a network of four powerful speakers and a microphone on the front steps of the building. The Lord was with us and blessing us!

At the end of the Easter service, I asked aloud for any who would request baptism to stand. Three youngsters, across the highway with their families, stood up and raised their hands asking for baptism. I had the help of the microphone and speakers on the front steps of the church so I took their confessions and they shouted a resounding "Yes" individually to the question of their belief that Jesus Christ is their personal Savior. Their families, including at least one grandparent, was present in the yard. The grandfather of these spiritually aware youngsters was baptized just a few weeks earlier.

After this happened, I was wondering how we could have a baptismal service with the group and not violate the personal separation rules. The indoor baptistry would not allow within the rules for an audience of church members, friends, and family of those requesting baptism. Then a church officer came up to me and said that we could borrow a tank and place it on the front parking lot. Several church men brought the tank and placed it on the parking lot the next Sunday at 10:00 AM full of crystal clear water.

At the end of the worship service, each of these fine youngsters were be baptized by their baptized believer fathers and grandfather in the tank surrounded by a group of people in their vehicles observing. Each young person restated their confession of Jesus as their Savior individually and I announced to the group that each "was baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of their sins".

Coming up from the water each of the new Christians received a cacophony of enthusiastic vehicle horns in support of their obedience. All was done obeying the instructions of our governor about physical separation. Only the family were touching the person being baptized, so there is no chance of any outside communication of the virus. I am thankful for the quick thinking of this church officer, Ralph Polk, because I would have not known what to do to get a request for baptism and not be able to provide the response. The Lord is definitely looking over us and taking care of us.

Many of the friends of the youngsters came and parked in the parking lot with Rice Patch Christian Church attendees so they could view this exciting baptismal service. Our church historian, Tammy Polk, posted movies of each baptism on the Rice Patch Christian Church Facebook page for all to see.

I pray that other churches will confront similar issues and have equally rewarding means of providing the Lord's care and keeping. Our members are determined that when the virus is brought under control, we will have at least one service per year outside as a drive-in service to commemorate the way the Lord has blessed us during this tragedy in the life of many people.

Rev. Larry D. Smith, Pastor
Rice Patch Christian Church
Islandton, SC