Baptism is an important step in following Jesus. Renovation Church recently baptized Chris and Jamie Rackl. Here are their stories of what brought them to the waters of baptism.

Chris's Story: I was raised in the church, and I was baptized as a baby. Spiritually, I had every advantage one could ask for. My father is a great Christian man who exemplifies everything that as spiritual leaders of the family God has called men to be. My parents, after almost 43 years, are still happily married.

Yet, my rebellious nature got in the way. I didn’t realize how lucky and privileged I was to have such incredible role models to show me the way to surrender myself and serve God. I didn’t realize how rare it was to have a father at home who cared about me, let alone took time every morning to pray for the physical and spiritual well-being of his family.

And because I took these things for granted, when the time came to leave home and strike out on my own, my life reflected the Prodigal Son more than the righteous roots I had grown from.

I was someone who couldn’t be told anything; someone who needed to make my own mistakes, no matter how many times I was warned along the way. I pitted my pious upbringing against all of the pleasures the world had to offer. My view of Christ had been tainted by the actions and words of judgmental Christians. My girlfriend at the time and I had talked about starting to go to church. I resisted because I simply wasn’t interested in leaving church feeling worse than I did when I went in.

One day, she asked me to listen to a sermon she found online. The pastor preached love, forgiveness, and acceptance. He reminded his congregation that Jesus hung out with sinners and that healthy people don’t need a doctor. He ended by saying that everyone was welcome regardless of their circumstance.

That sermon changed my life. We started attending that church, and months later when we moved to Buffalo, I was petrified that our old church was the only one of its kind. God is great, because the first church we visited here featured a sermon remarkably similar to the one that had brought me back.

That woman became my wife, and that new church is this church [Renovation Church]. I want to be baptized today because...I want to proclaim to my dad, who never stopped praying for my soul, and to everyone else, that this prodigal son has come home.
**Jamie's Story:** It was the summer between sixth and seventh grade when I found myself in the chapel of Path of Life summer camp where I was surrounded by my five closest girlfriends. It was in that chapel I bowed my head, closed my eyes, asked God to forgive me and Jesus to live in my heart. I wish I could tell you that my life changed and I was on fire for Jesus. I am ashamed to say that at that moment an undercover Christian was born. The pastor asked for those who had prayed for salvation to raise their hands; my hand remained in my lap—paralyzed. I didn’t want anyone to know what I had just done. I mean, what would people think?

That question would guide (or should I say misguide) my life for the next 20 years. I never went to church, but you could find me at the local bar every Saturday night, faithfully. I obviously did not grow up “in the church” and didn’t find myself in the company of many people who ever spoke of God.

About 15 years later, on a crisp October evening, I found myself sitting on my back porch, bundled in a blanket, getting to know this new guy I met while volunteering. I liked him—a lot. While we were talking with each other, he said something that changed my life. In casual conversation he spoke of God—fondly.

His confidence challenged me. It would be another few years before I would be brave enough to fly my “I love Jesus” flag. By God’s good grace, I did wander into a church and I picked up where I left off 22 years ago. I am learning that it’s not about admitting that I believe in God; it’s about living like I trust in God.

Today, I am raising my hand to say that I have stepped over that line of faith. I know following God can be challenging and even down right hard so I may need help, support, and grace from my “church” family. And that “new guy” I liked so much, is now my husband.

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**The Mission of Kingdom Come is specifically focused on helping to ensure that every man, woman and child has repeated opportunities to hear, see and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ locally, regionally, nationally and globally where The Chapel has influence.**

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**JUNE 14, 2013**

**THE MARRIED LIFE CAFE**

“Get Framed! God’s plan to protect and prosper your marriage” is the theme of a special evening featuring conversation, exciting giveaways and practical tools for an amazing marriage. Couples only—no childcare provided. For details and tickets visit thechapel.com/marriageevent.

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**AUGUST 4-7, 2013**

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Join thousands of Christians at Darien Lake for incredible worship music, inspiring seminars and kids ministry. A great place to bring family, friends and coworkers who need to meet Jesus. Information on tickets and volunteering can be found at kingdombound.org.