I went to Thomas Road Baptist Church (TRBC) located on 100 Mountain View Road, Lynchburg, Virginia. The pastor's name was Jonathan Falwell. This is a baptist church. I went this morning on October 25 at the 11 AM service with my mom.

The building was massive. It was all white and brick. It had a very Roman architecture look to it, including four large pillars and a pediment at the main entrance of the church. There were large windows on either side of the entrances. This is a huge sanctuary, it seats 6,000 people, I think. When you walk in, it's a long wide hallway with men in suits greeting everyone and giving them the bulletin for the service. Everyone is in little groups just talking to each other. The doors on the right go into the sanctuary. There are different rooms in this gigantic building that are all for different things. We only had the service in the sanctuary though. A little past the doors on the right, they had chairs and tables and couches for people to relax in. There was a little coffee shop called Lion and the Lamb. They had coffee and some sandwiches and pastries. There were so many people everywhere, it was overwhelming. We went into the sanctuary and found somewhere to sit. They had some music playing but once everyone came inside, they had a choir and some other people on stage lead singing. The words to all the songs were on the giant screens at the front of the church. Everyone stood up and sang songs. It was two levels and there were stairs on each side of the stage to lead up to the balcony which is where the tech crew was. They controlled the lights and the mic and the screens. Because of the insane amount of people, I can't give an approximate body count. It was pretty full though. There were people from all different kinds of communities and ethnic backgrounds and social classes. TRBC even offers Korean and Spanish church services. There were so many people we didn’t really talk to anyone. Although, you could see people mingling everywhere and it was a very comfortable environment, but as someone who felt out of place, I was uncomfortable. I was comfortable just because of the amount of people, it was almost paralyzing. No one offered to sit with us. We sort of just sat in the back and watched.

The opening of the service felt a little over dramatic due to all the loud singing and standing and clapping. I think some people were really emotional during the service and were diligent in taking notes and paying attention but I think that there were also many younger kids who were there because of their parents. These were the kids that just played on their phones the whole time. The people who paid attention occasionally you would hear them say “amen” or be nodding whenever Pastor Jonathan would say something that resonated with them. I wouldn't say the service was too structured but it wasn't a “do whatever you want” environment either. At the end of the service we sang another song and people would casually leave. The beginning and the
end was very similar, everyone just talking and singing. I wouldn’t consider things that happened to be rituals but we did pray a few times, this is to communicate with God; thank him for everything and ask for help. •

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