



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Nickelsville

11606 Nickelsville Highway, Nickelsville VA 24271

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“The Alien Invasion of Planet Earth”

Rev. 19:11ff

In the summer of 1996 the sci-fi action thriller movie *Independence Day* was released. In that production, that just happened to be released on July 2nd, planet earth was invaded by an extraterrestrial race of unknown origin when a huge mothership arrived and began launching attacks on major cities around the world. As such, people groups from all corners of the earth came together to launch successful counter-offensives on July 4th as they discovered the weak spot in the alien’s defenses. And, whether you like sci-fi flicks or not one thought is certain - the film was highly successful in bringing moviegoers from around the world together at the screen as it raked in \$817.4 million worldwide.

Before we go any further let’s consider some other dates. The first in 1987, when Ronald Reagan addressed the United Nations General Assembly saying, “I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat.” The second was in 2014 when Bill Clinton appeared on “*Jimmy Kimmel Live!*” saying that an invasion from outer space might be “the only way to unite us in this incredibly divided world of ours,” He went on to say, “how all the differences among people on Earth would seem small if we felt threatened by a space invader... . Everybody gets together ... and is nice ... *to one another.*” (italics mine).

The current administration is banking on the belief that any one of the world-wide issues we’re facing will do the trick with global threats that vary from climate change, cyberwarfare, the economy, or the new Covid Delta Variant. But everything we see suggests something very different - yes, the course of the Covid-19 pandemic to date clearly reveals such hopes are misplaced. And, rather than uniting the world, the coronavirus seems to have renationalized human life and further divided us. How so? While most of humanity has been cooped up inside their national borders, with only a handful free to travel - vaccination efforts also have become an international and divisive matter, with the people’s access to the vaccine being heavily dependent on where they are located geographically.

What does all of this spell? T.R.O.U.B.L.E. ... T.R.O.U.B.L.E ... and more T.R.O.U.B.L.E. - Trouble within the ranks, trouble outside the ranks, trouble on every turn! Yes, we are surrounded by trouble and division everywhere we turn, are we not? And the amazing thing about it is the fact that we cannot depend on the Martians to showing up to create unity within the ranks. We would do well to remember that the 4th of July has passed and Will Smith didn’t show up to deliver us with his ragtag band from Area 51. Yes, science fiction is merely that and nothing more. Reality is hard to admit, is it not?

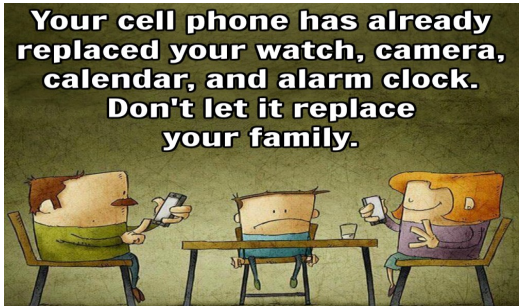
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A "BIG HELLO" To To all Our Church Family

From First Baptist Church

UPCOMING ITEMS OF INTEREST AND OPPORTUNITY

- ◆ Deacons Meet- 1st Tuesday every other month unless otherwise noted
- ◆ Baptist Women Meet- 1st Tuesday of each month 6:30 PM
- ◆ GA’S meet- 1st. & 3rd. Tuesday of the month. FLC 3:30-5:00 PM during school



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“The Alien Invasion”

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But what is reality? Well, it does seem that Planet Earth is ripe for an invasion but that invasion will not be headed up by aliens from outer space but by the God / Man whose name is Jesus Christ. And believe it or not the Mothership has already arrived but will soon depart for a distant destination. Yes, Jesus is coming for a second visit and if you think things are bad now, just remember: we’ve not seen anything yet. All we’ve witnessed are previews of the coming attraction.

The Mothership arrived around 2,000 years ago but went largely unnoticed by the multitudes because she didn’t arrive to reign down fire from above. No, in his Advent her founder (Jesus Christ) established her as God’s chosen instrument to spread faith, hope, and love. Since her inception she has been ignored, ridiculed, and despised. But soon and very soon all of this will change because the Mothership is destined to leave as soon as her bridegroom appears in the sky. Yes, Jesus will suddenly and quickly remove his glorious bride (the Church) from the scene. And then, literally speaking, all hell will break loose. And the sci-fi flick *Independence Day* will look like a Sunday-go-to-meeting picnic in comparison to that time of Great Tribulation as it unfolds, especially in the last 3 1/2 years of what the Bible reveals to be a 7 year period.

Allow me to reel in my eschatological mindset for a moment because our focus is on unity, peace, working together and the coming Prince of Peace who will annihilate his earthly enemies with the swift, sure, and pure word that will proceed from his mouth. The One who initially spoke the world into existence will silence his critics in spectacular fashion. We would do well to remember that while God is not the author of confusion, he is also no pushover! He will take care of all things - in his own way and time, as he sees fit.

So let’s talk for a moment about God’s first invasion of Planet Earth and the Mothership that appeared, firmly established by the Spirit of the Lord, on the Day of Pentecost. And as we do, let’s consider how well we’re doing in fulfilling our mandate as Jesus followers - to love the Lord and our neighbor as ourselves.

First, let’s address this issue of love. How well are we doing in this area. The love that Jesus introduced is *agape love* which is something the world knew nothing of when Jesus invaded time and eternity. Yet this is the same love that Jesus instilled within us when we experienced the new birth. It’s the same love that Jesus said would characterize his people as recorded in John 13:34-35. It’s a selfless love that is generated by the Holy Spirit who lives within the people of God. It’s a love that enables us to lay down our lives for our brethren.

In a world that focuses on individualism and self-preservation above all things, we should ask ourselves a serious question that cannot be ignored - Do our decisions and daily behavior reflect sacrificial love for the benefit of others? Or, God forbid, do our decisions focus on what we deem to be best for ourselves?

We must remember that Jesus Christ left the security of Heaven itself to become a man among men, susceptible to the filth, disease, and danger of all the inhabitants of Planet Earth to be our Savior. He lived and died, openly stripped of his dignity and self for unworthy people in an alien land on a rugged cross of shame and humiliation. And as you survey the cross tell me, and him, if you can see any thought of self in that gruesome scene?

In a world that’s focused entirely on self the church is called

“Concrete & Cranes”

VBS 2021

We have much to rejoice about at First Baptist. Since our church was birthed into existence in the early 1800’s she always placed a heavy emphasis on the education of the children in the community. This is evident in the fact that the early church placed far more emphasis on the education of its children than it did on having a duly established “meeting house.”

As such the church built what was called “Good Intent School” that was located on what we now know as Little Duck Road just outside our township. In the first 50 years of the life of the church she met in that school building and also in people’s homes. That is, when she wasn’t meeting outside.

Today that passion for our children and their Christian education has certainly not dwindled in the least. This is evident in our Life Groups (Sunday School) that meets weekly and also in our programs that focus on teaching our children about Jesus and his ways utilizing many other avenues.

In 2020 we were unable to have VBS because of the pandemic but 2021 has been completely different. Our VBS Director who is Karianne Counts, our children, teachers, and other helpers were beyond excited about VBS excited and pumped up throughout the week that began Sunday, June 20th and went through Friday, June 25th.

We had a blast with the children, teens, and adults as we learned more about Jesus, the foundation that he himself has laid.

We averaged 145 people each night in attendance and had several children who received Jesus Christ as their Savior! In addition, we are utilizing our VBS offering for shoebox mailing in Operation Christmas Child.

God continues to bless us richly at First Baptist and we are extremely grateful to him and everyone who worked throughout the week in VBS.



Pg. 4 of our Newsletter has more VBS pics.

“The Alien Invasion”

Cont. from Pg. 1

to be different. And we, as Jesus followers, who make up the church should be very much different than the rest of society. If sacrificial love isn't displayed in our lives on a daily basis, we have forfeited the privilege of being called the children of God.

Before you cut me off as being a radical and shred this publication, I ask you once again to look at Calvary in all of its ugly truth and brutality. And, as you do ask yourself a question: Was the atoning death of Jesus Christ not the most radical act of love that the world has ever experienced? So the question comes back to us - are we, like our Savior, known for our radical acts of *agape love* for the benefit of others? If not, what needs to change in our lives? And if, we are: how do these acts of *agape love* look in our 21st century world?

Can we or should we, like Jesus, offer ourselves up as sacrificial lambs for the slaughter? We would do well to remember that Jesus' death at Calvary was a one time event, as was the Day of Pentecost. Neither can be reproduced. In other words, there is but one Savior and we're not him and there is but one Church and we're not it. Yes, we are a part of this family (universal church) we are but a small part. So how can we show and share this *agape love* that Jesus has passed on to us in a way that honors Jesus?

We must begin by asking Jesus to help us and mold us into the people that he would have us be, in order that we might be instruments of his *agape love* in reaching others. Why? Because if he doesn't intervene this is something we cannot hope to accomplish in our own strength.

First, let's be genuinely honest with God and ourselves and throw the charades aside. Brutal honesty is always the best policy especially when it comes to self. If we cannot be truthful with ourselves we will never be truthful with God or our fellowman. Is this love that we claim to have in our hearts sacrificial? God isn't keeping tallies on the number of times we tell others that we "love them and are praying for them" on our social media accounts. He isn't running a spreadsheet on the number of hugs we dispense in our Sunday morning meetings. Neither is he impressed by the number of testimonies that we share telling others "we love them" as long as they look and act like us. He is highly concerned with the decisions we make that focus only "on self" and the "what's best for me" mentality that disregards the benefit of society at large. In these little lives of ours we need to be constantly reminded that Jesus died for the world.

Second, let's ask God to fill us with his faithful *agape love* that is greater than our worst fears. When Jesus was praying in Gethsemane he needed the reassurance of his Father's faithful love. And death was something he had never faced. As such, he submitted himself fully to his Father's will with the full assurance that his Father's *agape love* was much stronger than death. Do we understand that there are things that are far greater than dying and death? What is your testimony and influence worth? Remember, our testimony isn't what we say but what we do.

And last, let us understand that this *agape love* never shows favoritism. In other words, let us share this *agape love* abundantly with everyone around us in equal fashion.

In a world that is divided on every front the Church is called to be unified in body, spirit, and mission as we set the example and share the *agape love* of Jesus Christ by sacrificial love and service. Let's be about our Father's business until this Mothership is called home.

Bro Steve

2021 Youth / Adult Missions Week

Our Annual week of Youth / Adult Missions Outreach was once again a great success.

This year, because of the COVID restrictions we again decided to stay local in our missions engagement. We had great crews throughout the week who worked hard in touching the people of our region with the love of Jesus Christ. Here are a few pictures of our week.



We're thankful for those who fed us!



Worship Opportunities
SUNDAY MORNING
 8:45 AM - Early Worship
 10:00 AM - Life Groups (all ages)
 11:00 AM Morning Worship (Streamed Live)
WEDNESDAY EVENING
 Worship @ 7:00 PM (Streamed Live)
 VBS 2021 was Great!!!!!!



“Holy Humor”

