

MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER



# BELL TOWER

First Baptist Church in Hope Valley  
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The Hope Valley First Baptist Church family makes followers of Christ and worships God through prayer, fellowship, service and the study of the Holy Bible, testifying to the glory of His Name.

## *Pastor's Note*

### **“Getting Back To Worship”**

Everyone experienced it during the covid pandemic: Christians were no longer able to gather at church. Though some churches did their best to continue meeting, those who could pivoted to online meetings. Unfortunately, even after the crises passed, some believers decided not to return to corporate worship despite it being God's will, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25).

This experience got me thinking about those news stories of disasters. What happens when a tornado, fire, or flood destroys a church building? What is a believer to do without the convenience and tradition of a house of worship?

What would you do?

One solution is another church in the area allows you to use their building until you can rebuild. Maybe you will have to change your service hours to not conflict with their service, but it's one approach.

Another answer might be to see if a school will let you use their building. Many a church plant started in a school auditorium or cafeteria. It can be a lot of work to set it up and take it down each Sunday, but to those who enjoy corporate worship, it's an opportunity to minister.

If it was necessary, would you be content to travel a little further to church? Would you be comfortable starting the service earlier or later, singing without instruments, or sitting on metal folding chairs? Would you think, “Being a church isn't about a building. Believers didn't meet in church buildings for the first three hundred years of Christian history. This could be the best thing God has done for me. For the first time in my Christian life, my faith is seen for what it is.”

A far worse situation than the above happened to the people of Israel in 586-587 BC. Those who study such things in detail tell us the final blow came on July 16, 586. The author of Second Kings describes the horror in some detail,

Continued →

“At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. And Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to the city, while his servants were besieging it. Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. He carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, just as the Lord had said. Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land” (2 Kings 24:10-14).

The great and beautiful temple, the physical epicenter of the Jewish religion and faith, was decimated. Not because of a natural disaster, it was looted, burned, and leveled by enemy soldiers. And worse, the residents were rounded up, chained together, and marched a thousand miles into exile.

And so here they are. Discouraged is too mild a word. They are crushed, despondent, and hopeless. It’s as if God Himself has been overthrown by the powerful Babylonian empire. The people describe themselves as, “Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off” (Ezekiel 37:11).

What kept the faithful faithful during this crisis? With no place to gather what could keep someone true and dedicated to God? And what were the first things the people were to do when they came out of these seven decades of imprisonment and isolation?

Notice these three principles:

**1) In exile they maintained a knowledge of the things of God.**

Psalm 137 was written about this time of captivity. Notice how the author “remembered Zion” (137:1), how he recalls “Jerusalem” (:5), he continues to “remember You” and to “exalt Jerusalem” (:6). The mind and heart of the psalmist, even in captivity and exile, is focused on the dwelling place of God. He remembers God and what God has done for them and to them, and how they failed Him. But he could *recall* the things of God only because he first *knew* the things of God.

What about you? Are you familiar with the Bible? Can you quickly find well-known books and favorite passages? What if you were in a situation where you were unable to access a Bible? Can you, like the psalmist, recall the things of God? Do you, like the psalmist, desire being with the people of God?

**2) Once it was possible, they maintained corporate worship.**

As the 70 years of exile came to a close and the people returned to Jerusalem, the first thing they set out to do was to rebuild the city and the temple. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe the process. But as they prepared to rebuild, they were again overwhelmed and discouraged. The city had been thoroughly destroyed, its protective walls were gone and there was no temple to rebuild.

The prophets reminded the people that before coming back to rebuild the land and the temple, they first needed to rebuild their relationship with God. This is why before, during, and after the exile, God pleads with them to return to Him. Once they returned to their first love (Revelation 2:4), they could rebuild the temple of God and return to the worship of God among the people of God.

What is the lesson for us? The people’s lack of corporate worship was the result of God’s discipline, not God’s favor. When God blesses, His people gather to worship. Do we see the importance of corporate worship?

**3) In and out of exile, the people were to maintain holiness in their life and worship.**

The prophet Haggai was the first prophetic voice to be heard on the heels of the Babylonian exile. He asks these piercing questions,



“Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Ask now the priests for a ruling: If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy?’” And the priests answered, “No.” Then Haggai said, “If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?” And the priests answered, “It will become unclean.” Then Haggai said, “So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,” declares the Lord, ‘and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean” (Haggai 2:11-14).

Haggai’s point is simple even if his word picture isn’t familiar to us today. Put simply, Haggai is saying that sin is like sickness and holiness is like health. You can catch sickness, but you can’t catch health. If the people were to be true worshippers of God, they needed to be holy in all their living. In other words, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

In closing, let me ask if you are neglecting any of these spiritual disciplines: the scriptures, corporate worship, or daily holiness. To put it more simply, “You are My friends if you do what I command you” (John 15:14).

jim



# MISSIONS' FOOD DRIVE

*We deliver non-perishable items after 2nd Tuesday of the month.*



## Most Needed Items

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Canned Fish & Meats             | Rice & Pasta            |
| Canned or Dried Beans & Lentils | Boxed Macaroni & Cheese |
| Canned Soup & Stews             | Breakfast Cereals       |
| Canned Fruit & Vegetables       | Nut & Seed Butters      |
| Canned Tomato Products          | Spices & Condiments     |

*Check for expiration dates.*

*Please bring your non-perishable food items to the designated containers located at the front and side entrances to the church.*

**MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC**

May 26th - 3rd Annual Free Hotdogs!

Picnic begins at 12:30 PM  
The parade starts at 2 PM  
Bring a chair and join us on the lawn.

First Baptist Church in Hope Valley  
1059 Main Street, Hope Valley

📞 401-539-7553



# Tufted Titmouse House by Elaine Kenney

Saw a cute little gray tufted titmouse  
Checking out the cute little, blue-trimmed bird house  
Poking in her head and looking around  
Hoping she'd found, her new home.

She and her mate working so very hard  
Gathering nesting materials from the surrounding church yard  
Bringing twigs and grass in their tiny little beaks  
Arranging them with a few tucks and some tweaks.

If we are lucky, we may get to see  
Them raise their nestling family  
To have a close-up view of these precious little birds  
Leaves me at a loss to describe in words  
The feelings in nature that we can find  
That bring love, happiness, and peace of mind.



**Sunday, May 12, 2024**

**HAPPY  
MOTHER'S  
DAY**

**PENTECOST SUNDAY**

**May 19, 2024**



May the Holy Spirit fill your heart with boundless love. Have a blessed Pentecost!

**May 27, 2024**

REMEMBER  
THOSE WHO HAVE  
SACRIFICED THIS

**Memorial Day**

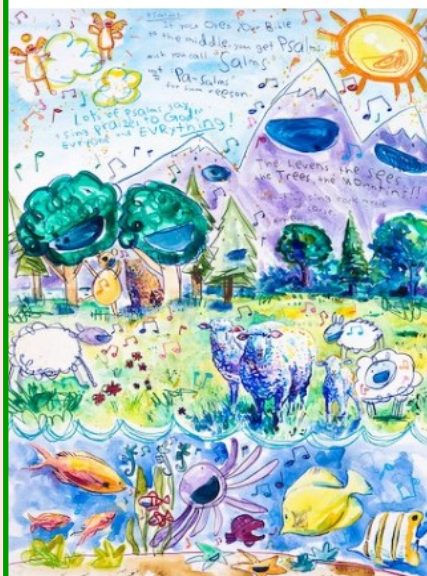
GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS,  
THAN TO LAY DOWN ONE'S LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

JOHN 15:13 NKJV

Articles for the Bell Tower are due on the third Friday of each month. Please email your articles to Maria Gill at [fbhusecretary@verizon.net](mailto:fbhusecretary@verizon.net).

## A Grand Adventure Passport to the Psalms

*a special experience for grandparents & grandchildren*



Join us as we journey through the psalms—complete with stops to experience sheep, music, trees, water, a garden, dancing, and a banquet.

Our week will include exciting offsite adventures and fun group activities, as well as free time for grandparents and grandchildren (K-6th grade) to spend together.

**July 8-12, 2024**

A program of ABCORI's Elder Care Ministries  
at Canonicus Camp & Conference Center

For more info, contact [eldercare@abcori.org](mailto:eldercare@abcori.org) or (401) 522-9731.





# Children's Corner

## Devotional: Being Committed

Children's Devotion about being committed to God based on Genesis 22:1-13

### Read: Genesis 22:1-13 (NKJV)

Boy, talk about being committed to God! God tested Abraham to see how committed he was to Him. Isaac, the promised son, was to be sacrificed. Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac because of his great faith in God. God stopped him, before any harm came to Isaac—but what a test of faith!

God still tests us from time to time, to see how committed we really are to Him. Being committed to God, no matter what, can be really hard. There a times, like in this story, where our faith is challenged. But no matter what comes up against us, we need to remain committed to the Lord.

It's really hard when we come up against opposition at school, in a sports team or a club we belong to. But hard as it may be, we need to still remain committed to God. As Christians, our faith will come under attack from others that don't understand. But stand strong and don't give in. Remember, God loves you. He will honour your stand for Him.

If you are having a hard time right now with others attacking your faith, first of all bring them before the Lord in prayer. Then pray daily for God to strengthen you and to give you wisdom.

You won't ever be going through this alone. God is with you always. Stay Committed!

Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established.  
- Proverbs 16:3 (NKJV)

**Lord, please help me stay committed  
No matter how hard it gets,  
For I know you love and care for me  
And want for me the best.**

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## Abraham Is Tested

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." Genesis 22:8a (NIV)

Based on Genesis 22:1-14 (NIV)

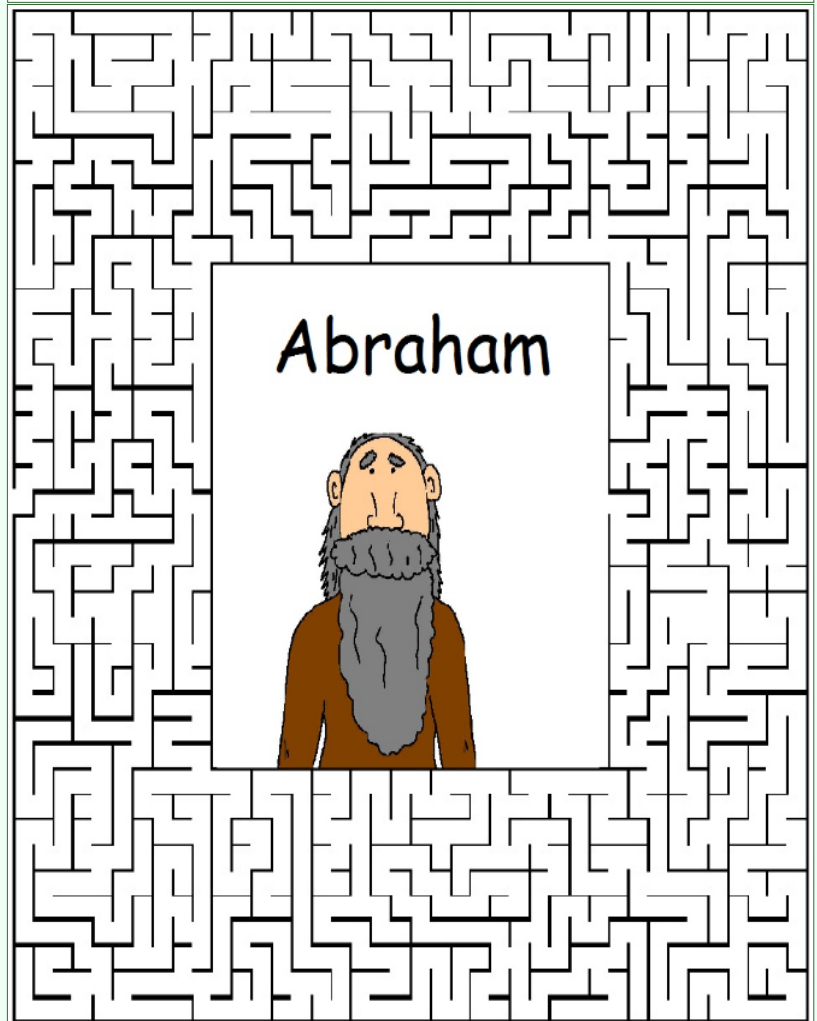
God himself will provide the Lamb.



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 Z S Z C H T R N W F F T L A T  
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RAM	THICKET	SERVANTS	ALTAR	BURNT SON
ISAAC	OFFERING	KNIFE	LOVE	LAMB
HORNS	HAND	WOOD	FEAR	DONKEY
SACRIFICE	ABRAHAM	WORSHIP	FIRE	





# EASTER + SUNRISE SERVICE



 You're on  
Smile camera!

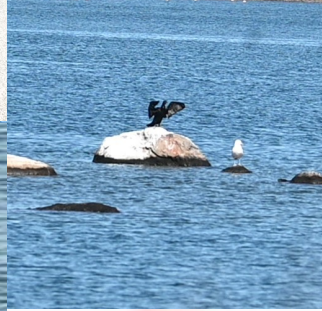
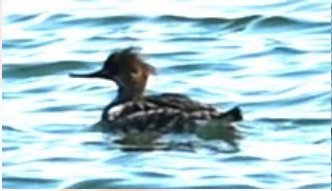






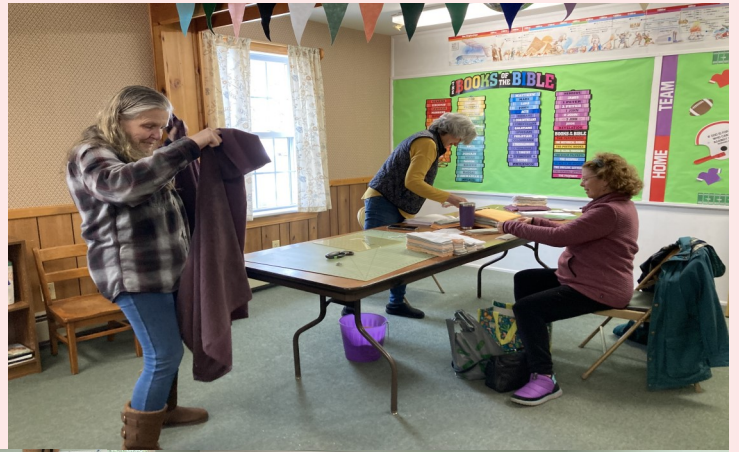
Ladies' Hike at Ninigret  
National Wildlife Refuge  
4-9-2024

**Women's Bible Study**  
**Monday Nights - 7 PM in the Parlor.**





FBHV  
Sewing Sisters



Thanks to Elaine Lewis, Judy Noel, Karin Hutchinson, Janet Tefft, Susan Andrews, and Tammy Stone for using their skills in providing quilts, etc. to people in need.