

Family & Friends..... March 15, 2023

Bring on Spring! March 20, 2023 is the official first day of Spring marked by the Spring Equinox that starts the season. The equinox is a moment in time and space when the sun is positioned directly above the Earth’s equator, which happens just twice a year. The sun crosses the equator from south to north, bringing warmth and light back to the Northern Hemisphere and plunging the Southern Hemisphere into its fall and winter darkness. We are blessed each year about this time with the pretty daffodils that are popping up all over the area with their bright and joyful yellow color. The daffodils, after overcoming their obstacles and hardships from winter, have bounced back and show us rebirth and that life goes on. Perhaps we should appreciate the simple things in life that make us happy! God gives so many beautiful things to enjoy in His creation. We just need to take time and smell the roses. God is good, God is love, to God be the glory!

It will blossom profusely and rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. (Isaiah 35:2)

Always happy to announce our visitors: Doug & Denise Knutson (Incline Village, NV), Jo Davis and Karen Kerr (Gravette), Dwane and Tammy Hawkins (Centerton), Kathleen Spencer (Bay), Taylor & Alison Moore and Ted Irby (BV).

Those on our prayer list: Or deepest sympathies to Randall Caselman & family in the passing of Georgia on Tuesday. Connor Evans is at home after having a procedure done at Mercy in Springfield. Jim Caylor is sick and asks a place in our prayers. Mike Lacey had an emergency procedure last Friday. Susan Duffy had surgery on Wednesday, March 15th. Rosalyn Patterson is back at Mirada Assisted Living after her fall. Continue to remember Mike Hale, Wade Nichols, Johnson Family, Cluck Family, our missionaries, military, police force, our leaders, president and country. Please keep praying for me. Love you all.

Our children’s home list: Juice, salad dressings, spaghetti sauce, Spam, and honey. For our Food Pantry: Cereal, pancake mix (add water only) and syrup, and mac & cheese.

In the darkest hours of life, only through the eyes of faith can we see the loving hand of God. Love you, stay safe.

Karen

Bella Vista Church of Christ

Highway 71 and County Road 40
989 NW McNelly Road
Bentonville, AR 72712

Return Service Requested

ELDERS

Tracy Bowman.....479-899-3089
Don Butcher.....636-548-0458
Dallas Dobbs.....479-640-49439
Perry Johnson.....913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Josh Porter Joe Hott Mike Spencer
Randall Hunt Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Tyler White Mike Martin Jerry Snyder

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

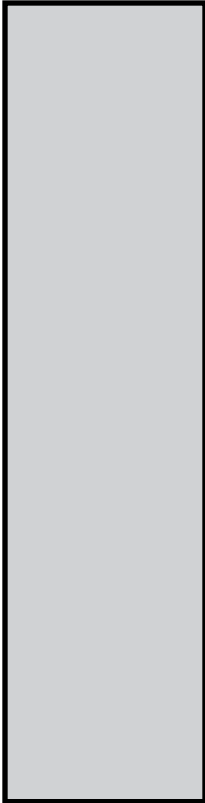
LORD’S DAY
Early Worship 8:15 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed) 9:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed) 10:30 AM

WEDNESDAY
Ladies’ Class 9:45 AM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed) 7:00 PM

Phone: 479/273-2434

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Bella Vista

Words of Welcome

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
- “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:1-12 ESV)

“Good morning.” “Welcome.” “Glad you’re here.” “It’s good to see you all.” If you are a churchgoer, these are probably some of the things you hear from your preacher every Sunday. From the preacher’s side, it seems only right to greet the congregation, thank them, let them know they are valued and appreciated. This is not just a practice for preachers by the way. It seems that any public address usually begins with some kind of welcome, but when we look at the preaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount he seems to launch into the sermon without any preamble at all. He appears to launch directly into describing the type of people his followers ought to be.



LIFELINES

But what if this is not what Jesus is doing with this part of the sermon. Could it be possible that Jesus is extending a welcome as he begins his sermon? Look at the opening verse of chapter 5, “Seeing the crowds...” Could it be that we have read this sermon and forgot about the crowds? We find their description in Matthew 4.

So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. (Matthew 4:24-25 ESV)

The crowds! The sick, the demon possessed, the epileptics, the paralytics, those who were on the margins, the ones who are looking for hope, these are the folks in the congregation to whom Jesus preaches. These are people who may very well think that God has forgotten them. They may believe that there is just no way they can be included in the Kingdom. Yet, the first words they hear from Jesus are words of welcome. Not just, “Good morning.” “Welcome.” “Glad you’re here.” “It’s good to see you all.” But, “Welcome! The Kingdom of God is open to you!”

Do we see ourselves in the crowd? Haven’t we been there? Are we there now? Aren’t these words that we desperately long to hear? Aren’t these – words of hope and welcome, words of good news – the words that people around us desperately need to hear? Please don’t get me wrong. As followers of Jesus we ought to be humble (poor in spirit). We ought to mourn our sins and the conditions in which these sins have left us. We ought to be meek, long for the world to be made right, be merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, you get the idea. We know that these characteristics are needed in our churches and in our homes. We can see how far short we often fall from these traits. Yet Jesus welcomes us into his Kingdom even in our broken, marginalized state.

We could learn a lot here. Sometimes, in our churches we get this backward. Sometimes we carry the message of the way people ought to be, the way people ought to live, or the ethics they ought to have before we let them know that they are welcome in the Kingdom. Of the many things we see in the life of Jesus that we should strive to imitate, being welcoming and inclusive is one we cannot neglect. Who do we know that needs to hear these words of welcome from Jesus? Who can we tell about the way in which Jesus welcomed us when we were broken and on the margins? Maybe the question isn’t, “Who can we tell?” Maybe it is, “Who will we tell?”

-JEFF GRISHAM

Outlandish!

Go with me to the cross. Women are weeping. A member of the Supreme Court says, “He saved others but he is powerless to save himself.” Another voice adds to the insult: “If you be the Messiah, come down off that cross and we’ll believe in you.” A Roman soldier offers Him wine on a stick and smugly says, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself.” From a nearby cross one sane voice from all the confusion, “Remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And from the parched lips of Jesus, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” At that moment the sky goes black, the earth began to quake violently, downtown the veil of the temple is supernaturally torn from top to bottom.

Pretty outlandish! Right? A court-condemned thief, a sinner on his way to Hell, asking and receiving Heaven, a place in paradise. A sinner is swept through the Pearly Gates. What a crazy value system.

Anthony Campolo tells a story about some guys who broke into a department store and changed all the price tags. A \$612 sofa was \$40; a \$3000 boat motor was \$7.50; a \$350 shotgun was \$10; a \$3.00 paperback book was \$800. A \$30 blouse was \$900; they re-priced everything! Outlandish? Yes, but it was four hours into the business day before the store owners discovered the switch. Some got great bargains. Some felt cheated.

Today we have an outlandish value system. We see the most valuable sold for pennies and the cheapest smut goes for millions. A Bible sells for \$30. A smutty TV show is budgeted in the millions. We live in houses worth tens of thousands, drive a \$40,000 automobile and drop twenty, thirty dollars into the Lord’s lap each week. A stockbroker trades his integrity to peddle inside information. A politician allows money to control his vote. A member of the church trades his influence for a place of honor or a moment of pleasure. Why do we take simple black and white issues and paint them gray? Why are priceless Bible truths traded for worthless human standards? Why do we elevate the body and degrade the soul? Why do we pamper the skin and pollute the heart? What causes this kind of outlandish behavior?

No Destiny. We have allowed Satan to convince us that we are headed nowhere. If the universe is a creator-less mass and life is an accident, then we have no future. Life becomes cheap and meaningless if we are all victims trapped on a mud heap called earth. Outlandish!!

No Duty. If no duty, then no obligation, no responsibility, no need for betterment, no goals, no upward movement.

No motive to be better than we are. So, a husband feels no obligation to support his wife and children; a mother has no pull toward family values. We can call a child a fetus and kill it. We can determine life is not worth living and take it. We can get loaded on chemicals until we’re out of our mind. We can lie and steal to get ahead. We make one religion as good as another and compromise Biblical truths. Life is reduced to paychecks, weekends, quick thrills. No duty equals disaster. Outlandish!!

No Truth. Truth is the enemy of Satan. He can’t function in its presence. If there is no truth, if there are no absolutes, no rules, no Bible, then there is no standard to live by. As a result, each of us can behave as we wish. This is exactly what Satan preached in the beginning. He has not changed. In the garden he maintained there was no truth, and today he has captured many of us with this same theological argument. Outlandish!!

No Worth. If we have no destiny, no duty, no truth, then we have no worth. Right? Wrong!! We have been purchased with a price: Not with silver and gold, but by the blood of God in the flesh. Jesus died to sanctify us, redeem us, justify and save us. He died to give us a destiny, duty, truth and value. We are twice His; once by creation, once by redemption. Outlandish!!

This is why: A lady taken in adultery is forgiven. A prodigal in a pigpen is welcomed home. A tax collector is forgiven and Jesus goes home with him. A thief on a cross is swept through the Pearly Gates.

This is why you and I can be saved. Outlandish!!

-RANDALL CASELMAN
From Lifelines 8/2/2006

| SUNDAY SERVANTS: 3/19/23 | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| First Service | | | |
| Welcome, Prayer & Scripture | Kim Metheny | Song Leader | Anthony Christiano |
| Greeters..... | Terry Balentine, Gary McCool, Terry Roberts | Communion Scripture & Prayer | Tyler White |
| Closing Prayer..... | | Don Butcher | |
| Nursery Workers | | Jerri Dobbs, Tori Hunt | |
| Second Service | | | |
| Welcome, Prayer & Scripture | Mitch Whittington | Song Leader | Marquis Elliott |
| Greeters | Terry Balentine, Bob Spaw, John Bowman | Communion Scripture & Prayer | Curt LaPorte |
| Closing Prayer..... | | Ray Reiss | |
| Nursery Workers | | Patti Bertschy, Debbie Martin | |
| | | Van Driver | |
| | | Kyle Dillard | |
| March Worship Coordinators | | | |
| Worship Coordinator | Mark Tucker | Streaming Coordinator | Chris Johnson |
| Audio Coordinator | Jim Caylor | Video Coordinator | James Beatty |