

**Family & Friends..... March 29, 2023**

I guess when they say, "you are never too old to learn something," it is true. We may all have to take a field trip somewhere to observe this, and I'm ready to go. If I should already know this, I guess I am behind the times. In late March or early April, pine trees, about two weeks before Easter, have become known for what they display. They tell us to look at the top of the pine trees and you will see yellow shoots, known as candles, then the side buds, which will form branches, that leads to new growth, and resembles a cross. As the days get closer to Easter Sunday, the tallest shoot will branch off and form a cross. By the time Easter Sunday comes around you will see that most of the pine trees will have small crosses on all of the tallest shoots. This sighting has led to the legend that pine trees "know" when it's Easter! If anyone has seen this, let me know. I saw pictures and it was pretty cool. The Loblolly Pine is one of the most common trees in the U.S. God is awesome! To God Be the Glory!

*"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16)*

We are thankful for our visitors: David and Connie Huff (Bethalto, IL), Benda Peterson (Olathe, KS), Anna England and Tom & Becky Vickery (Bentonville), Dwane & Tammy Hawkins (Centerton), Ted Irby (BV).

Those on our prayer list: Continue to remember and pray for Randall Caselman and family in the passing of Georgia, and the family of John Herzig in his passing. Don Cope's sister, Glenda Jones has been diagnosed with small cell lung cancer. Doug Klingman had an outpatient surgical procedure on Thursday. Jacob Haskins had surgery on his clavicle on Tuesday. Continue to remember and pray for Susan Duffy, Mike Lacey, Mike Hale, Jim Branstetter, the victims of the recent shooting in Nashville, and the tornado victims in Mississippi.

Be sure to check your handouts each week and the bulletin board for things coming up like Care Group activities, etc.

Children's Home List: Spam, pickles, vinegar, spinach, and body wash. Food Pantry: Cereal, mac & cheese, peanut butter, jelly, and canned fruit.

Linger in God's Word and you'll find stories of faith. 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

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LORD'S DAY		WEDNESDAY	
Early Worship	8:15 AM	Ladies' Class	9:45 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed)	9:30 AM	Bible Classes (Livestreamed)	7:00 PM
Worship (Livestreamed)	10:30 AM		

**Phone: 479/273-2434**

[www.bellavistachurchofchrist.com](http://www.bellavistachurchofchrist.com)

# Bella Vista

# MINISTERS

## Unbelievable

*O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted. (Habakkuk 1:2-4)*

This is the opening of the book of Habakkuk. The time is around the mid to late 7th century B.C. The northern tribes of Israel have been taken captive by the Assyrians. Judah still remains, but there is a lot of trouble. Probably like many of other people in Judah, Habakkuk appears to wonder if God notices, and if he does, what is he going to do about it.

God responds to Habakkuk's question. *"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own."* (Habakkuk 1: 5-6)

Are you kidding? God's response to the trouble that is in Judah is to bring the Babylonians to take Judah. Unbelievable! The people of Judah may be bad, but they aren't nearly as bad as the Babylonians. God goes on in Habakkuk chapter one to describe the Babylonians as dreaded, fearsome, violent, and "guilty men, whose own might is their god." How could God do this?

It is here that we should stop and point out that God often does the incredible, the unbelievable. God created the world out of nothing. He spoke the world into existence. Unbelievable! Because of the wickedness of humanity in the days of Noah, God destroyed



the world with a flood. Unbelievable! God called Abraham and Sarah, promised them a son and delivered on that promise when they were far past their childbearing years. Unbelievable! God rescued a nation of slaves from Egypt, the most powerful nation in the world at the time. Unbelievable! The list could go on and on.

God does the unbelievable. It is an unbelievable thing is that God wants to be with us. As stubborn and rebellious and difficult and wicked as we can be, he still desires to be with us. As unbelievable as that is, what's more incredible is the lengths to which God will go to make that possible.

Around 700 years after Habakkuk spoke to God, we find another of God's people asking questions of a strange new rabbi named Jesus. Nicodemus comes to Jesus looking for answers. Jesus speaks to him about being born again, born from above. Nicodemus wonders how this can happen. Jesus speaks of being born again of water and spirit, of heavenly things, and eternal life. Nicodemus still does not understand. It's just unbelievable.

Then Jesus says the most unbelievable thing. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."* (John 3:16-17)

We watch as we follow Jesus through the Gospels. We watch as we follow him all the way to the cross. We hear his plea to the Father in the garden of "Let this cup pass from me." We read of the abuse, the mocking, the beating, the humiliation, the pain and suffering. We listen to him cry out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" We hear him say, "It is finished." And as we see this and witness the lengths to which God will go so that we can be with him, there is word that comes to mind. "Unbelievable!"

It is truly amazing to see how much Jesus loves us, and how badly he wants to be with us. That kind of love and self sacrifice should elicit a response from us. It demands our love and devotion to him in return. It should result in lives that are marked by our faithful obedience to him, and lives that are transformed into his image. If that is not our reaction to what he has done for us, that's unbelievable.

-JEFF GRISHAM

## Faces In The Crowd

Play along with me for a moment. Recall the last photograph you saw on the news, perhaps of a politician, maybe a tight-end catching a Hail-Mary pass, or an entertainer belting out your favorite song. There are always people in the background, unknown faces with life stories just as important as the prominent person in the picture.

Ever focus on a face in the crowd and wonder what their life story was about: Where they were from? How come them here? How did they feel about what they were witnessing? Ever wonder about their relationship with God: Were they atheists, agnostics, believers, faithful participants in God's household?

It's the day after the crucifixion; you're reading the "Jerusalem Times" with pictures of a self-proclaimed Messiah dying on a cross outside the city. As usual, there are faces in the crowd, and we wonder what's their life story?

**Judas:** Hanging from a rope beside the path across the Kidron. Conscience come home. Betraying his friend became a burden too heavy to bear, so he takes his own life. We too have a choice; will we betray Him or cultivate an in-depth relationship?

**Peter:** This is the man we heard saying, "I'll go with You wherever You go, I'll never leave or forsake You. I'll die with You." But now, we can barely see his face in the shadows, following Jesus at a distance, not wanting to be recognized as a disciple. Is this our face in the crowd?

**Annas & Caiaphas:** Two men who have placed ambition before a relationship with this dying man. They couldn't hear Him say "love Me more than these."

**Pilate:** I hate conflict! In most cases I'll remain neutral in the argument, but there are times that neutrality is wrong. It was Jesus who said, "you are either for Me or against Me." I wonder how many times my neutrality crucifies Jesus afresh?

**Barabbas:** He's been arrested, tried, found guilty, sentenced. Guilty! Where he should have died, Jesus died in his stead: "bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, by His wounds we are healed." We all share Barabbas' guilt, Amen?

**The two Thieves:** It appears that both are arrogant, "heap-ing insults upon Him." But as the end neared, one heart was softened, and we hear him say "Don't you fear God..."

We are punished justly but this man has done nothing wrong." Precious words from the lips of Jesus: "Today you will be with Me in paradise." We gotta decide, arrogant or contrite heart, which will it be? Which face belongs to us?

**The Soldiers:** They are only doing their jobs, indifferent to the one on the cross. They are more interested in who gets His clothing than His suffering. Indifference! What an ugly word. Lukewarm indifference was the sin of the church in Laodicea. Indifference, a sin that sickens Jesus. May we never be guilty.

**The Crowd :** Prove yourself and we'll believe: "Come down from the cross and we'll believe." Many today want proof of God, but it's faith, believing without proof, that pleases Him. (Hebrews 11.6)

**Mother Mary:** She lingers at the cross. Gotta ask, do we linger in our worship or are we constantly watching the clock. Amazing isn't it that the women show more bravery than the twelve? Here is an observation: The women (Those who served Jesus) are the ones who seem to love Him most, lingering at His death and at the tomb. "If you love Me you will keep My commandment!" (If you love Me, you will serve Me). Serving the Jesus in others is proof of our love.

**The Centurion:** Here's a man awestruck with Jesus. "Surely this was the Son of God." Are we awestruck, or do we take Him for granted: "Ho-hum, another Sunday, another sermon, wonder where we're going to eat lunch?" Do we see our creator God on this cross? Really?

Faces in the crowd. But one of these faces belongs to you and your writer? Which one describes us most accurately?

-RANDALL CASELMAN  
From *Lifelines*, October 14, 2020

### SUNDAY SERVANTS: 4/2/23

#### First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture .....	Aaron Sloan	Song Leader .....	Sammy McCain
Greeters.....	Mike Johnson, David Saunders, Gary McCool	Communion Scripture & Prayer.....	Roger Arnold
Closing Prayer.....		Dallas Dobbs	
Nursery Workers .....		Angie Christiano, Shannon Hubanks	

#### Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture.....	Mason White	Song Leader .....	Lee McCain
Greeters .....	Mike Johnson, Eric Gibson, Zach Ballard	Communion Scripture & Prayer.....	Kirk Franklin
Closing Prayer.....		Don Butcher	
Nursery Workers.....		Jennifer Busbee, Reagan Busbee	
Van Driver .....		David Ellison	

#### April Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator .....	Mike Lunsford	Streaming Coordinator .....	Aaron Bagwell
Audio Coordinator .....	Homer Makinson	Video Coordinator .....	Marquis Elliott