

The Connection

Messages of Hope



A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 690

August 03, 2022

“A Sign of Hope”

Only a cross remained after Balsora Baptist Church in Texas went up in flames.

On Friday, June 17, 2022, contractors working on Balsora Baptist Church in Wise County, Texas, went on their lunch break. When they returned, the building was engulfed in flames. Firefighters tried their best to douse the blaze, but the church—parts of which were more than 100 years old—was completely destroyed.

The only things left behind were debris, charred wreckage—and an unexpected miracle. Fire crews and onlookers were shocked to see something standing tall amongst the smoking rubble: a cross.

“I watched the roof go down,” said the church’s pastor, Sonny Smith, “and as the smoke began to settle, the Cross stood in the smoke.”

According to Smith’s wife, Lanita, this cross was used by members for their prayer requests. “As prayers were answered, we placed the answered prayers on the cross,” she said.

Two days after the blaze, church members gathered near the church to sing and pray together. “Many members are in their 70’s and 80’s,” said Sonny. “They actually grew up there, were baptized there, had their children baptized there, their parents had their funerals there... My heart went out to them, but [when we saw] that cross standing, it changed the whole mood of those elderly members. They knew God was giving them hope that all was okay.”

The charred cross was placed in the church’s prayer garden, along with Bibles that survived the blaze. “It gave us chills,” said Lanita. “We knew without a doubt that God is going to walk us through. In good times and the bad, He’s there!” Though the cause of the fire is currently unknown, congregants are eager to rebuild. Neighboring churches of various denominations reached out to offer help. Online, people from all over the world— from California to Switzerland— shared their thoughts and prayers for the community.

“Prayers for the congregation,” one user wrote. “I know you are heartbroken, but God will help you rebuild and renew your strength... that Cross is just the new beginning.”
(Story by Kaylin Kaupish - “A Sign of Hope from God After a Fire” from Guidepost) Pictures from Balsora Baptist Church.



Folks, as believers, hearing this story, see these pictures, we say “How Great is our God!” The world sees a coincidence that just happened. The cross for us is more than a piece of wood, a picture on the wall, or a piece of jewelry we wear. For the believer it is a sign of love, forgiveness, compassion, redemption, salvation, sacrifice, giving, thankfulness, connection, loss, and the list could go on.

We have a cross in the Sanctuary at HOPE Church Raleigh. It was designed and made by Chuck Andrews, one of our members over 13 years ago when HOPE Church started. That lighted cross has its prominent place to remind us of our Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for our sins. The cross does not bear the body of Jesus because it is also reminder that He rose from the dead and lives so that we can live also.

Look at that cross standing tall in the midst of destruction around it in the picture above. For Balsora Baptist Church, a sign of hope. For us, also a sign of hope, knowing what the cross of Christ stands for. Every gaze should bring you hope for tomorrow. Thank you Jesus.

Blessings,
Pastor Marty - HOPE Church Raleigh
Worship . Grow . Serve

HOPE Calendar

Wednesday, August 3

Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer
@ 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, August 4

Worship Team Practice @ 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 7

Worship Team Practice @ 8:30 a.m.
Worship @ 9:30 a.m.
Fellowship Time @ 10:50 a.m.
Sunday school @ 11:10 a.m.

Monday, August 8

No Staff Meeting today
PCMA Leadership Meeting @ 10:00
a.m. @ Galatia EPC Fayetteville

Wednesday, August 10

Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer
@ 7:00 p.m.



Outreach Ministries

“Food of the Month”

for the Raleigh Dream Center Food
Pantry **Boxed Cereal**
We have a collection bin in the foyer

Meal Ministry

**Take a meal from the freezer if
needed for you or someone else.**

There is a sign-up sheet on the
bulletin board to help prepare meals
for others.

See Christina Johnston
with questions.

Spiritual Growth Ministries

Sunday School

This Sunday for all ages

Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer Tonight @ 7:00 p.m.

(Zoom Link available for those who
cannot meet in person)

WOMEN of HOPE

Saturday, August 13
@ 1:00 p.m. meeting at the church

MEN of HOPE

Tuesday, August 16 at 7 p.m.
A ZOOM link for the meeting will
be sent out beforehand.
Join us!

Prayer Requests:

Covid -19, Mark Drylie, Chandi Haswell &
family, Revill & Mary Lane Mallory, Evelyn
Doby, Jamie Baldwin, Donna Williams,
Diane Williams, Renee Logan, Loretta
(Sandi Underwood's daughter), Joan
Summers, Jordan & Cinnamon (son and
daughter of Lynn Joyner's family
members), Tommy Lanphere (Lynn
Joyner's brother), Becky Hale's mom in
Wyoming, Gene & Becky Hale, The Baker
family, Dave & Dot Geil, Joy Forrest's
daughter Haley, Carlyle and Cynthia
Franklin (Sandra Pierce's dad and
stepmom), Brian Adam's dad, our Military,
our Missionaries, our Nation, and the
world. If you have those you would like
added to our prayer concerns, please
email me those names.

The Computer Lab Simple Technology Assistant

HELP Wanted

Please go to our website
and read the information on
serving in The Saturday
Computer Lab. There is a
form there to fill out if
interested. We need 6 to 8
volunteers when we
resume in September to
fulfill this outreach ministry
of HOPE Church Raleigh

Next Session Meeting Sunday, August 14 @ 12 p.m.

Helping Hands Ministries

Fellowship Food - August 7

Church Will Provide

Soundboard - August 7

Benjamin Pierce

Communion Steward - August

Terry Duffell

Greeter - August 7

Volunteer Needed

Volunteer for the Nursery - Aug. 7

Terry Duffell

This Sunday
Scripture Text and Sermon

Romans 13:8 - 14
*“Putting On the Lord Jesus
Christ”*

Daily Devotions

For This Coming Week

| | | |
|--------|----------|----|
| Aug 7 | 2 Samuel | 6 |
| Aug 8 | 2 Samuel | 7 |
| Aug 9 | 2 Samuel | 8 |
| Aug 10 | 2 Samuel | 9 |
| Aug 11 | 2 Samuel | 10 |
| Aug 12 | 2 Samuel | 11 |
| Aug 13 | 2 Samuel | 12 |

Quote of the Week

**“Let no day slip over without
some comfort received from
the mouth of God.”**

John Knox

HOPE Church Raleigh An Evangelical Presbyterian Church

4911 Green Rd

Raleigh, NC 27616

919-508-6827

Worship Time: 9:30 AM

www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org

www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh

Twitter: @HopeChRaleigh

YouTube.com (type “HOPE Church Raleigh”
in the search box)