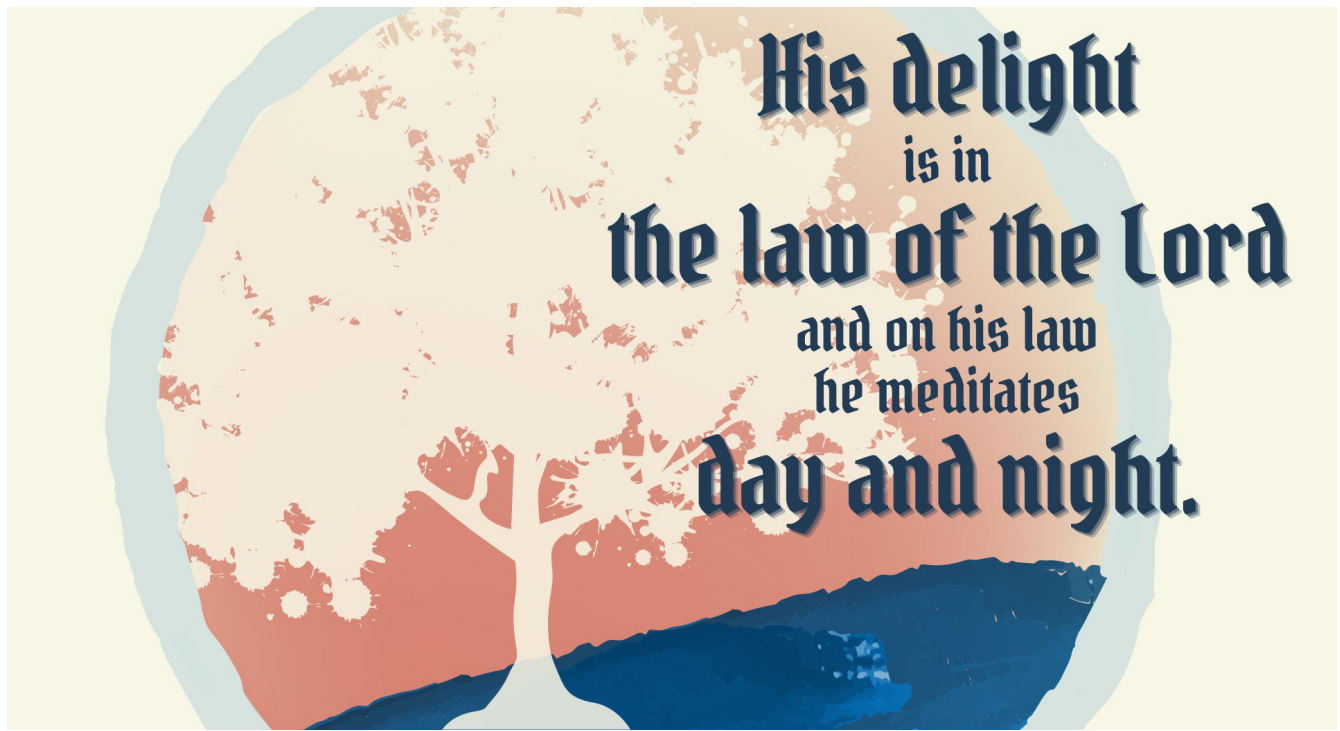


# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FAIRDALE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY / 2024



This past Sunday was the first Sunday of the new year. If you were able to be at church Sunday morning, you heard our new Call to Worship, Psalm 1. As usual, we will recite this psalm together at the start of every worship service for the next 6 months. Perhaps take some time to look over it during the week – read through it with your family, put it on some note cards, save it as your phone or desktop background. Our hope is that this repetition will help you to hide God's word in your heart and that by the end of June, you will have this psalm memorized.

In addition to just reciting it on Sunday, we heard a sermon on this psalm from Pastor Josh Greene. If you weren't there or

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

watching online, we encourage you to take some time this week to listen to it. We were exhorted to reject the way of the world – wickedness, sin, and scoffing – and follow the way of the Lord. We were reminded that the way of the Lord is not just being wise and doing good in our own strength, but rather it is putting our faith in Jesus who is THE way, the truth, and the life.

As we begin 2024, may we be people who follow God's way and delight ourselves in the the law of the Lord. May we embrace the way of the Lord and become strong like trees, yielding the fruit of growth and change. May we see God conform us more into the image of Christ as we hide his word in our hearts.

# Teach Us to Number our Days

**Jake Beattie | Pastor**

**T**his past Sunday evening we started a 4-week sermon series on the topic of stewardship. I preached on the topic of stewarding our time. We looked at Psalm 90:12 as a reminder that our time here on earth is short. We want to understand that and as a result, make the best use of the time we do have. Towards the end of my sermon, I gave six practical examples of things that are a good use of our time.

## **Reading your Bible**

This is something many of us may have set a goal to improve on in the new year. As I was talking with my brother recently, I was reflecting on my life since God saved me in 2007. In these last nearly 17 years, I have read the Bible a lot. And yet, I feel that every time I open the Bible and read passages I have read many times before, God continually reveals new things to me. There is endless value in reading your Bible and we all need to be reminded that spending time reading it is always a wonderful use of the time God has given us. If you have not yet set a goal for Bible reading in 2024, do it now, it is never too late to get started.

## **Praying**

Another thing that is always a good use of your time is spending time in prayer. If we are honest with ourselves, many of us would have to admit that we pray far less than we wish we did. God wants us to pray. Jesus taught us

to pray. We need to pray. Your prayers don't need to be fancy or use big words or be long. Use the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6 as guide and share your heart with God. Praying is always a good use of your time.

## **Attending Church**

Hebrews warns us not to neglect meeting together (Heb 10:25). The church is a local gathering of God's people. We need one another. We need to be reminding each other to keep seeking after Christ as we walk through this life. One of the ways that happens is coming together to worship. It's important and we should commit ourselves to this local church gathering. Spending your time coming to church and worshipping with fellow believers is never a waste of the time God has given you.

## **Encouraging one another**

In Hebrews 10:25, the verse which tells us not to neglect meeting together, the author also instructs us to encourage one another. Earlier in Hebrews we are told, "exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13). We need to be encouraging one another, or else we will be hardened by sin and may fall away. Time spent encouraging others around you is always time well spent.

*Continued on back page.*

## BEING A CHURCH THAT PRAYS

With prayer being a priority for our church, we want to equip you with tools to strengthen your prayer life.

Each month, this section of the newsletter will be dedicated to a specific prayer focus. There will be ideas for things to pray specifically and corresponding scriptures to help guide your prayers. This month, let us pray for love and unity as a church.

Pray that we would:

- be unified in mind and thought (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- be known by our love for one another (John 13:35)
- bear with and forgive one another. (Colossians 3:13)
- be unified in Christ, regardless of worldly status (Galatians 3:28)
- consider how to serve one another (Philippians 2:3-4)
- find ways to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24-25)

# Unless the Lord Builds the House

**Chris Harrod | Director of Missions**

**H**appy New Year! The new year is a great time of reflection, looking back at what the previous year brought and wondering with anticipation at what the new one will bring. I know for our church, we have had much to celebrate this past year. We sent a team of 25 to Ecuador for the first time in four years, had two families in our church officially appointed as long-term missionaries, our food pantry continues to grow, and many in our community have been loved and served by our church. For myself personally, my wife and I welcomed a baby into our family, and it feels like he's growing and changing daily!

As we begin to switch gears and plan for what we want to accomplish this upcoming year, let's also consider the warning of Psalm 127:1-2. Psalm 127 is a very short psalm, but it gets right to the point:

***'Unless the Lord builds the house,  
those who build it labor in vain.  
Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
the watchman stays awake in vain.  
It is in vain that you rise up early  
and go late to rest,  
eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for he gives to his beloved sleep.***

There are some passages in the Bible we read that don't seem very clear and may be hard to understand, but this is definitely not one of those passages! The implication of this passage couldn't be clearer. If we want to see God using our church for his glory this year, we need him to accomplish the plans and goals we set. If we want our Ecuador trip to be building up the church and helping to make disciples there, we need Jesus to be with us. If we want to send out families to the mission field in a way that honors God and serves the nations, we need God to lead the way. We can invest all the time, work, and money into each of these things and plan to the best of our ability, but the first thing we need to do is humble ourselves before God and ask that he use us. We need to start off this new year with less of a mindset of taking matters into our own hands, and more so falling on our knees and asking that God's will be done.

So before you gear up for a busy day working the food pantry, teaching Sunday School, serving in nursery or making your family plans for the week & month ahead, take some time to pray and ask that God would be at work in your life this year. That he would be gracious to use you as he builds his kingdom. That, Lord willing, our church can look back in 2025 and see how God graciously and mightily used our church for his glory. May we be a church that is living on mission this year, not laboring in vain but humbly building however God leads us.

## Who was Lottie Moon?

Every year around Christmas time, we focus on giving to the International Mission Board. This special offering is named after Lottie Moon. Many of you may be familiar with her, but some of you may not be.

Charlotte Moon, known as Lottje, was born in Virginia in 1840. She rejected Christ until she was in college. After college, she worked as a teacher for many years before she followed God's call to China at the age of 32. She labored among the people of Tengchow and P'ingtu, teaching girls and women and never fearing to share the gospel with those around her. She labored in China for 39 years until her death in 1912.

While serving and living in China, she wrote regular letters to churches and agencies in America, describing the great need for the gospel among the Chinese people. In 1887, she wrote to the *Foreign Mission Journal* proposing that the week before Christmas be designated as a time of giving specifically to foreign missions. The first Christmas offering was collected in 1888 and raised \$3,315, which at the time was enough to send 3 new missionaries to China.

As we finish out January, we will continue to collect for this special offering. Praise God that he has established his church in so many parts of the world. May we seek to be a part of continuing that effort and building up those who are laboring to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.