

With building finished, Little Hope Baptist Church ready to go to work

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“Just enough of the smoke-smell remains in one area to remind us how dark it was and how good God is,” said Pastor Bill Parr of Little Hope Baptist Church near Canton during the dedication of the church’s new education building Aug. 8.

The building, which [burned Jan. 1](#), was one of at least 10 arson fires in East Texas churches last winter.

Parr recalled how dark it was in the early morning of New Year’s Day when he and others saw smoke and flames coming out of the education building.

The church lost about 20 percent of its attendance during the two-month arson investigation and four-month rebuilding, he said.

Efforts are under way to recoup.

“God loves us and lets us go through some things, but joy comes in the morning,” he said in his Sunday morning message preceding the dedication of the new building.

“The building is finished, and now the work begins,” he said as he alluded to Vacation Bible School and other programs.

During the dedicatory message, Ernie McCoulsky, director of missions for Kauf-Van Baptist Association, urged members not to “coast” now that the building is complete but to let it be a tool to reach people for the glory of God.

“The church is probably the only institution in the community that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members,” McCoulsky said.

“You are more the church when you leave here than when you are sitting here. You are the church to the community.”