



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ

MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 74 No. 1 January 5, 2021

ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Stacey Paulin
Jimmy Sweeney

MINISTER

Hiram Kemp

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

SECRETARY

Dee Parramore

OFFICE PHONE **(863) 682-4702**

SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

YOUTUBE.com

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching
since 1969

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Marc Veary....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
J. Paguaga....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

Examining the Apostles

Hiram Kemp

The special group of men that Jesus commissioned to carry the gospel to the world after His ascension were known as the apostles. The word apostle means one sent out with a message. Every apostle was a disciple, but not every disciple was an apostle. The apostolic office was a special role fulfilled by those selected by Jesus Himself (Mark 3:13-14; Acts 1:24-25). Jesus prayed all night before He selected the men to serve in this capacity (Luke 6:12-13). Some of these men were trained and given power during Jesus' earthly ministry as they saw Him teach, heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead (Matthew 10:1, 11:4-5). After Jesus' return to heaven, the apostles were guided into all the truth, and they laid the foundation of God's household (John 16:13; Ephesians 2:19-20).

There are some apostles that we do not know much about. We are only told their names. There are other apostles that we know a great deal about because scripture allows us to look into their lives before and after they were called by Jesus (e.g., Peter, John, Paul). It is thought-provoking to consider the various types of men that Jesus called to be His apostles. Let us notice a few things about some of the lesser-known apostles based on what we find in scripture. As His disciples today, be encouraged that He can use us just like He used them.

Matthew: The Tax Collector Turned Evangelist

Before Jesus called Matthew (also known as Levi; cf. Mark 2:14) to be His disciple, he was a tax collector. Tax collectors were detested in first-century Palestine as they were seen as corrupt traders who worked for the Romans. Tax collectors sometimes took more than was necessary and were guilty of greed and dishonesty (Luke 3:12-13, 19:2, 19:8). The Pharisees frowned on tax collectors and did not think that any righteous person should keep company with them (Luke 15:1-2).

However, when Jesus saw Matthew, He did not see someone who was beyond hope. He saw a man full of potential who would be an apostle and faithful evangelist. Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, and Matthew did just that (Matthew 9:9). He not only followed Jesus, but he eventually penned the first gospel in our New Testament. The gospel of Matthew is a favorite of many, and probably the one people are most familiar with because of its position in the New Testament. Matthew was a tax collector, despised by his countrymen but desired by his God. Matthew's contribution to the New Testament should encourage us to never count anyone out. We should be reaching out to those who the world has given up on and let them know that God wants to give them another chance (2 Peter 3:9).

Andrew: The Brother and Bringer

Andrew was a disciple of John before he was a follower of Jesus. Without a doubt, this prepared him to follow the Messiah (John 1:35-40). Once Andrew identified Jesus as the Messiah, he called his brother, Peter, and introduced him to Jesus (John 1:41-42). Jesus called both Andrew and Peter away from their fishing nets and charged them to be fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-20). Later, Andrew brought a young boy to Jesus who provided the bread and fish for Jesus to feed the 5,000 (John 6:8-10). On one occasion, Andrew introduced some Greeks to Jesus who desired to see Him (John 12:20-22).

We do not possess any writings from Andrew or any sermons that he preached, but we know that he was always bringing people to Jesus. If all someone could say about us is that we are bringing people to Jesus, that would be a great compliment (cf. Mark 5:19). Andrew's brother, Peter, ended up being far more well-known than he was but had he never introduced Peter to Jesus, that may not have been possible. We may never write or preach like Peter, but we all can bring people to Jesus like Andrew.

Andrew was an apostle who no doubt did his share of preaching, teaching, and healing, but he was, more than anything, someone who brought others to Jesus (Mark 6:7-13).

Thomas: From Doubter to Believer

Thomas was a man filled with courage and questions. When Jesus went to raise Lazarus from the dead, the disciples thought it might lead to His death. Thomas was willing to go and die with Him (John 11:11-16). He was not afraid to go into battle with Jesus, but he was someone who liked to be sure of what he was getting into before he fully committed. Before Jesus went to the cross, Thomas wanted Jesus to plainly tell him the way that He was going and how the apostles could follow Him (John 14:5). Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Perhaps Thomas is most famous for his doubt concerning the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas was a twin (Didymus means twin, see John 20:24) and was probably used to people getting him mixed up with his brother. When the disciples claimed to have seen the risen Jesus, he probably thought they mixed him up with someone else. He wanted definite proof (John 20:24-25). Jesus appeared, allowed Thomas to feel the wounds in His hands and His side, and commanded Thomas to believe (John 20:26-27). Upon feeling the wounds and being assured of Jesus' identity, Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28). When Thomas learned the truth, he expressed it. Jesus says to those of us who have not seen but have the eyewitness testimonies of the apostles that we can be blessed in our belief (John 20:29). The gospels were written so we could have the same faith and assurance that Thomas enjoyed and know for certain that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30-31). Thomas struggled with doubt but turned his doubt to conviction. As we find things

YOUTH GROUP

The youth group, and anyone else that would like to come, are invited to the annual New Year's bonfire at the Kenyons this Friday, January 8th at 6 pm. Be sure to bring your own chair for sitting by the fire.

RSVP to Brian or Jagie. Let Jagie know if you can bring a side dish or dessert. The meat will be provided. Let Brian know if you have a Christmas tree to add to the fire.



*Evelyn Wyatt
received her eternal reward
on December 31, 2020*

"Bless are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"
Revelation 14:13

in scripture that challenge us and leave us doubting, we should not stop until we come to the truth like Thomas. We should then share it and proclaim it as he did.

Judas: The Traitor

Judas was not always wicked. Jesus prayed for him and empowered him to do His work in the limited commission just as He did the other apostles. However, at some point, Judas turned away from righteousness and is forever remembered for his treachery. Every time Judas is listed among the apostles, he is mentioned last. This epithet is attached to his name: the traitor (Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16; John 6:71). Judas chose to betray Jesus for money, and after he was overwhelmed with guilt, he hung himself (Matthew 26:14-16, 26:47-50, 27:3-5). He is a sad example of what could happen to any disciple of Jesus. He was an apostle who taught others, performed miracles, and was close to Jesus but ended his life in apostasy. Judas teaches us many things, but perhaps the most important lesson is that as we walk close to Jesus, we should be sure that we are true disciples and not traitors.

Not everyone can be an apostle of Jesus, but everyone can be His disciple. The apostles were selected in the first century for a special role, and no one living today occupies this office (cf. Acts 1:21-22). Still, we should examine their lives and mimic the good they did and refrain from the bad. Jesus chose all types of men to follow Him, and He used them in unique ways. Jesus is still calling men and women to follow Him, but it is up to us to accept His invitation.

Senior Saints

by John McShane

When you Google the word loyal, the definition is "giving or showing firm and constant support or allegiance to a person or institution." Loyalty is genuinely having their best interest at heart and ensuring the relationship is reciprocal. Loyalty is the ability to put others before yourself and stick with them in good times and bad. Show loyalty to friends, family, and others by being honest, trustworthy, supportive, and generous. Maintain healthy boundaries with those around you so you can be loyal to them in a productive way. When we came up out of the waters of baptism, we had committed to be loyal to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Today, it seems that loyalty can change from day to day depending on what or who we want to believe. There are many false, and unfortunately, very convincing prophets around us today. Are we still as loyal to God as we were when we were baptized? Are we still aware of the words in Romans 1:16, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*"? When our earth years are over, and we enter into eternal life, we will find out if our loyalty was where it should have been. In the words of 1 John 3:24, "*Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this, we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*" It would not hurt any of us to do a daily loyalty check to determine where we stand in God's eyes.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Our Members:

PRAYER LIST

Bob Pratt
Chuck Wyatt
Adeline Hine
Bill & Carlene Long
Ciera Edwards
Kathy Nester
Sharon M. Washington
Joyce Williams
Ray Nashick
Antoine & Marcella Swain

Brenda Mask
Linda McShane
Bernetta Green
Bobby Simpson
Brian Smith
Jim Turner
Annette Phillip
Ron & Judy Ford
The Palmer family

Carol Edmonson
Wayne Shearer
Ingrid Stewart
Melody Baxter
Geny Johnson
Margaret Coone
George Davis
Nikki Williams
AJ Palmer

(Please update the office of any changes)

The EXTENDED FAMILY and FRIENDS prayer requests are emailed every week.

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Faith West	Joyce Burbage	Carol Eason
Ellen Shearer	Chuck Wyatt	

Phone numbers are in the directory. Let's call to let them know we miss them and love them.

UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Jessica Palmer & AJ Palmer have tested positive for Covid. AJ is scheduled to have surgery this week for pyloric stenosis.

RESPONSES

Cam'ron Bailey repents of disrespecting his mother and not treating people like a Christian should.

OUR PRAYERS AND CONDOLENCES

Bill Fife (Phil's brother) passed away on Wednesday, December 30. Bill had been on our prayer list since his Covid diagnosis.

Irma Dampier (former member) passed away on December 31, 2020. Her husband, Gene, was a longtime elder at SFA.

- *Congratulations -*
Casey & Emily Paulin
 (12-18-2020)

and

Jerry & Samantha Pollard
 (12-31-2020)



SCHEDULED TO SERVE

January

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Song Leader/Prayer Ian Enamorado
Devo Terrance Dindy, Jr.
Closing Prayer Allen Grimes

Sunday, January 10, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"Judas: Lessons from a Fallen Apostle"
Matthew 26:20-25

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"The Book of Revelation in 7 Words"
Revelation 1:3

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both services) Phil Fife
Greeters E&C Smith
Song/prayer before class Ian Enamorado
Announcements David Anderson
A.M. Song Leader Vince Daugherty
Scripture reading/Prayer Andre Medley
Lord's Table Wesley Brunson
Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Bingle
P.M. Song Leader Vince Daugherty
Scripture reading/Prayer Jimmy Sweeney
Lord's Table Wesley Brunson
Closing Prayer David Deal

TODAY - Elders/Deacons/Preachers Meeting, 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

Song Leader/prayer Vince Daugherty
Devo David Anderson
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

ASSEMBLING UPDATE

We still encourage those who do not feel well and those who consider themselves high-risk to stay at home.

To side with caution, we are still requiring masks to be worn upon entering the building as we have since July 2.

We will continue live-streaming the services on YouTube as we have since March 22. Thank you for your cooperation. - Elders

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Dec. 20	\$9,707.50
Dec. 27	\$6,390.00
Jan. 3	\$6,235.00
Contribution Average	\$7,442.61

People are beyond ready for the new year. It's no wonder, seeing as 2020 has become synonymous with terms like "dumpster fire" and "hot mess." Let us take stock of our attitudes as we start this new year: Did we let 2020 get the best of us? As we went throughout the year, did we let politics divide us from other Christians? Did we allow our tempers to flare over hot

button issues? Did we label others as sheep or stupid because their views were not in line with ours on politics or the pandemic? Did we use Covid19 as an excuse to be less active in the church? We are now in 2021, and the circumstances have not changed. Do we still blame 2020... or do we realize that we cannot actually blame a year for everything unfortunate that happened there within? Instead... we can look inwardly and try to address the turmoil. How much time in 2020 did we spend asking God for peace in comparison to complaining about 2020? I hope you will join me in resolving to be more content in any circumstance that this world throws our way (Phil. 4:11-13), seeking peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7), and improving our attitudes toward trials (Rom. 5:3; Jas. 1:3). We may not know what 2021 holds for us, but we do know who holds all in his hands (Job 12:10).

--- Mark Your Calendar ---

Florida School of Preaching 46th Annual Lectureship

God-Breathed Scripture

January 18-21, 2021

Make plans to join us for this important study of God's word! Learn the truth and why it matters!

Broadcast Live at fsop.net

List of speakers can be found on fsop.net

Dates to remember

January 7 -

Thursday Ladies' Class, 7 pm

January 8 -

Bonfire at the Kenyons', 6 pm

January 10 -

Elders, deacons, & preacher meeting, 4 pm

January 18-21 -

FSOP Lectureship.
Topics and speakers, go to fsop.net

January 29 -

Youth Group devo at the Daughertys', time TBD

January 31 - Fifth Sunday Building Fund

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

Find us on social media



**THEN HE SAID TO THEM,
'FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN.'**

MATTHEW 4:19

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CHURCH OF CHRIST**
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