



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 77 No. 5 January 31, 2023

ELDERS

David Anderson
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Rick Kenyon
Stacey Paulin

MINISTER

Joshua Cantrell

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

EMAIL

SFA.church@gmail.com

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.

WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Find us on

YouTube & Facebook

HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching
since 1969

Missionary - Huron, SD
Casey & Emily Paulin

MISSION FIELDS

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

“Her Name Is Sophia”

A shocked family in tears sat in the waiting room of a trauma intensive care unit, crushed with emotions, fearfully but eagerly waiting for word on the condition of their beautiful daughter who, less than an hour ago, had been in a terrible automobile accident. A man wearing scrubs finally entered the room. He sought the family of “trauma patient #2” to inform them their loved one was going in for emergency surgery. There was another family in the waiting room, and since the nurse did not have her real name, he could not immediately identify this “trauma patient’s” family. He found the correct family and explained to the grieving mom he only knew her daughter as “trauma patient #2.” From the hospital’s perspective, it makes sense to have a “trauma name,” since many come through the ER without identification or ability to communicate. However, this mom, through her tears, wanted the nurse and everyone else in that room to know, “She has a name. Her name is Sophia. *Her name is Sophia!*”

This family gave practically everything they had and almost every hour of their time and energy toward the hopeful recovery of their precious daughter, spending hours of daylight and darkness by her side in two Florida hospitals. Many prayers went up to God in the name of Jesus. Doctors, nurses, and medical staff worked selflessly over the past four and a half months. South Florida Avenue church members went the second mile on numerous occasions to help ease this family’s multiple burdens. In the end, however, we are all just human. Sophia Elizabeth Smith passed from this life early Saturday morning, January 28, 2023, surrounded by her family. We do not understand why God allows these things to happen, but with the patriarch Job, we simply declare, “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21).

“Her Name Is Sophia” and She Loved the Lord

Sophia attended services with the South Florida Avenue church of Christ since coming into this world. She, like many others, was grounded (as much as a toddler could be) by Reba French’s cradle-roll class. Sophia enjoyed her Bible classes, especially when she had friends in them. She definitely leaned more toward the “social butterfly” side of things rather than the serious side 😊. Sophia obeyed the gospel and was baptized (Mk. 16:16) by Bobby Sheumaker while in middle school. There was no doubt by those who knew her that Sophia was a faithful Christian. Jesus said that “every good tree bears good fruit” (Mt. 7:17), and Sophia’s life definitely bore good, sweet fruit. Once she figured she was old enough, Sophia loved to help the congregation by assisting and teaching the



small children's classes. Teachers and parents may not have always thought her timing was right 😊, but she sure loved children and wanted to help in God's kingdom every way she could. This would later show itself in her mission work. Do we love the Lord and His church and show it like we should (cf. Mt. 22:37-40; Lk. 6:46)?

“Her Name Is Sophia” and She Loved Her Family

The Smith family has always stuck together. Scott served for many years as a scout leader with Brian in his troop. The whole Smith family, including the girls, would go on Boy Scout trips together. Even without the scouts, they enjoyed outings together in nature, including their annual Sanibel trip. Sophia and her siblings watched out for one another. Yes, they aggravated one another and at times could not stand each other 😊, but if anyone else messed with a sibling, there was no doubt whose side they would rush to defend! This sticking together and why it is so important displayed itself in no greater way than on the day of Sophia's accident. She was on her way to our Youth Day with Joe Wells. Her sister, Olivia, was already here. When Sophia did not arrive, Olivia saw with her cell phone tracking app that Sophia was just a block away. Olivia waited and waited, and when she saw from the app that Sophia was still at that same intersection, she rushed to see what had happened, only to arrive on the horrible scene. It was made even more surreal by Olivia's seeing among the cluttered wreckage Sophia's Bible lying in the road, yet unattainable due to police barricades. Sophia had already gone by ambulance to the hospital. Olivia then called her mom (who was already in her car tracing Sophia's route, sensing something was not right), and they met at the hospital. Sophia's family's sticking together is exemplary to us all. We are supposed to be our “brother's keeper” (cf. Gen. 4:9), but do we notice when our sister or brother in Christ is missing? Do we keep track of our spiritual siblings to make sure they are traveling in the right Way (Jn. 14:6)? Yes, the South Florida Avenue shepherds have a tremendous responsibility in this area (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4); however, they cannot do it alone. All Christians must help (Lk. 15:4-6; 1 Thes. 5:14)!

“Her Name Is Sophia” and She Loved Adventure

Sophia never considered Jesus' words “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Mt. 28:19) a burden. In fact, she saw it as an adventure! Her first YES II mission trip was to Panama in 2018. She was hooked! Following this, she went on as many campaigns as she could! Even after covid and before YES II trips resumed, Sophia went on American Mission Campaigns, organized by Austin Fowler. She even went twice in the same summer, much of it at her own expense! Again, her “social butterfly” leanings may have gotten her in a little trouble with some 😊, but there is no denying she loved those mission trips. For some reason, Sophia and Olivia (her “travel buddy”) were known, on more than one occasion, to be stranded in far away cities due to cancelled flights or extraordinarily long customs checks 😊. On one occasion, they were stranded in Miami at a big fancy casino hotel the airline had arranged. As we might guess, Sophia wanted to milk that for all it was worth, which was only a moderate amount in expense vouchers provided by the airline. On another occasion, Sophia and Olivia were stranded in Memphis. Jeff and Jennifer Phillips from the Covington church of Christ took them into their home and treated these girls as if they were their own daughters! God's people are truly the best! Paul said of Priscilla and Aquila, they “risked their own necks for my life, to whom ... I give thanks” (Rom. 16:3-4). Sophia's spirit of adventure, applied to making disciples, allowed her to “risk her neck” in saving souls, even though she would probably not regard it as such because of the fun she had doing it. Are we willing to step out of our normal surroundings to influence others with the gospel? Christians are “earthen vessels,” containing gospel “treasure ... that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” (2 Cor. 4:7).

“Her Name Is Sophia” and She Wears A New Name

As much thought as Scott and Staci put into naming their youngest daughter and as beautiful as that name is, Sophia is even more blessed now to have a better, newer name. John wrote about the Christian who stays faithful and overcomes the world, “I will write on him [or her] the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name” (Rev. 3:12). Note how many times “My God” appears in this one-verse promise to those who overcome. God's eternal ownership of these overcomers is expressed by a three-fold name. First, this person will be given the “name of my God,” which designates a person who belongs to the Lord, the opposite of those who are marked as belonging to the world (Rev. 13:16-17; 16:2; 19:20). The “name of the city of my God” designates heavenly citizenship (cf. Rev. 21:12; Phil. 3:20). “My new name” indicates a person who shares in Christ's glory (cf. Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:2).

Yes, “Her name is Sophia.” She has finished her race (Heb. 12:1-2). She has “kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). We can see her again. Let us continue praying for this family. May we live our lives in such love and obedience to Jesus that we will not only see Him for all eternity but all the faithful as well when this life is over! ♥ *Brian*

PRAYER LIST

Current: Kathy Nester is in Breezy Hills Rehab on Socrum Loop. **John Hunt** (has not been feeling well) **Continual:** **Bob Pratt** (health); **Brenda Mask** (blood pressure issues); **Debbie Bush** (struggles); **Brian Smith** (heart health); **Antoine & Marcella Swain** (health); **Geny Johnson** (health); **Bill & Carlene Long** (strength); **Ron & Judy Ford** (health); **Bobby Simpson** (health); **Annett Phillip** (health); **Janie Wise** (health); **Charles Paulin** (health); **Jim Turner** (health). **Margaret Coone** (health).

Shut-ins: Joyce Burbage, Carol Eason, and Kenny & Reba French.

Extended family and Friends: prayer requests are emailed each week and posted on the bulletin board. **Please help us keep these lists updated by informing the office of known changes in status.**

Our deepest sympathies

to the Smith family as our dear Sophia passed away on Sat. Jan. 28, 2023. The funeral service will be Friday, Feb 3, here at the church building. Visitation will be at 9:00 am and the funeral service will follow at 10:00 am. SFA members will be providing a pot luck meal for the family and friends. Please contact the office if you can help provide food or drinks for this occasion.

Cindy Hoffelder, the mother in law of Daniel Stearsman, was baptized into Christ on Wednesday in Warner Robbins, GA. Cindy has attended S Florida Ave many times in the past! The angels in heaven are rejoicing and so are we!!

There are lots of dishes in the utility room that need to be picked up! Please check and see if they belong to you!

Polishing the Pulpit
August 16-24.2023

Some have expressed interest in chipping-in with other SFA members to rent a cottage in the area and attend. If you are interested, please let the office

Save the Date:
March 12-15, 2023
Spring Gospel Meeting
Speaker:
Victor Eskew
Theme:
God's Spiritual Family

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

February

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

AnnouncementsDavid Anderson
Song Leader/prayerFrankHamby
DevoVince Daugherty
Closing PrayerPaul Sweeney

Sunday, February 5, 2023

10:30 A.M

What to do When Your Faith is Shaken
(Ps 46:1-2)

Josh Cantrell

6:00 P.M.

Between Sundays (Matt. 5:13-16)- Josh C.

Those to Serve

10:30 A.M.

Song/prayer before classKyle Faneuf
AnnouncementsTyler Anderson
A.M. Song LeaderTerrance Dindy
Scripture reading/PrayerJosh Estridge
Lord's Table (both).....Wesley Brunson
Closing Prayer BrianWilliams
Open/Close bldg (both).....Jason Hendri-
GreetersNona/Janice
Attendance cards (both)Sawyer/Ellis
Sound Booth (both).....Paul Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song LeaderDavid Williams
Scripture reading/PrayerRick Kenyon
Closing PrayerJeff Stewart
Greeters PM.....Sweeneys

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

AnnouncementsBrian Kenyon
Song Leader/prayerAndre Medley
DevoJosh Cantrell
Closing PrayerWayne Shearer

Upcoming Events 2023

February

- 11 - Youth Group Valentines Party
- 12 - Elders, Deacons, Preachers Meeting
- 17-19 - Ladies Retreat (Weeki-Wachee)
- 18 Men's Breakfast at SFA @ 9:00 am
- 24-26 -Yes Weekend (Forrest Park)
- 26 -Fellowship in Service

March

- 12-16 Gospel Meeting at SFA with Victor Eskew

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Jan15.....	\$5,481.00
Jan 22.....	\$6,059.00
Jan 29.....	\$7,819.00
Contribution Average.....	\$7,748.74
Weekly budget	\$7,410.00

An Audience of ONE

I felt discouraged as a voice whispered, "Don't write any more. People don't care. They won't like what you write." Then on Friday the 13th I read my daily devotion and it reminded me that my audience is God. Focus on God and His word when you write. Seek always to please Him. Just plant the seed and God will give the increase.

When David wrote, his focus was always towards God. He wrote to an audience of one, God. Over the years, people have been encouraged, inspired, and comforted by his writings. He was focused on his sins, his weaknesses, etc., but most of all his need for God. The inspiration of God led to his private thoughts becoming public messages for generations to come. One such message I now pray almost every morning: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm

139: 23-24

The Hymn "Take My Life, and Let It Be" says it well: "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love. Take my lips and let them be, filled with messages from Thee."
I want to please my audience of one, God!

Youth Section

Lessons from First Timothy: When I Grow up (I Timothy 3:10)

Seemingly every kid is asked the question, "what do you want to be when you grow up" about a million times in the course of their formative years. Have you ever heard a young man give a response, "I want to be an elder"? Yeah, me neither. Occasionally a young man will say I want to be a preacher but even that is rare. Paul told Timothy, "If a man desires the position of elder, he desires a good work" (I Tim. 3:1). The church in any time or location is always in great need for leadership and competent men in positions of authority. In I Timothy 3:1-7 Paul tells Timothy what characteristics elders must have in order to be qualified for the position. To any young man reading those verses, most if not all of the characteristics are things any Christian should strive to show in their own lives. Just because you are not already in a position of authority does not mean you cannot be a leader. Try to organize your life in such a way that when you grow up, whatever you do you can be a servant and a leader in the church. Who knows, some day you may just be an elder!

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



Apple
Podcasts



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

*But I would not have you ignorant,
brethren, concerning them which are
asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others
which have no hope
1 Thes. 4:13*



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.