

# The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

**A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.**  
The Messenger is published weekly by the South Florida Ave. Church of Christ meeting at 1807 South Florida Ave - Lakeland, FL 33803 Vol. 71 No. 07 02-13-18

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## OFFICE PHONE

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## 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.

## 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.

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IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

## Those Who Should Not Be Baptized

Hiram Kemp

The religious world is misinformed about the practice of baptism. There are some who believe the method of baptism does not matter. Those who deny that there is a scriptural method to be employed argue that one can be sprinkled, have water poured on his or her head, or be immersed; it is simply a matter of choice. The Bible does not leave the method of baptism open for our personal interpretation and judgment. The word translated "baptize" in our English translations means to dip, plunge, or immerse. Baptism is described by Paul in the New Testament as a burial (Rm. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). When the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized, it is said that both he and Philip went down into the water and both came out of the water. This would be unnecessary if water was simply going to be sprinkled or poured on his head (Acts 8:38-39). When John was baptizing in Aenon, it is said he chose this location because there was much water there (Jn. 3:23). Still, there are those who believe baptism plays no part in whether or not a person is saved. Individuals who advocate this view of baptism claim that one is saved at the point of belief or verbal confession and may be baptized later, but they say baptism has no bearing whatsoever on their salvation. The New Testament contradicts this view of baptism. Jesus said those who believe and are baptized are saved (Mk. 16:16). It is at the point of baptism that sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Jesus told Nicodemus that unless one is born again of water and spirit, there would be no chance of entering the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5). Peter said that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21). So, the belief that baptism can be divorced from the salvation process or that belief alone is enough is not biblical. However, with all the Bible says about baptism and the importance it places on this culminating act in the salvation process, there are some who should not be baptized. There are at least three groups of individuals who should not be baptized.

## The Impenitent

The word impenitent means failing to have feelings of shame or regret about one's actions or attitudes. The Bible calls for us to be penitent, or to repent. There is godly sorrow and then there is worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow produces repentance when we view our sins through the lenses of God's word and want to turn away from those things. Worldly sorrow involves temporary grief. People may be sad that they were caught doing the wrong thing, but this person has no real desire to change. A prerequisite to baptism is a penitent heart. Peter

told those present on Pentecost that they needed to both repent and to be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who see baptism as some ticket to punch or a “get out of hell free card” without having a penitent heart should not be baptized. Anyone who is being immersed simply to please a spouse or to jump on the bandwagon at a camp or retreat should reevaluate his or her motives. Baptism is serious business and should not be trifled with. God wants all of humanity to repent and come to a knowledge of the truth that leads to conversion, but those unwilling to repent should not be baptized (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). Being baptized without repenting is like spraying on cologne or perfume without taking a shower; it does no good and does not solve the real problem. Jews who heard the gospel were told to repent and turn, and we are told the same today (Acts 3:19). Baptism washes away sins, but only for those who repent. If a person is not willing to repent he or she should not be baptized.

## The Unaccountable

The Catholic Church not only practices sprinkling as a mode of baptism, but they also “baptize” infants. Both of these practices are erroneous. Baptism is for those who understand what sin is, have the ability to repent and are old enough to comprehend the gospel message. The false doctrine that is promoted by many in the denominational world of inherited sin, or total hereditary depravity, is refuted by Ezekiel 18:18-20. We do not inherit Adam’s sins or anyone else’s. Adam introduced sin into the world, but it is brought into each individual’s life by his or her own doing (Rm. 5:12; Jas. 1:13-16). Children who have not yet reached the age, or stage, of accountability should not be baptized. Just because a child mentally grasps what the Bible says and can regurgitate facts does not mean he or she is a candidate for baptism. One must not only understand the gospel and what it means to repent, but the one responding to the gospel must also know and appreciate the high call of sacrifice the Christian life demands (Lk. 9:23). This is not to say someone who wants to be baptized must know everything that the Bible teaches on every subject. If this were true no one would ever be baptized. Yet, we should not try to make Biblical minimalists out of those preparing to enter the kingdom of God. Children should be told that God loves them and should be instructed concerning his word early on, but there need not be any rush to baptize someone who has no sins that need to be washed away. This principle of being unaccountable expands to those with mental handicaps and other similar conditions. Jesus welcomed the children to come to him and said we must become innocent like them in order to see the kingdom (Mt. 18:3-4; 19:14). Some may be thinking: what exactly is the age of accountability? No one can say for certain. Levels of maturity differ from child to child, but those preparing to baptize a young child should go over what the Bible says and be sure to the best of their ability that the child is ready and is doing this on his or her own. If the child is not accountable, he or she is safe and should not be baptized.

## The Saved

Those who have already been saved and have had their sins washed away in baptism will still sin occasionally (1 Jn. 1:8,10). However, one does not need to be baptized again simply because sin has occurred. There is only one baptism according to Paul (Eph. 4:5). The blood that cleansed at baptism is just as powerful to cleanse post-baptism for those who confess sins and walk in the light (1 Jn. 1:7, 9). Sometimes people question their own baptism, and individuals believe they need to be baptized again because they have gained more knowledge. I believe if someone has questions about their baptism and their conscience is troubled, we should not hesitate to baptize them in order to put their doubt to rest and be sure. Nevertheless, if we teach people the way God deals with sin both before and after baptism, we might reduce the number of people desiring to be baptized a second time. Simon the sorcerer was taught the gospel by Philip in Samaria and was baptized for the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 8:12-13). A short time after this, Simon fell into sin and was rebuked by the apostles. He was not told that his initial response was insincere and that he should be re-baptized. Simon was told by Peter to repent and pray (Acts 8:22). This is what all Christians should do when sin occurs, repent and pray, and God will forgive just like he does at baptism (Heb. 8:12). One is only scripturally baptized once. If the first baptism is doubted, then one should be baptized scripturally for the right reasons and that is the one baptism that scripture describes. Those who are in a saved relationship with God through his Son should not be baptized, but should repent when they sin, confess that sin to God, and strive to walk in the light, trusting God to cleanse them continually.

*(continued on page 4)*

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Carol Eason has been moved to Consulate Care on Socrum Loop Rd. Still no visitors at this time. Virginia Walker was home sick. Also remember Faith West, Bill Long, Wanda Bruno, Ginny Hamby, Jim Turner, Brenda Mask and Margaret Coone in prayer.

**Shut In Members:** Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Evelyn Wyatt and Sharon Edler.

**Others:** Lynn Stevens, Bob McAnally, Jerry Cole, Joan Shanes, Mike Tubbs, father of Elizabeth Tubbs, Janet Hyder, Doris Smith, Joyce Stearsman and Jack Pinckert

## Upcoming Events

**Saturday February 17th:** Men's breakfast here at SFA. at 8:00 a.m.

**Sunday February 18th:** Teacher Workshop from 2:00-5:00 p.m for all those teaching next quarter from March-May.

**Sunday February 18th:** Lads to Leaders Meeting (Bible Bowl Test) 2:00-5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday February 20th:** Seniors Saints will meet for coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m. If you are not familiar with the Senior Saints, it is for any or all our members who are retired and would like to get involved. We have fellowship, and plan things we can do to help further the work of the church.

**Tuesday February 20th:** F.S.O.P Ladies Class at 7:00 p.m.

**February 25th - March 1st:** Gospel Meeting at the North Lakeland church of Christ. Speaker will be Aaron Ellis.

**Saturday March 10th:** Ladies' Day at the Venice church of Christ.

## Sympathy

Joyce Cauthen, former member here, passed away Feb. 11. There will be a grave-side service at Oak Hill, Friday, Feb. 16, at 10:00 am. Please pray for this family.

## Response

Rene' Bingle and Nancy Jacobs responded to the invitation asking for prayers of the congregation. Please keep them in prayer.

## Visitors

Michael Edwards, Bitsy Thomas, David & Susan Stearsman and family, Bill & Joyce Perkins, George & Marion Beals, Lashonda Ivey and Denise Cowser.



## " Fellowship Meal "



## Special Worship Schedule

Every last Sunday of the month, starting on **Sunday, March 25th**, we will have morning worship, then a fellowship meal and go right into our second worship service. At the fellowship meal, we will celebrate Birthdays and Anniversaries for the month. Also, in conjunction with our second service, we will have a brief singing service to learn new songs, instead of having it on the first Wednesday night of the month.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### February

David Anderson ..... **Table** ..... David Williams  
Paul Romine ..... **Assist** ..... Robert Cooper

**Sunday, February 18, 2018**  
9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class**..... Jim Turner  
**Prayer**..... Fred Strickland

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Fred Strickland  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**..... C.J. Grimes  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... John McShane  
**Sound Booth**..... Paul Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader**..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer**..... Paul Romine  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... David Deal  
**Sound Booth**..... Paul Sweeney  
**Greeters**..... Bingles  
**Att. Cards**..... Antonio/Paul  
**Open & Close Building**..... Bobby Sheumaker

**Wednesday, February 21, 2018**

**Song Leader**..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer**..... Wayne Shearer  
**Closing Prayer**..... Ken Walker

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005*

**Sunday, February 25, 2018**  
9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class**..... Ken Walker  
**Prayer**..... C.J. Grimes

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Fred Strickland  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**..... Ken Walker  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Sound Booth**..... Paul Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader**..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer**..... John McShane  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Sound Booth**..... Paul Sweeney  
**Greeters**..... Dixs  
**Att. Cards**..... Colby/Sawyer  
**Open & Close Building**..... Bobby Sheumaker

**Wednesday, February 28, 2018**

**Song Leader**..... Matt Willcut  
**Opening Prayer**..... Jeff Bingle  
**Closing Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Jan. 21.....	\$5,223.60
Jan. 28.....	\$5,099.75
Feb. 04.....	\$7,286.45
Feb. 11.....	\$4,884.53
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....	<b>\$5,656.95</b>
<b>2018 Weekly Budget</b> .....	<b>\$4,716.51</b>

# Those Who Should Not Be Baptized (continued from page 2)

## Conclusion

Baptism is important, one cannot be saved without it. Still, if a sinner will not repent, then baptism will do no good. If the person desiring to be baptized is unaccountable, the baptism should not take place. If one is already saved, baptism serves no purpose. Jesus sent his disciples to teach and then to baptize. Let us do the same, in that order (Mt. 28:18-20). Ω

**Set to Go!**  
**Feb. 23-25, 2018**  
**YES Weekend**  
Forrest Park, Valdosta



**Think souls! Let's Invite our friends and neighbors to church assemblies and/or to one-on-one Bible studies!**

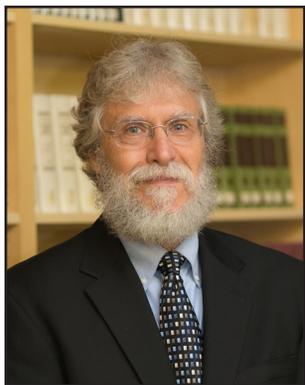
**Sunday morning, Feb. 25, will be this year's "Purpose Sunday," when our eldership will go over our 2018 budget and congregational work goals!**



*South Florida Avenue*  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
*1807 South Florida Avenue*  
*Lakeland, FL 33803-2653*

Return Service Requested

The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .



Jody is the director and main speaker for the International Gospel Hour. He also serves as an instructor for the Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies.

## **Gospel Meeting with Jody Apple** **The Big Questions . . . March 4-7, 2018**

**About God** (Sunday, March 4, Bible class at 9:30 am)

**About the Bible** (Sunday, March 4, sermon at 10:30 am)

**About Christ** (Sunday, March 4, sermon at 6:00 pm)

**About Faith** (Monday, March 5 at 7:00 pm)

**About Redemption** (Tuesday, March 6 at 7:00 pm)

**About the Christian Life** (Wednesday, March 7 at 7:00 pm)