

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. 69 No.10 03-08-16

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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

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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www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com



SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

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

Spring Gospel Meeting with Melvin Otey on "The Parables of Jesus" March 20-23, 2016



Sunday at 9:30 am: *The Persistent Widow*

Sunday at 10:30 am: *The Prodigal Son*

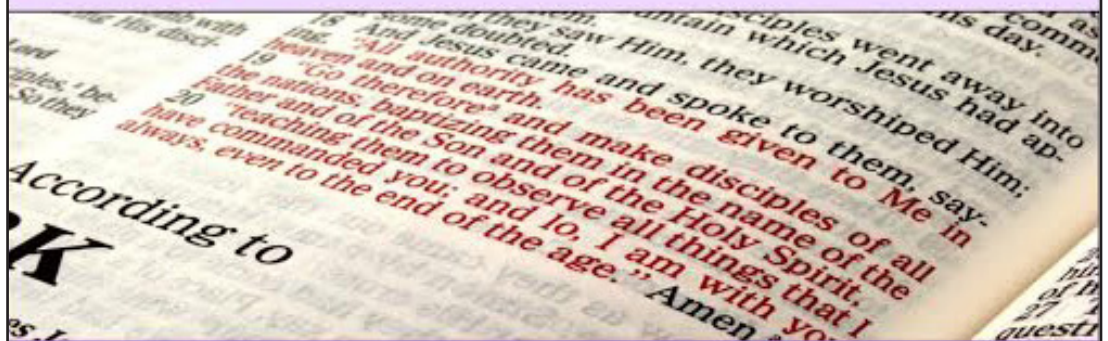
** Pot Luck Lunch Afterwards*

Sunday at 6:00 pm: *The Creditor and His Debtors*

Monday at 7:00pm: *The Seed and The Soils*

Tuesday at 7:00 pm: *The Master and His Talents*

Wednesday at 7:00 pm: *The Shrewd Steward*



Melvin Otey serves as an Associate Professor of Law at Faulkner University, Jones School of Law; writes for Christian publications; and conducts Gospel meetings, lectures and seminars. He formerly worked for the US Department of Justice in Washington, DC, as a trial lawyer (2000-2003, 2007-2014) and preached for the Georgia Avenue congregation in DC (2006-2014). He received formal education from St. Louis University (BS in Business Administration, 1997), Howard University School of Law (JD, 2000), and Amridge University (BS in Ministry/Bible, 2008; MDiv in Ministerial Leadership, 2014). He and his wife, Jania (Jah-nay-ah), have two sons (Caleb and Christian).

South Florida Avenue church of Christ

1807 South Florida Ave, Lakeland, FL 33803

Phone: (863) 682-4702

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Plan to come hear each lesson and bring a friend!

What Are You Looking for in a Church

Wayne Jackson

Some people couldn't care less about religion. They do not believe in God; and "church," in their opinion, would be a burden and a waste of time. There are not many theoretical atheists (the evidence for God's existence is much too compelling); there are, though, legions of practical atheists—those who profess belief, but live as if there were no God.

Most folks, however, have a genuine conviction that there is a Creator and they believe they owe him allegiance. Accordingly, if they really are conscientious about that, frequently they will search for a church. They may choose one associated with a family tradition, or they may simply go shopping for something near their home. Neither of these avenues of pursuit is necessarily wise.

Churches are plentiful. If one lives in a metropolitan area, he scarcely will be more than a few blocks from a church building. There are large facilities and smaller ones. There are bright, well-kept places, while others are run down. If you are looking for material constructions, you can just about have your choice. Unfortunately, it is the case all too often that "church" choices are superficial. For many, spiritual considerations are not the prime factor in a church selection.

In looking for a church, the first consideration for some is what type of facilities or programs are available. For example, is the building comfortable? What sort of seating is provided, or how is the temperature regulated? Is the parking convenient? Is there a commodious nursery? Is a day-care facility available? Are there recreational and social activities for the members? Do you have a "bail-out" program in case I get behind on my car or house payments?

Notice that all such questions are grounded in physical-material interests. Others move in a slightly different direction. They want to know: Do you have a good music program? Is there, perhaps, a chorus or "praise" teams? Is your church a democracy where everyone has the right to help make church decisions, etc.? Questions of this nature, though sincere, indicate the need for a more mature level of knowledge.

More crucial are the following considerations: What does this church stand for? Does it hold the conviction that the Bible is the inerrant, inspired word of God? Does the leadership believe in the uniqueness of the New Testament church pattern and strive to lead the congregation in the direction of faithfulness, as opposed to a loose philosophy which alleges that most all "Christian" churches are okay, and doctrine really doesn't matter? Does the church have an "open-door" policy where folks can simply float in or out at their convenience, with no accountability to the leadership? Such is not a responsible way to conduct the Lord's business.

Does sound doctrine emanate from the pulpit—teaching that enriches the soul and inoculates against worldliness and false doctrine? Or are people looking for speakers who are jokesters, stand-up comics, with a repertoire of jokes that ridicule the church and biblical preaching?

Are we anxious to have leaders who love us and are concerned about our souls? Or do we prefer to be left alone to craft religious procedure according to our personal tastes? Do we want healthy teaching that re-proves, exhorts and, when needed, rebukes? Or would we rather have that mushy, feel-good psycho-babble?

Are we still interested in restoring the original church, or have we gravitated toward the Joel Osteen, Rick Warren "community church" motif? There is much talk these days about the "emerging church." The so-called church is one that has "emerged" from the restraints of New Testament authority and is of the Jeroboam variety (1 Kings 12:25-33). Far too many want a religion fashioned after their own inclinations (Colossians 2:23), with just a faint aroma of pristine Christianity.

Congregations that have been identified with a "restoration" principle for many years are coming under a new leadership that is charting a course more toward Rome than Jerusalem, and scores of naive people can't tell the difference. Many need to look into the mirror of divine truth (James 1:23-24), and ask themselves this question: "What am I looking for in a church?"

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Ginny Hamby will be discontinuing chemo at this time. She will have further testing done. Jacquelin Dopwell's surgery went well, but they were unable to remove all the cancer. Also keep Janet Crosby, Dolly Martin, Frank Hamby, and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Alyssa Buckner, Henry Enamorado and Debbie Horsley's father.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Bill Burton, Claud Romine, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Duane Nelson and Sharon Edler.

Others: Chrissi Fuesner. Please keep all these in prayer.

Upcoming Events

March 12th: Egg Hunt at the Bingles at 10:00 a.m.

March 13th: L2L will meet. This is the final meeting before the convention. Everyone involved with the scrapbook will meet at 1:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Everyone else will meet at 4:00 p.m.

March 15th: Florida School of Preaching Ladies Class at 7:00 p.m.

March 19th: Semi Annual Picnic and Sing at Mary Holland Park in Bartow hosted by Jackson Ave. Church of Christ. Lunch at noon. Activities starting at 11:00 a.m.

Thank You's

Dear Christian brothers and sisters, Thank you for your thoughts and prayers for Ron. We are thankful he is on the mend. In Christian love, Ron & Judy Ford.

Dear church family, Thank you all, for your prayers, cards and visits while I was in the hospital and re-hab. So good to be back with my family here at S.F.A. Your love and kindness is beyond what I've ever known. Love, Grace McAnally.

Sympathy

Betty Jean Thornhill, our sister in Christ, passed away last Thursday, March 3rd. The services were held here at S.F.A. on Tuesday March 8th. Please keep the Sweeney's and family in our prayers during this difficult time.

Billy Moore, the brother of Bettye Bolding, passed away last Saturday March 5th in Kansas City. Please keep Bettye and her family in our prayers.

Visitors

Gary & Jena Belich, Floyd & Shirley Loudermilk, Barbara Vine, Miriam Small, Johnny Davidson, Louise Stewart, Ted & Debra Okolichany and Hans Huang.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

March

C.J. Grimes..... **Table** David Williams
Antonio Martin..... **Assist** Tucker Sweeney

Sunday, March 13, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Tucker Sweeney
Prayer..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Frank Hamby
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Kenny French
Sermon..... Bob McAnally
Closing Prayer..... Kyle Williams

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Stacey Paulin
Opening Prayer..... Paul Romine
Sermon..... Brian Kenyon
Greeters..... The Fifes
Att. Cards..... Sebastian & Quadarius
Closing Prayer..... Ken Walker
Open & Close Building..... Fred Strickland

Wed. March 16, 2016

Song Leader..... David Williams
Opening Prayer..... Jeff Bingle
Closing Prayer..... Kyle Bingle

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call **Chuck Wyatt** so he can get a replacement - 859-5231*

Sunday, March 20, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Williams
Prayer..... Kyle Bingle

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Frank Hamby
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Jimmy Sweeney
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Stacey Paulin
Opening Prayer..... Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters..... The Bingles
Att. Cards..... Quadarius & Paul
Closing Prayer..... Bobby Simpson
Open & Close Building..... Fred Strickland

Wed. March 23, 2016

Song Leader..... Jim Turner
Opening Prayer..... David Anderson
Closing Prayer..... Bobby Sheumaker

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Feb. 14.....	\$5,077.00
Feb. 21.....	\$5,631.00
Feb. 28.....	\$6,392.70
Mar. 06.....	\$5,087.21
Contribution Average	\$5,145.83
2016 Weekly Budget	\$4,422.60

Obeying God's Will Whether "Bitter" or "Sweet"

Ezekiel was a prophet of God who declared God's word among the people of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, who were carried away as captives by Babylon and were dispersed along the River Chebar (Ezk. 1:1). At this same time, God had a prophet in Jerusalem (Jeremiah) and in the courts of Babylon (Daniel), so that no matter where God's people were, God's voice could be heard. Ezekiel was told, "Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you." ⁹Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. ¹⁰Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe. ³¹Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." ²So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. ³And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness. ⁴Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them" (Ezk. 2:8-3:1). In this unusual dialog and figurative command to eat a scroll, two lessons can be learned about obedience to God's word. First, it is possible for God's servants to be rebellious and disobey God (like Jonah 1:1-3). Sometimes we can stoop to the level of the rebellious people we are trying to help. Like Ezekiel, we must be reminded not to rebel against God's will for us. Second, we must "digest" God's word to the *(continued below)*



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

Announcements

Thursday and Friday, March 10-11 We will work on our scrapbook. Meet in the fellowship room @ 6 p.m.

Sunday, March 13 We will have our next L2L day. All our young people who are going to Orlando should attend. We will finalize everything for the big meeting! We will meet in the fellowship room. **Important:** youth and adult mentors interested in scrapbook will meet @ 1:00 pm (lunch will be provided for those staying immediately after morning worship). All others will meet @ 4:00 pm.

Sunday, March 25-27 Will be the Lads Leaders Convention. Please pray for our young people and their chaperones as they travel and participate.

(continued from above) point of making it our life. The word Ezekiel was to take in contained both negatives ("lamentations and mourning and woe") and positives ("honey in sweetness"). So it is with us. Some of God's commands are much more enjoyable and involve less consequences from the world of rebellion than others. Yet, the seemingly negative commands are just as important because, in the long run, keeping both results in great blessings (Proverbs 8:32). Let us not base our obedience to God only on those things we don't mind doing. Rather, let us obey all of God's commandments! ❤️ *Brian*



Our young people and their chaperones are gearing up for a mission trip to Nicaragua June 25 thru July 3. If you want to make a special contribution to this work, please see the elders.