



# South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST *MESSENGER*



1807 S. Florida Ave.,  
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 78 No. 12 March 19, 2024

### ELDERS

David Anderson  
Brian Kenyon  
Bobby Sheumaker

### DEACONS

Tyler Anderson  
Jason Hendrix  
Stacey Paulin

### MINISTER

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

OFFICE PHONE  
(863) 682-4702

### EMAIL

[SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto: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.....6:30 p.m.

### WEB PAGE

[SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://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  
Ted Wheeler ..... Ghana, W.A.

# YOU'RE INVITED

MARCH 22-24, 2024

# GOSPEL MEETING



Join us  
for a weekend  
of studying  
God's word  
and enjoying  
fellowship



STEVEN FORD  
PREACHING

## MEETING TOPICS:

**Friday March 22**

@ 7:00pm Existence of God \*

**Saturday, March 23**

@ 7:00pm Three Portraits of Faith \*

**Sunday, March 24**

@ 9:30am A Christ Centered Life

@ 10:30am The Love of the Father

@ 6:00pm Serving from an Empty Cup \*

**\*Please stay for refreshments & fellowship  
following each evening service.**

# INVITE YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS, & NEIGHBORS!

# Can We Stand “144,000 Strong” with the Lamb?

Brian R. Kenyon

The Book of Revelation is a very encouraging study once we understand the apocalyptic nature of its writing and that symbolism is the dominant feature and focus, not historical personalities or events. The “144,000” is a group mentioned or alluded to throughout the book. While this group is misaligned and falsely characterized by denominationalism, we can be encouraged by what God actually reveals about them!

## Who Are These 144,000?

After the sixth seal was opened by the Lamb, there was an apocalyptic description of a great judgment unleashed upon the opposition to God (Rev. 6:12-14). Those “of the earth” (i.e., belonging to Satan, Rev. 17:8), from every social strata, cried out to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us ... from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17). The answer of who was able to stand was figuratively portrayed as two groups of people.

First, the 144,000 symbolized the “redeemed of the earth” (Rev. 14:3). Attempts to limit these to redeemed Jews fail to recognize the figurative nature of the passage. Christians are the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:15-16 cf. Rom. 2:28; Gal. 5:6; Phil. 3:3). The list of the tribes from whence these 144,000 came is different from the traditional lists in the Old Testament (cf. Gen. 35:23-26; Ex. 1:1-4; 1 Chr. 2:1-2). Second, John saw a “great multitude which no one could number,” who were those martyred Christians who came “out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9-14). This group symbolized those who had died in the violent persecutions of that day, while the 144,000 symbolized those on earth who were faithfully serving the Lamb despite the severe persecution.

These 144,000 also appear “standing on Mount Zion” with the Lamb, “having His Father’s name written on their foreheads” (Rev. 14:1), which symbolized their belonging to God ((Rev. 3:12; 7:3; 9:4; 22:4), as opposed to Satan by having his mark (cf. Rev. 13:16-17; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). These 144,000 sang “a new song before the throne ... and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth” (Rev. 14:3). These 144,000 also “follow the Lamb wherever He goes ... were redeemed from among men ... for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Rev. 14:4-5).

## How Can We Stand Like the 144,000?

Although the combined persecuting forces “will make war with the Lamb ... the Lamb will overcome them ... and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14). Anybody can stand with the Lamb if he or she meets this three-fold status. First, he or she must be “called.” Only those who have obeyed the gospel are “the called of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:6-7; 8:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Jude 1 cf. 2 Thes. 2:14). Second, he or she must be “chosen.” God chooses us through the gospel (cf. Eph. 1:3-6). This choice, or “election” (from the same Greek word, *eklektos*, ἐκλεκτός), is not unconditional but dependent on our conforming to His will (Eph. 1:11-14; Rom. 8:29). Jesus came as “a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God” (1 Pet. 2:4-6). Whether we accept Jesus, He is the same cornerstone. To those “who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become ... A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed” (1 Pet. 2:7-8). People are not “appointed” to reject Jesus (cf. Mt. 11:28; Mk. 16:15-16), but by their rejecting Jesus, they are “appointed” to stumble (cf. Mt. 7:21-23)! Third, he or she must be “faithful.” Faithfulness does not require sinless perfection (cf. 1 Jn. 1:8-10), but loyalty to the Lord (Mt. 24:44-46;

### Did You Know?

The 12 tribes in Revelation 7:4-8 are listed differently than other biblical list. Judah is listed first due to this tribe’s preeminence (i.e., line of Christ, Rev. 5:5; Gen. 49:10; Heb. 7:14). Levi, who had no land inheritance, is listed (Rev. 7:7). Manasseh and Joseph are listed (Rev. 7:6, 8), but Ephraim and Dan are not, perhaps due to their idolatry (cf. 1 Kgs. 12:25-33; Judg. 18). This listing, along with the context, shows this is figurative not a restored national Israel in our future!

## PRAYER LIST

**Current:** Stacey Paulin will be having surgery on March 20 in Miami, Fran Gabaldon has an appointment at Moffit on March 26. Jeff Bingle had a PET scan last week.

**Continual:** Debbie Bush (struggles); Antoine & Marcella Swain (health); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Linda Simpson (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Jim Turner (health)

**Shut-ins:** Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

**Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.**

Jeff Stewart and Ron Cox responded to the invitation asking for prayers of the congregation for forgiveness of sin.



There will be a “door knocking” opportunity for those interested in distributing fliers and sowing the gospel seed. We will meet at the building at 9:30 am on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 21-23, in conjunction with our Gospel Meeting with Steven Ford. “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11).

The **Senior Saints** have prepared blessing bags to be distributed to the less fortunate in our community. They are available in the fellowship hall beside the table on the south wall.

Also, thank you to the **Senior Saints** for providing a new coffee maker for the fellowship hall!

### EGG HUNT

**Sunday March 24, 2024**  
**2:00 PM**  
**at the Sheumaker's home.**  
**1621 Yorkshire Trail**  
**Lakeland, FL**



*Thank you note from  
 Ronny and Debbie Lynn*

*Thanks you all for the prayers, phone calls, cards and visits. We are thankful for our Christian family at S. Florida Ave.*

\*\*\*\*\*

The Elders would like to meet with each SFA family to hear your ideas, concerns and questions.

They will be at the building on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Please call the office or set up a time and day that works best for your family.

Pray without ceasing  
 1 Thes. 5:17

### Scheduled to Serve in March

Designated Elder	Brian Kenyon
<b>Wednesday, March 20, 2024</b>	
Announcements	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Terrance Dindy
Devotional / Invitation	Jarred Spivey
Closing Prayer	David Deal
<b>Sunday, March 24, 2024</b>	
10:30 am Sermon	Steven Ford
The Love of the Father	
6:00 pm Sermon	Steven Ford
Serving From An Empty Cup	
<b>Those to Serve 10:30 am</b>	
Greeters	Fife
Song/Pray before class	Tucker Sweeney
Announcements (both)	Brian Kenyon
Song Leader (both)	Andre Medley
Prayer / Bible reading	Steve Tydings
Lord's Table (both)	Jeff Stewart
Closing Prayer	Josh Potvin
Open/Close Building	Jason Hendrix
Attendance Cards	N/A
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix
<b>Those to Serve 6:00 pm</b>	
Greeters	Bea/Jeanelle
Announcements	Brian Kenyon
Song Leader	Andre Medley
Prayer / Bible reading	Jarred Spivey
Closing Prayer	Tim Croson
<b>Wednesday, March 27, 2024</b>	
Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	David Williams
Devotional / Invitation	Andre Medley
Closing Prayer	Camron Bailey
<b>How We Are Giving</b>	
March 3	\$8,225.00
March 10	\$7,520.00
March 17	\$6,368.00
Contribution Average	\$7,205.90
<b>Weekly Budget</b>	<b>\$7,410.00</b>

**If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!**

# IF GOD WERE THE COACH, WOULD YOU MAKE THE TEAM?

This past week I spent time with my daughter and her family. Her husband coaches the JV basketball team at Mars Hill, so I heard quite a bit about his team. One of his team members had an unhappy mother because he was asked to sit on the bench rather than to play and she thought that was unfair and that her son should be out on the court. My son in law explained to her that her son was not putting in the effort that the others players were. He had potential but he did not want to put in the work.


What do you think God would say about you? He sees where our priorities are, He sees where our efforts are. He knows our potential. He sees the time we actually put into winning souls and serving others. (Matthew 6:21) Are we more concerned about worldly things and activities when there are souls dying all around us every day? Are we neglecting our most important responsibilities and expecting to hear "well done good and faithful servant"(Matthew 25:21-23) when this life is over? God does not tolerate lukewarm Christians. Revelation tells us He will "spew them out of his mouth". (Rev. 3:15-16).

Yes, God sees our efforts and so do those around us. Let's make sure our efforts match our words so others will be able to see whose team we are really on. One day we will either be told to "depart from me" (Matt. 7:23) you were never on my "team" or "Come into my courts with praise". (Psalms 100:4).

## Ladies:

These ladies day events are great opportunities to grow together spiritually! Please **RSVP** if you are able to attend. Also, contact the office if you would like to attend but need a ride.

The Ladies Of Eagle Lake Church Of Christ  
 Invite You To Our 2024 Ladies Day With  
 Sister Pamela Clark  
 "Living In The World, But Not Like The World"  
 Romans 12: 1-2



And be not conformed  
 World <sup>but</sup> TRANSFORMED  
 by the Renewing  
 OF YOUR MIND  
 ROMANS 12:2

Saturday April 20th, 2024; 8:30 Till 11:30 a.m.  
 LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED  
 Please R.S.V.P. By: March 30th, 2024  
 Gail Jackson: 903-243-1445  
 Lorraine Hubbard: 863-514-3379  
 We Look Forward To Seeing You There!!!



**Recipes**  
 Ladies Day  
 Saturday, April 6, 2024  
 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
 RECIPE FOR PEACE

**SPEAKERS:**  
 "Stock Your Spiritual Pantry" Stephanie Kenyon  
 "Putting It All Together" Unita Orr

**Registration:** 9:30 A.M.  
 Continental Breakfast

**Program Begins:** 10:30 A.M.  
 Lunch Provided: 12:00 NOON

**KISSIMMEE CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 921 WEST VINE STREET  
 KISSIMMEE, FL 34741

**R.S.V.P - no later than March. 25<sup>th</sup>**

Please contact Karen Kirkendall at 407-973-4058  
 or email at [karenkirkendall@aol.com](mailto:karenkirkendall@aol.com)  
 with names of attendees so name tags  
 can be made ahead of time.

[www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)  
 Email us: [SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



## South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue  
 Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

" But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31



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