

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.14 04-05-16

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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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SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY

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

Yes, We Are Open on Sundays

Mark T. Tonkery

My family and I recently took a day trip to Amish Country here in Ohio. It was a nice and relaxing day in which we went sightseeing, shopping and tasting the free samples of cheese. While there I picked up some of the local advertisements, looking for the good deals and coupons for my wife. I noticed while skimming several of the ads that some of the stores made a special note that they were open on Sundays.

This is due to the fact that most of the Amish and Mennonite people close their stores and shops for Sunday worship. I did think it was interesting that I did not see any church of Christ or other religious group for that matter have an ad in the papers, reminding the locals and visitors to their community that they too were open on Sundays for worship.

Now it maybe just understood that Sunday is the Lord's Day and Christians worship on this day, or maybe there was an ad that I did not see advertising the church's assembly and times of meeting on Sunday. Regardless, what a great reminder it would have been to see an ad in the paper reminding that the churches of Christ are open on Sundays. That Sundays are not just a "day off" where we look for something to do, but it is a very special day of worshiping God. The first day of the week is a day where we as Christians come together (Acts 20:7), a day to be taught the Word of God and to fellowship with other Christians.

Every Sunday, Christians can be found breaking bread and offering prayers (Acts 2:41-42). It is also the day of the week when we are to give of our means for the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:2). We remember that Christ arose from the grave and conquered death on Sunday (John 19:1ff).

Yes, we are open on Sundays! Maybe this is a good reminder for the local congregation as well. Christians are to be present when the "doors are open" for worship and Bible study! After all, Hebrews 10:24-25 still reminds Christians, *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*

A Matter of Perspective

Robert Johnson

We live in a society that has become increasingly hostile to the values in which Christians believe, to which they hold and by which they live. Laws have been enacted in some states that are designed to limit the expression of Christian thought to church buildings, prohibiting even the reading of certain passages of Scripture in public that some would construe as controversial. The problem is exacerbated by those who wear the name Christian but who do not have a clue what it means to be a Christian and to live as a Christian. This is the legacy of the influence of secularism that permeates so much of life.

How do we respond to such an attitude? We remain consistent to our calling as Christians. Paul reminded Timothy to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2), whether in season or out, whether popular or not. Why? Because only the Word of God reveals His truth about salvation, about the life those who have salvation in Christ are called to live. Only the Word of God is “living and active” (Hebrews 4:12), able to penetrate to the innermost part of our being and help mold us in His image. Only the Gospel is God’s power to salvation (Romans 1:16), and only by teaching and living the truth, a lifestyle consistent with the message of the Gospel, will we have an impact on others. “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evil doers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).

Even with this, we know there will be many who will still reject the Gospel because they have been deceived by Satan and have allowed sin to harden their hearts. How do we respond to this? We must continue to live the Christian life. Jesus told us, “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!” (Luke 12:4-5).

This reminds us of an important point. This life is brief, as a vapor or mist (James 4:14). If we are faithful unto death, we have the promise of eternal life (Revelation 2:10). No matter what we face in life, whether trials, difficulties, persecutions or whatever, they are short-term compared to eternity. How sad it is for those who reject Christ, who would spend their time living in sin, in seeking to eliminate the influence of Christ, to face what comes in eternity. “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:18). To reject God is to be given over to sin, and without Christ there is no hope after this life is over.

While many of those who are without Christ would laugh at such an idea, it does not change its truthfulness, because Scripture is true. The rich man in the Gospel of Luke, who lifted up his eyes in torment (16:23), realized his lavish lifestyle had been nothing more than a wasted life. So it will be for those today who reject the Gospel and live a worldly lifestyle and who are hostile to godliness. While we would like to live peaceably during our time here and now, even if we face trouble and distress, what joy will it be to see our Lord in eternity! Trouble today will fade into nothingness in being with the Lord. No matter how good life can be without Christ, it will be meaningless instantly when one realizes it brought judgment forever.

I do not minimize anything anyone has to endure for the sake of the Lord in this life. However, we must realize it is temporary. I do not minimize the problems the ungodly can generate, but without Christ, one’s problems will truly begin after this life is over, and that for eternity. We must keep our perspective about life, no matter what life brings. Remember what it is we live for, and remember those outside of Christ, those who do not obey Christ, are those most to be pitied. “But for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury” (Romans 2:8).

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Colby Dix was home very sick with the flu. Also keep Jim Turner, Jacqueline Dopwell, Janet Crosby, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Dee Moore, Alyssa Buckner and Harold Rister.

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

Others: Chrissi Fuesner and Barbara Savage. Please keep all these in prayer.

Upcoming Events

April 10th: Lads to Leaders Banquet following the morning service. Bring a covered dish. The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

April 16th: A Meet-N-Greet Brunch for the ladies at 10:30 a.m. It will be at C.J. & Kelcey Grimes house 7955 Benjamin Dr. Lakeland FL 33810.

April 16th: Men's breakfast at Eagle Lake Church of Christ at 8:00 a.m., door knocking to follow.

April 17th-21st: Gospel Meeting at the Eagle Lake Church of Christ. The flyer is on the bulletin board for more info.

Address Change

Bob & Grace McAnally have moved. Their new address is 1325 Grasslands Blvd. Apt #206 Lakeland, FL 33803.

Charity Event

Taleah Anderson is collecting empty prescription bottles for the V.A. clinic. The deadline is June 29th. The box is in the foyer. Please remove all the labels.

Thank You

Thank you so much for the cards, food and prayers during my illness. In Christian love, Jacquelin Dopwell.

Thank you for the prayers, calls and cards at the passing of my sister, Kathleen Fraley. Also for the donations to the F.S.O.P in her memory. In Christian love, Bob & Bea Pratt

Response

Elizabeth Tubbs responded and asked for the prayers of the congregation last Sunday evening. Please encourage her.

Visitors

Tania Portelles-Driggs, Kyle Coe/ Shayna Lee and Kyle Jr., Wilfrido & Jeanny Negron and Jaiden, Charles Ferguson and Rob & Linda Redden.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

April

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** Josh Estridge
Fred Rapley..... **Assist** David Anderson

Sunday, April 10, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... John McShane
Sermon..... Bob McAnally
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Sermon..... Brian Kenyon
Greeters..... The Frenchs
Att. Cards..... Paul & Quadarius
Closing Prayer Tim Croson
Open & Close Building..... David Anderson

Wed. April 13, 2016

Song Leader..... Steve Hunley
Opening Prayer Kyle Bingle
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

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

Sunday, April 17, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Kyle Bingle
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jim Turner

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Greeters..... The Bingles
Att. Cards..... Sebastian & Quadarius
Closing Prayer Ken Walker
Open & Close Building..... David Anderson

Wed. April 20, 2016

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer John McShane
Closing Prayer Fred Strickland

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Mar. 13.....\$4,475.82
Mar. 20.....\$4,252.00
Mar. 27.....\$6,809.58
Apr. 03.....\$4,771.00
Contribution Average.....\$5,126.19
2016 Weekly Budget.....\$4,422.60

Good Guys Fighting Each Other?

For the last two weeks, the number one movie has been Batman versus Superman, and later this year, there will be a movie that pits Iron Man against Captain America. All four of these characters are “good guys” in the comic book world. Whether Hollywood is just running out of fresh material or whether this is a deliberate reflection of our culture’s view that there is no such thing as objective good (or both), decide for yourself. However, comic book characters aside, “good guys” fighting each other is not a good thing in the real world. All the “good guys” of God (i.e., faithful Christians) are on the same team and should not be fighting one another. Paul warned the Christians in Galatia, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” (Galatians 5:13-15). A team that fights within itself is doomed to fail. Jesus illustrated this principle when He answered the scribes who said He cast out demons by the power of the devil, “How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end” (Mark 3:23-26). Jesus’ point was simple: it would be ridiculous to think that Satan would defeat his own team members. Such an action would guarantee that “Satan’s house” would be defeated. *(continued below)*



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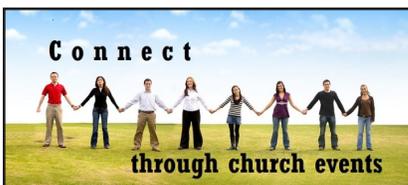
Lads to Leaders Banquet

April 10 @ 11:45 a.m.



The congregation is invited to celebrate the accomplishments of our young people and encourage them to further cultivate their talents for the Lord’s service! This will be a “potluck” style meal held in the fellowship room. Our food theme this year is American. There is a sign-up sheet on the hallway bulletin board.

YOUTH DEVO & ACTIVITY ON SATURDAY, APRIL 23



If you would like to host a devotional or activity, please let Brian know. Now that 2016 L2L is complete, we will start these events again!

(continued from above) If that is true of the “bad guys,” how much more true would it be for God’s team? Let us always be aware of who is the real enemy and use our Christian armor against him (Ephesians 6:10-18), and not fight each other! ❤️ 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.



WEEKI WACHEE YOUTH RETREAT APRIL 29 - MAY 1

Make plans now to attend this annual event! Let Brian know if you want to attend. We will arrange the transportation. This will be a great weekend!