

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. 70 No. 35 09-19-17

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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 Yeary.....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

NEW LIFE ... KEEP IT GOING

By Brian R. Kenyon

Hopefully, by now, all the members of this congregation have had their electricity restored and have regained a sense of “normalcy” following the hurricane. We are thankful that the damage was not as bad as it could have been in this area and that church members here were not injured in the aftermath. As it did in 2004, when Charlie, Frances, and Jeanne blew through Polk County, the landscape will be different in many areas. Once familiar tree lines will never look the same. Some trees that remain will be permanently bent as a sturdy reminder of Irma for those who experienced her. Damaged buildings may be repaired or rebuilt with a different look or perhaps even demolished. Eventually, the area will look as crisp and as clean — or maybe even more so — as it did before the hurricane. However, as “normalcy” progresses, let us not be complacent but keep preparedness going. Some people’s yards had not been thoroughly picked-up nor their trees properly trimmed since the 2004 hurricanes. They had much work to do preparing for the storm. It is easy to become less and less vigilant the further time passes without a hurricane. If we are not careful, yards and trees will get out of hand again, leaving vulnerable many homes. This compares to being a Christian.

SATAN'S DEVASTATION

Before becoming Christians, our lives were a “desolate landscape.” We were the “slaves of sin,” resulting in our spiritual death (Rom. 3:23; 6:16 cf. Jn. 8:34; 2 Pet. 2:19). We were under the control of Satan (1 Jn. 5:19), and “walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others” (Eph. 2:2-3). During that former life, we were puppets to “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16). The only things we produced were the “works of the flesh ... adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like” (Gal. 5:19-21). Before Christ came into our lives, there was nothing we could do to correct our wrong or even to clean up our mess. Spiritually, we were constantly as if a hurricane made its path through our souls!

CHRIST'S RE-CREATION

Thankfully, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). Jesus cleaned-up the devastating mess we created for ourselves through our own sin, the mess we ourselves could not make right. Gratefully, “God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). Jesus lived a perfect life and always “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). He became our perfect sacrifice, for “Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us ... once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:24-26). God recorded His will through the writers of the Bible and providentially passed it down to us in reliable translations (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3, 20-21 cf. 1 Thes. 2:13). God’s written word was not written merely to be admired but to be obeyed! Paul wrote to the formerly sin-enslaved Romans, “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). Obedience to the Gospel puts us “in Christ” (cf. Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27), and “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). We are spiritually re-created by God in Christ! It is as if He took the hurricane-devastated landscape of our souls and not only instantaneously cleaned them up, but also replanted maturing fruit bearing trees in the place of the irreparably damaged ones!

CHRISTIANS' PRESERVATION

Because of the grace of God and the redemptive work of Christ, there is a sense in which we are to “work out” our “own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). That is, we have some responsibility in the salvation process. Paul summarized this point very well: “For by grace [God’s part] you have been saved through faith [our part], and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). God did not design salvation so that we passively do nothing while we wait for that heavenly home. Rather, we are to be active in the areas of salvation God designed for us to be. God knows we are not sinless (cf. Jn. 1:8-10), and He does not require us to be. He requires our loyalty (Heb. 11:6). He has provided a way from which we can never fall as long as we continue to meet His conditions. Peter wrote that we must give “all diligence” and “add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love” (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Then note: “For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ... for if you do these things you will never stumble” (2 Pet. 1:8-10). Note again, “if these things are yours and abound ... if you do these things.” The promises of never being “barren nor unfruitful” and “you will never stumble” are conditional! However, just like becoming complacent when it comes to keeping our earthly houses ready for a hurricane, we can become complacent in keeping our souls in good standing before God. The Christian graces of which Peter spoke must “abound,” which implies continual growth and influence. If we cease “abounding” in them, we leave our souls vulnerable for Satan’s devastation once again!

CONCLUSION

We continue to thank God for sparing us the damage that could have happened, but even more importantly, we thank God for saving our souls through the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Let us not become complacent and “neglect so great a salvation” (Heb. 2:3). Rather, let us continue to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Mt. 6:33), seeking “those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). God wants us to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), and He has provided everything we need from the cleansing blood of Christ to the promise that He “will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5). If you, dear reader, are outside of Christ, we would be delighted to study with you and encourage you to obey the Gospel. If we are in Christ, let us keep on being faithful and growing in the Lord. If we are complacent, let us repent and get involved in the Lord! ♥ *Brian*

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Please keep Ginny Hamby in prayer as she started another round of aggressive chemo treatment on Tuesday Sept. 19th. Jim Edmonson was admitted to LRMC Sept. 19th for observation. At the time of this printing, he was in room B-420. Call before visiting, as he was expecting to be released in a day or so. Also keep Jim Turner, Margaret Coone, Sharon Washington, Carol Eason and Josephine Bowman in prayer.

Relatives: Joy Baker, (Michelle Paulin's cousin).

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

Others: Duane Nelson, Joyce Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner, Jack Pinckert, Corey Perry and Paul Meacham, (preacher for the Panama St. Church of Christ in Montgomery, AL). He has been diagnosed with brain cancer and has been given a 16 month life expectancy. He is 54 years old.

Upcoming Events

Sept. 24th-27th: Fifth Annual Sebring Lectures at the Sebring Church of Christ. See the flyer for more info.

Sept. 29th - Oct. 1st: Rush at Freed Hardeman University for middle school and high school students.

Saturday Sept. 30th: Ladies brunch at the Skyview Church of Christ at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday Oct. 1st: Lads to Leaders kick off meeting has been rescheduled at 4:30 p.m.

Sunday Oct. 1st: Fellowship In-Service after evening services. Again please bring finger foods.

Saturday October 7th: South Florida Ave.'s Ladies Day! The men of the congregation will be serving lunch. Please see the sign up sheet on the bulletin board. There is also a sign up sheet for items needed for the breakfast. For questions see Kelcey Grimes or Brittani Kemp.

Thank You

Thank you all for the wonderful cards! Arizona takes some time to get use to but it has been great! Military life has been an interesting experience with many ups and downs. You all remain in my prayers and I hope all is well!

Kind Regards, Elly Enamorado

Hither, Thither and Yon

Duane and Gloria Nelson have moved to Arkansas to be with their son. They will surely be missed. Please continue to keep them in prayer.

Visitors

Victor Travis, Lindy Hendrix, Jenna Hart, Helen Albright, Ellis Richardson and Ken & Belinda Harrison.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

October

David Anderson **Table** David Williams
Vince Daughtery **Assist** Robert Cooper

Sunday, Sept. 24, 2017
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Jim Turner
Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Stacey Paulin.
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... David Anderson
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jim Edmonson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Paul Romine
Opening Prayer Kyle Williams
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Jeff Bingle
Greeters Darlene T./ Brenda M.
Att. Cards..... Paul & Ian
Open & Close Building..... Jimmy Sweeney

Wed. Sept. 27, 2017

Song Leader..... Jim Turner
Opening Prayer Bobby Sheumaker
Closing Prayer John McShane

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

Sunday, Oct. 1, 2017
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Frank Hamby
Prayer..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Kenny French
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Matt Willcut
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tyler Anderson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Kyle Williams
Opening Prayer John McShane
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

Greeters The Edmonsons
Att. Cards..... Willcut boy's
Open & Close Building..... John McShane

Wed. Oct 4, 2017

Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Fred Strickland
Closing Prayer David Deal

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Aug 27.....	\$5,034.25
Sept 03.....	\$5,383.00
Sept 10.....	\$.....N/A
Sept 17.....	\$7,596.00
Contribution Average	\$5,252.68
2017 Weekly Budget	\$4,716.51



Where Is Our Passion?



I was in Denver on the second weekend of the 2017 NFL football season. There was a big home game that Sunday afternoon against the team from Dallas. When I got back to the hotel Sunday night, there were a few people wearing Dallas jerseys looking a bit dejected. I thought, "Wow, people would fly all the way up here to watch their football team in its second game of the year? They must have lots of money." I went to the airport Monday morning, and to my surprise there were people all over wearing Denver and Dallas jerseys, talking about the game. Later that day, on a layover in Atlanta, there were people wearing the jerseys of many different NFL teams, talking about the various games they attended. Although looks can be deceiving, they did not all seem super wealthy. It was obvious, though, everyone of these people were very passionate about their NFL team. They were willing to spend significant amounts of money and time to travel far from home for a one hour game (that takes about three hours to finish). Two thoughts occurred to me. First, people will do what they are passionate about, even if it requires great cost and sacrifice. Saul of Tarsus, for example, was passionate about "defending Judaism," even to the point of persecuting the church (Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:6). However, when he was converted to Christ, he *(continued below)*



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 . . .



The L2L "Kick-Off" meeting has been rescheduled for October 1 @ 4:30 p.m. in the fellowship room. See how you can help our young people grow spiritually!

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



We rejoice that **Josh** was baptized into Christ on Thursday, Sept. 7, 2017. His conversion was a "team effort," led by the Gospel of Christ, your hospitality, sound teaching/ preaching, enthusiastic worship, and one-on-one Bible studies. To God be the glory!

(continued from above) became even more passionate about serving Christ, even to the point of constantly risking his life (2 Cor. 11:23-28). How passionate are we about Christ? Are there "extracurriculars" we attend more often than His church assemblies? Is there anything else we treasure more than Jesus? If so, we are not as passionate about Jesus as we need to be! Second, what if every church member were as passionate about Christ and His church as those people at the hotel and airports were about their teams? Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). Passionate football fans watch or attend their team's games as much as possible. They let everyone know their favorite team. Do we attend as many of God's assemblies as we can? Do people know we're on the Lord's side? We cannot fake passion. If we lack it for the Lord, be converted! ❤️ *Brian*