

# 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.39 09-27-16

## ELDERS

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

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

## How to Convert a 91-Year-Old

Hiram Kemp

On Thursday September 15, 2016, Don Starks was baptized into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins at 91 years of age. Don is the father of Michelle Paulin, our secretary here at South Florida Avenue, and we were glad he made the decision to become a Christian. Don had grown up Catholic, gone to Catholic school and lived his entire life up to this point in the Catholic faith. We all have people in our lives we would like to reach (Rm.10:1). The issue with leading people to Christ is that we do not know when Jesus will return, and we also do not know when people's lives may end (1 Thess. 5:2; Heb. 9:27). So how do you reach someone who is steeped in their religious beliefs and 91 years old?

### Example

Don has been living at Azalea Park assisted living facility for some years now. Jim Turner would frequently go to Azalea Park to visit and have a prayer with Don as he made his rounds visiting (Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27). Jim would go in and sit with Don, he would talk to him about life, how his day was going, and of course the Bible. Jim always responded to questions and situations in the world with a verse of Scripture (1 Pet. 4:11). Don always complimented that he knew Jim would be in heaven because he was such a faithful Christian and knew the Bible so well (1 Pet. 3:15). Jim allowed his light to shine and was the salt that added flavor to the life of Don (Mt. 5:13-16). Jim was simply doing the work of a Christian, visiting and talking about the God he loves and the church for which Jesus died. Don saw the example that Jim modeled and the contagious spirit of happiness that he had, and it intrigued him (1 Pet. 2:12). Don was also married to a faithful Christian, Louise Starks, for sixty years, and no doubt her example played a role and cemented the importance of God in his mind as well (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

### Evangelism

Don had seen the example of Jim, but this was not the only thing that played a role in his conversion. Bob and Grace McAnally recently moved to Azalea Park as well. Grace reached out to Don and began to talk to him about eternity. Whenever she got the opportunity she would let him know that it was not too late to make the most important decision of his life (2 Cor. 6:2). She spoke with him frequently about the necessity of baptism for the right reason and in the right way (Acts 22:16; Rm. 6:3-4). I was privileged to go with her on a visit or two and talk with Don about obeying the gospel and it was clear that a good foundation had been laid. Grace used the opportunities that God had placed before her to engage Don about his soul. Jesus told his disciples to go into "all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15-16). Grace believes the power

*(continued from page 1)* is in the gospel to save regardless of age or circumstance (Rom. 1:16). To convert people, we need to put our trust in God's Word and pray that people will have an open heart to receive it. Grace was a mouth-piece for God and spoke to Don about Jesus, and this led him down the path to salvation. Faithful Christian women have always been an important part of the church, and the same holds true today (Acts 18:26; Rom. 16:1-2).

## Endurance

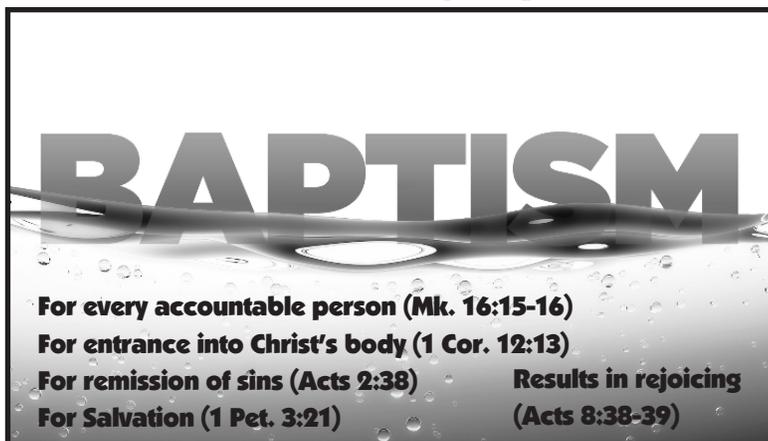
The New Testament makes it clear that being a Christian means I must have an attitude of perseverance (Heb. 12:1-2). As we reach out to those we love with the gospel we will not always receive favorable answers immediately (Jn.7:5), but this should not cause us to quit or grow weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9-10). Michelle had been concerned about her dad and his soul for a long time. She spoke often with me about his need to be obedient to the gospel and her desire for him to be saved. I suppose Michelle could have said her dad is ninety-one and that he is stuck in his ways. She could have reasoned that people do not normally change this late in the game, but she did not. Along with constant prayer, she thought of ways to reach him for his soul's sake. She talked with him concerning his need to do what Jesus said if he ever hoped to be reunited with his wife in heaven (Jn. 3:3-5). She talked with Grace and myself about ways that we could approach him and mention the gospel and the church. The endurance that Michelle displayed helped in bringing her dad to the Lord. He understood that if she was this persistent it must be important, and it caused him to think about his need to do the right thing. Michelle's brothers and sisters were all on board concerning their dad being baptized, and this added to his excitement and desire to do it. We all can get down at times about a prospective convert and feel as if there is no chance, but this is not true. Michelle demonstrated what Paul meant when he said to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

## Brotherly Love

Once Don decided that he needed to obey the gospel there was the issue of where this could be done. Don is not able to move around quite as well as he would like, and so this would make it tough to lead him up the steps into the baptistery here at the building. When it was made known what he wanted to do, we all began to search around for places that would assist us with the facilities and equipment necessary to baptize Don. Michelle called around to a bunch of places, Kathy Sweeney and Brian offered suggestions with places and ways that this could be done. We were finally able to contact the Kelly Rec Center, and they not only had the pool that could be used but also a seat that Don could sit in and be lifted in and out of the water after the baptism. Finally, David Anderson along with Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (preacher for the Sixth Street congregation), and myself were there to help him into the water and to baptize him. Don's daughter, Debbi, was able to watch on the iPhone live as her dad was immersed into Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 2:38).

## Conclusion

The question of how do you convert a 91-year-old is answered quite simply. The way this is done is through the example of faithful Christians and faithful Christian spouses, the everyday evangelism that takes place through speaking the truth for Jesus, and the endurance to never give up on a soul that is separated from God. The truth is that there is still time for those we know who are outside of Jesus. May we look at the conversion of Don Starks as an example to be followed. May we be encouraged by the hope that lies in his conversion for those whom we have prayed and to whom we have spoken who are dearest to us but have not submitted to the Lord. The gospel is God's power to save, and it still saves today (Rom. 1:16). Two thousand years ago a Pharisee came to Jesus at night and asked Him how a man can be born when he is old. The answer to Nicodemus was simple, "by the water and the Spirit" (Jn. 3:4-5).



**BAPTISM**

- For every accountable person (Mk. 16:15-16)
- For entrance into Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:13)
- For remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- For Salvation (1 Pet. 3:21)

**Results in rejoicing**  
(Acts 8:38-39)

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Hannah Hendrix and Becky Shuemaker were both home sick. Olivia Davis (granddaughter of Frank & Ginny Hamby) was home with the flu. Ian Enamorado has a broken arm. Also keep Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Jacquelin Dopwell, JoAnn Hoback, Elizabeth Tubbs, Melody Baxter, Faith West, Carla Moore, Debbie Horsley and Margaret Coone in prayer.

**Relatives:** Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Bonnie Byrd, (Virginia Walker's sister), who is under hospice care, Preston Craft (Melissa Craft's brother) and Harold Rister.

**Shut In Members:** Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Janet Crosby, Duane Nelson and Sharon Edler.

**Others:** Jackie Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner and Alyssa Buckner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

## Upcoming Events

**October 2nd:** In-Service Fellowship after the evening worship service. Please bring finger foods.

**October 2nd-30th:** Hilltop Church of Christ Fall Faith Series. Please see the bulletin board or announcement slide for additional times and info.

**October 7th-9th:** Family Festival at the Weeki Wachee Christian Camp.

**October 29th:** North Jackson Ave. in Bartow 89th Homecoming. The theme is "Living Faithful in a Troubled World" Rick Kenyon, Blaine Cook, and Jason Hendrix will be speaking. Please see the bulletin board or announcement slide for further details.

**November 5th:** Ladies Day at the Kissimmee Church of Christ at 9:00 a.m.

## Thank You

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, We want to thank you for all your thoughts, prayers and cards. Its a blessed reminder that we never face our struggles alone. Being a part of a family, no matter where we go or stay, there is someone willing to help. We hope to get to know each of you personally in the coming future. Thank you.

In Christian love, Don & Debbie Horsley and Harold Rister.

## Visitors

Matt & Shannon Wilcutt and boys and Paul Edwards

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### October

Frank Hamby ..... **Table** ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
Stacey Paulin..... **Assist** ..... Josh Estridge

### Sunday, September 25, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Stacey Paulin  
**Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Stacey Paulin  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Williams  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... C.J. Grimes

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Paul Romine  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters**..... David & Tonya Anderson  
**Att. Cards**..... Quadarius & Paul  
**Closing Prayer**..... Jeff Bingle  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Phil Fife

### Wed. September 28, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Jim Turner  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Williams  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Phil Fife

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

### Sunday, October 2, 2016

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Frank Hamby  
**Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Williams  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... Kyle Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Greeters** ..... The French's  
**Att. Cards**..... Ian & Quadarius  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Jimmy Sweeney

### Wed. October 5, 2016

**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... David Anderson  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Kenny French

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

**Aug. 28**..... \$4,535.83  
**Sept. 04** ..... \$5,659.00  
**Sept. 11**..... \$4,264.32  
**Sept. 18**..... \$4,056.00  
**Contribution Average**..... \$4,919.23  
**2016 Weekly Budget**..... \$4,422.60

# Let the Lord Enlighten Your Darkness

The psalmist wrote, "For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness" (Psalm 18:28). According to the ancient ascription at the beginning of this psalm, David wrote it on the day "the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul." The world has always contained haters of God and His people. So too has the Lord always made a way for His people to endure any trial! A burning lamp in Bible times was a symbol of continuance of life and prosperity (Exodus 27:20; Psalm 13:9). Sometimes even God's people allow the darkness of ignorance, sin, and/or spiritual unrest to overtake them. Life is definitely full of challenges and obstacles to faith, but God is able to overcome all of them in our life if we allow His light to dispel the darkness. God brightens the darkness through His word. Again, the psalmist wrote, "Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path" (Psalm 119.105). Let us allow God's word to fill our heart and permeate every aspect of our living. There is no need to continue in sin when we know that it can be forgiven (Acts 2:38). There is no need to allow persecution to stifle our Christianity when we know that suffering for Christ will seem as nothing compared to eternity in glory (Romans 8:18). There is no need to be afraid of the dark when we know that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). ❤️ *Brian*



*South Florida Avenue*  
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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .



Hiram Kemp and Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (minister of the 6th Street church of Christ) have begun a 30 minute radio program, "**The Way of Truth**," which airs Monday evenings from 5:00-5:30 on WWAB, AM 1330.

## The "Golden Rule" is something to do, not something from which to refrain

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

**The "Golden Rule"**

Do not say, "I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work." (Proverbs 24:29)

**The "Do Not Rule"**

## Gospel Meeting

with **Stephen Rogers**

*October 16-19, 2016*

**Sunday:**

**Bible Class:** Grasping the Nature of Christianity

**A.M. Sermon:** Knowing God

**P.M. Sermon:** Exalting Jesus

**Monday:** Helping People Realize They Can and Must Choose to Obey God

**Tuesday:** Getting the Outline Properly Put Together

**Wednesday:** Clarifying the Plan of Salvation

