

# 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. 71 No. 43 11-06-18

## ELDERS

David Anderson  
Kenny French  
Bobby Sheumaker

## DEACONS

John McShane  
Stacey Paulin  
Jimmy Sweeney

## MINISTER

Hiram Kemp  
(386) 405-5372

## ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Brian Kenyon  
(863) 944-8565

## SECRETARIES

Michelle Paulin / Dee Parramore

## OFFICE PHONE

(863) 682-4702

## 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 Veary.....Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald..Scotland  
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.  
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands  
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

## EMAIL

[SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

## WEB PAGE

[www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com](http://www.southfloridaavenuechurchofchrist.com)



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

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

## The Church At Philadelphia: "A Church With An Open Door"

Brian R. Kenyon

John, while on the isle of Patmos, wrote the Book of Revelation. In Chapters 2-3, there are recorded seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor. Although each letter was written to a specific congregation, each is also applicable to us (cf. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," Rev. 3:13). The sixth of these letters was written to the church at Philadelphia. The subtitle, "A Church with an Open Door," is adapted from Ray Summers (Worthy Is the Lamb).

## Background of the City

Philadelphia was located at the junction of three major roads in Asia Minor, and was known as the "Gateway to the East." Because of its location, the city was culturally diversified. The city was founded by King Attalus II (150 BC), who was very loyal to his brother Eumenes; hence, the meaning of the city's name "brother-lover." Philadelphia was founded for the purpose of spreading Greek culture and civilization. Concerning the Greek way of life, Philadelphia was a "missionary city" (cf. "an open door," Rev. 3:8). Religiously, Philadelphia was the center of worship to Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and revelry. The church at Philadelphia seems to have been a small congregation (cf. "little strength," Rev. 3:8), yet she was large in faithfulness—a great encouragement to us!

## Relevance of the Writer

This letter is written from "He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens" (Rev. 3:7). This is the lengthiest description of Christ found in the seven letters. "He who is holy" connects Christ with Deity (cf. Isa. 40:25). "He who is true" emphasizes the genuineness and dependability of Christ (cf. Rev. 3:9b). "He who has the key of David" identifies Christ with the rule and throne of David's seed (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-13). That Jesus was in complete control is evidenced by the fact that He can open what no one else can shut, and that He can shut what no one else can open. Jesus does what He wills (cf. Mt. 28:18)!

*(continued on page 2)*

# Christ's Commendation

The all authoritative Christ commends the Philadelphians for their faithfulness. "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (Rev. 3:8). Christ has set an "open door" of opportunity before them (cf. 1 Cor. 16:9). Christ had confidence in them that they were able to take advantage of this opportunity. Although no one can shut the door Christ opens (Rev. 3:7), His church must still pass through it to receive reward. The confidence Christ had in them was revealed by three noteworthy qualities. First, they had "strength." Although they were "little" (numerically), they were strong. This church had strength enough to achieve Christ's purpose (cf. Heb. 11:34). Second, they had "kept my word." They endured an unnamed persecution and remained loyal to their loyal Lord. They knew that rejecting Christ was rejecting God (cf. Lk. 10:16), and that such could not be pleasing. Third, they had not "denied my name." The name of Christ is to be revered and confessed as a way of life by God's people (cf. Rom. 10:8-10). To deny His name is to be denied before the Father in heaven (cf. Mt. 10:33). These qualities will allow us to seize the opportunities Christ gives.

## Christ's Promised Blessings

In addition to His commendation, Christ gave a number of promises to the Philadelphians. First, He promised that those Jews who had rejected Him and persecuted His church would, with all people, acknowledge Christ and know that the church is the object of God's love (cf. Phil. 2:9-11). "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie — indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you" (Rev. 3:9). These Jews were not the true Israel of God (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6; Gal. 6:16), but were of Satan's "synagogue" (cf. Rev. 2:9). Second, Jesus promised that He would protect His own. "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:10). Although the "hour of trial [temptation, KJV]" is not explicitly defined, it may refer to persecution (cf. Rev. 2:10), or to a judgment from God (cf. Rev. 6:12-7:4). In either case, God would keep them safe. Those who "dwell on the earth" were those who belonged to Satan, the god of this world (cf. Rev. 11:10; 13:8-12, 14; 17:8). Third, Christ promised His coming. "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown" (Rev. 3:11). The coming here did not likely refer to the second coming, but rather to a judgment upon Christ's enemies in Philadelphia. To the church at Sardis, this promise was threatening (Rev. 3:3), but to the church at Philadelphia, the promise of His coming was encouraging. The difference lies in faithfulness. Faithfulness is the key to readiness for His coming (cf. Mt. 24:46; 25:14-30). So long as the Philadelphians would "hold fast," their "crown" was secure (cf. Rev. 2:10). These promises encouraged them in their difficult situation.

Christ continued, "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name" (Rev. 3:12). The initial promise is one of permanent dwelling with God (cf. "go out no more"). A "pillar" is the symbol of strength and permanence. At many ancient ruins, the pillars of a building are all that remain standing. The next promise involved the ownership of God, expressed by a three-fold name: "the name of My God" shows that one belongs to God; "the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem" shows one's citizenship (cf. Phil. 3:20; Rev. 21:2); and "My new name" identifies one who shares in Christ's glory (cf. Col. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:2). Although these blessings were promised to the Philadelphians, they apply to God's people today as well.

## Conclusion

We may be small in number compared to the world, but we make a difference for good if we, like the Philadelphians, take advantage of the doors Christ opens for us. We must keep His word lest we forfeit our crowns. May God give us the awareness and determination to take advantage of the doors He opens. ♥ *Brian*



**PEW PACKERS THIS SUNDAY EVENING AT 5:45**

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** It was good to have Melody Baxter back from being ill with strep throat and laryngitis; Ginny Johnson is scheduled to have hernia surgery on Nov. 13th; Wayne Shearer (surgery 11/6); Sharon Washington, Dorothy Trice, Bill Long, Kristen Cox (migraines), Faith West, Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Nicole Dix and Margaret Coone.

**Shut In Members:** Carol Eason, Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage and Cheryl Barker.

**Others:** Darlene Thompson's granddaughter, Paulisky Irizarry (Jagie's brother), Lynn Stevens, Chrissi Fuesner, Bobby Cole, (Linda McShane's brother who has cancer), Joy Perkins (Brenda Mask's niece who was in a serious accident), Ruth Brunson, Chip Bolding, Tonya Mathis, Connie Jordan, Maureen Nichols, and Sandy Given (former member), Mike Floyd (member at Laura St. having heart problems)

## Upcoming Events.

**Friday Nov. 9th:** Acapella singing at the Old Polk County Court House. Sign up sheet is on the Senior Saints bulletin board. Van leaves at 4:45 p.m.

**Sunday Nov. 11th:** Elders/Deacons meeting at 4:30 p.m.

**Sunday Nov. 11th-15th:** Sixth Street Fall Gospel Meeting, 7:30 p.m. nightly

**Tuesday Nov. 13th:** F.S.O.P. Ladies class at 7:00 p.m.

**Friday Nov. 16th:** Youth Group Thankful Meal at the Parramore's. Sign-up sheet is on the youth group bulletin board.

**Saturday Nov. 17th:** Men's Breakfast at Central church of Christ in Haines City at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday Nov. 17th:** Group will leave for Tallahassee at 8a.m. to help with hurricane disaster relief. Meet at the building at 7:30 a.m. to load supplies into vehicles.

**Sunday November 18th:** North Jackson Ave. church of Christ in Bartow will be having their 91st Homecoming starting at 10:00 a.m.

**Tuesday Nov. 20th:** Senior Saints meeting at 9:30 a.m.

**Friday Nov. 30-Dec. 2:** Concord St. church of Christ Science & Bible Seminar with Kyle Butt.

## Hurricane Relief

Tables are in the hallway for hurricane relief supplies. There is still a need for blankets! We will collect these until Nov. 14th and then a group will be travelling to Tallahassee to take supplies and help. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board if you are interested in going.

## Visitors

Clyde & Dolly Griffith, Michael Edwards, Mikala Edwards, Johnny Davidson, Mary Moore and Ruth Brunson.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### November

Alex Parramore..... **Table** ..... John McShane  
Bobby Sheumaker ..... **Assist** ..... Tucker Sweeney

**Sunday, November 11, 2018**  
9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Prayer**..... Phil Fife

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements** ..... Matt Willcut  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Sermon**..... Brian Kenyon  
**Closing Prayer**..... Wayne Shearer  
**Sound Booth**..... Alex Parramore

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Opening Prayer**..... Steve Hunley  
**Sermon**..... Brian Kenyon  
**Closing Prayer**..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Sound Booth**..... Alex Parramore  
**Greeters** ..... Pratts (before) Williams (after)  
**Att. Cards**..... Cam'ron and Caelen Bailey  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Charles Paulin

**Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

**Song Leader**..... Ken Walker  
**Opening Prayer**..... David Williams  
**Closing Prayer**..... Paul Romine

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Stacey Paulin so he can get a replacement - (863) 838-8911*

**Sunday, November 18, 2018**  
9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class**..... Jim Turner  
**Prayer** ..... Casey Paulin

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements** ..... Matt Willcut  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**..... Paul Romine  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tyler Anderson  
**Sound Booth**..... Phil Fife

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Opening Prayer**..... Fred Strickland  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson  
**Sound Booth**..... Phil Fife  
**Greeters** ..... Fifes  
**Att. Cards**..... Antonio/Paul  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Charles Paulin

**Wednesday, November 21, 2018**

**Song Leader**..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer**..... Ken Walker  
**Closing Prayer**..... Phil Fife

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Oct.	14.....	\$6,941.15
Oct.	21.....	\$9,274.06
Oct.	28.....	\$5,776.95
Nov.	4.....	\$5,717.38
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....		<b>\$5,913.78</b>
<b>2018 Weekly Budget</b> .....		<b>\$4,887.98</b>

## ~ Communion to Shut-ins ~

Nov	11.....	McShane
Nov	18.....	Parramore
Nov	25.....	Kemp
Dec	02.....	Kemp
Dec	09.....	Kenyon



Even though we are in the midst of a great Gospel meeting as this bulletin is printed, make plans now to attend Sixth Street's Gospel meeting with Michael Shepherd, Sunday thru Thursday, November 11-15, 2018. Let us support our brethren across town and learn more of God's word! If you need a ride, please let Brian know and it will be arranged!

## The Need for Gospel Preaching Never Ends

Although Gospel meetings with particular speakers come and go, as long as this world stands with people in it, there will always be the need to preach and teach the Gospel! All people are spiritually lost the moment they commit sin (Rom. 6:23; 7:7-11). As long as sin remains unforgiven, the sinner will always be separated from God (Isa. 59:1-2). The only way for sin to be forgiven is to be washed in the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5 cf. Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22-26). The only way to know about Jesus and what He did through His blood is to learn it through God's word (Jn. 5:39; Rom. 10:17). The only way to come in contact with the blood of Christ that washes away sin is to be baptized into Christ. Paul wrote, "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (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 . . .

# Thank You!

This past Gospel meeting was the first opportunity we had to use our new kitchen equipment and remodeled design. Although many people had a part in putting this together, five people in particular (Dennis, Fred, Robert, Kathy, and Lee) sacrificed many hours of time and put in much hard work installing, cleaning, and moving kitchen items. Truly, the church is made up of many members and each is important (1 Cor. 12)!



Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). With all this being necessary for forgiveness, Paul thus asked rhetorically, "How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). Yes, Gospel teaching and preaching will always be necessary! Are you forgiven? Have you obeyed the Gospel? ❤️ *Brian*

### God's Plan of Salvation

**Hear God's word (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)**

**Believe in Jesus as God's Son (Jn. 8:24)**

**Repent of Past Sins (Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30-31)**

**Confess Faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9-10)**

**Be Baptized for Forgiveness of Sins (Acts 2:38)**

**Live Faithfully by God's Word (Rom. 12:1-2)**