

# 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. 44 11-20-18

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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 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

## The Church At Laodicea: "A Church With An Closed 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. 3:22). The seventh of these letters was written to the church at Laodicea. The subtitle, "A Church with a Closed Door," is adapted from Ray Summers (*Worthy Is the Lamb*).

## Background of the City

Laodicea was located at the junction of the Lycus and the Maeander River valleys, which also was the location of three major trade routes. The city was founded by Antiochus II (261-246 BC). Laodicea quickly became the center of Hellenistic culture, reaching its peak in 190 BC. In AD 60, the city was destroyed by an earthquake. It was rebuilt without help from Rome, thus giving its people an arrogant attitude. Laodicea was richer than the other six cities. It was noted for banking, manufacturing of clothing (especially from black wool), and its medical school, which was famous for its eye ointment (cf. "eye salve," Rev. 3:18). The city's wealth and easy going lifestyle was very attractive. Although the establishment of the church in Laodicea is not recorded, it seems Epaphras could very well have been involved (cf. Col. 4:12-13). Paul wrote at least one epistle to the Laodiceans that God's providence did not allow to survive (Col. 4:16).

## Relevance of the Writer

This letter was written from "the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). Christ as "the Amen" guarantees that all He said was "faithful and true" (cf. Isa. 65:16). Jesus perfectly fulfilled His role as "Witness" by virtue of the fact that He had first hand knowledge, that He was competent to reproduce that knowledge, and that He was willing to make His truth known. "The Beginning of the creation of God" affirmed Christ as the source of all things created (cf. Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17).

(continued on page 2)

# Christ's Condemnation

The Laodicean church was best (or worst) known for its “lukewarmness,” as revealed by Christ, “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16). Unlike the other churches, the Lord had nothing good to say about the Laodicean church. The imagery of lukewarm water would have been obvious to the Laodiceans. Their water supply was drawn from hot springs near the city. The taste of warm mineral water was not pleasing. The Lord wished they were either “cold” or “hot.” This was a congregation who could care less about the Lord’s work. There is more hope for one who is openly against the church, than for one who is completely indifferent (cf. Saul of Tarsus, 1 Tim. 1:12-16). Hot water heals, cold water refreshes, but lukewarm water does neither. This congregation was so nauseating to Christ that He was about to “vomit [spue, KJV; spit, ESV] you out of My mouth”! We also are nauseating to Christ when we are indifferent toward His work!

The Lord further condemns them for their arrogance. “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). Unlike the saints in Smyrna, who were poor materially, but rich in faith (Rev. 2:9), the Laodiceans were rich materially, but poor in faith. Their attitude of self-reliance was contrary to God’s will (cf. Hos. 12:8; Lk. 18:11). Christ saw the Laodiceans as they really were: “wretched” (in spite of their luxurious condition); “miserable” (in spite of their own comfort); “poor” (in spite of their wealth); “blind” (in spite of their eye ointment); and “naked” (in spite of their clothing makers). We must not rely upon ourselves, but we must put our trust in God (Pr. 3:5-7).

## Christ's Solution and Blessing

The Lord advised them to obtain (“buy from Me”) the true treasures. “I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (Rev. 3:18). In contrast to their well-known black wool, Christ told them to obtain “white garments.” The term “nakedness” symbolized shame and humiliation (cf. Gen. 3:7-10). Their haughty garments of self-sufficiency could not cover their sin, thus they were told to obtain garments of purity, victory, and sanctity (cf. “white”). They were further called upon to “anoint” their eyes with true medicine. They were blinded to their own faults and materialism by the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4). We must learn from the Laodiceans that we too can be so caught up in materialism that we lose sight of that which is eternally important.

Although the Laodiceans were close to being regurgitated by the Lord, He gave them hope. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (Rev. 3:19-20). Chastening stems from love (Pr. 3:12; Heb. 12:5), and love is why God gives time to repent (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). To “be zealous” is the opposite of being “lukewarm.” If they would “open the door” upon which Christ knocks, they would enjoy fellowship with Him. To “dine [sup, KJV; eat, ESV]” with Christ is to dine with Him in spiritual communion (cf. Lk. 14:16-24). Christ will not force admission, but He seeks entrance through our willingness (Mt. 11:28-30). The closed “door” is opened only by accepting His word (“hears My voice” cf. Jn. 10:3-4, 14-16).

Finally, Christ gave a promise: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Rev. 3:21). To sit with Christ on His “throne” would be a great honor. There can be no greater incentive for us than to know that Christ has already “overcome” (Jn. 16:33). When we are faithful, we also will share in His victory and rule (cf. Eph. 2:5-6; 2 Tim. 2:11-12).

## Conclusion

May we never make the Lord sick by our apathy toward His work. Rather, let us be zealous in doing His will. We start by obeying the Gospel. We finish by living it faithfully all our days. ♥ *Brian*



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

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Ginny Johnson's surgery went well. Bernetta Green is in the hospital having tests. Ken Taylor is also in the hospital with breathing problems. Wayne Shearer, Sharon Washington, Dorothy Trice, Bill Long, Kristen Cox (migraines), Faith West, Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby and Margaret Coone.

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

**Others:** Thomas Daniel Martin (Darlene Thompson's grandson, RSV & bronchitis), 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

**Sunday, November 25th:** Teacher Training meeting, 3:30 p.m.

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

**Sunday Dec. 2nd:** Fellowship In-Service following the evening service.

**Sunday Dec. 9th:** Elders/Deacons Meeting at 4:30 p.m.

**Tuesday Dec. 11th:** FSOP Ladies class at 7:00 p.m.

**Saturday Dec. 15th:** Men's breakfast at North Lakeland at 8:00 a.m.

**Saturday Dec. 22nd:** Our Annual Holiday Party at the Sweeney's. If you plan to attend please add your name to the sign up sheet on the bulletin board.

## Address Update

There is a new address for Chuck and Evelyn Wyatt:  
1001 Carpenters Way; Apt # K-109 Lakeland, FL 33809

## Congratulations

Chaz & Molly Hine are the proud parents of a baby boy born 11-9-18. His name is Colston Charles Hine. It was a healthy delivery and everyone is doing fine.

## Baby Sprinkling Gifts

Our family is growing! Chaz & Molly Hine had a baby boy. C.J. & Kelcey Grimes will be having another little girl and Vince & Tiffany Daugherty will be having another baby boy. If you would like to sprinkle them with gifts or cards, there will be a table in the hallway to place your gift or cards on until Sunday Dec. 2nd. Make sure and specify which baby your gift is for.

## Visitors

Mary Moore, Jerry Green, Margaret Khoury, Eric Bunch, Leigh Anne Garland, Noah, Jack Mason, Olivia and Laila, Maritza Bueto and Cornelius Entwistle.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### December

Dennis McCarter..... **Table** ..... Josh Estridge  
Chaz Hine ..... **Assist** ..... Bobby Simpson

**Sunday, November 25, 2018**

**9:30 A.M.**

**Song at Bible Class**..... Ken Walker  
**Prayer**..... CJ Grimes

**10:30 A.M.**

**Announcements** ..... Matt Willcut  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**..... Ken Walker  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Sound Booth**..... Casey Paulin

**6:00 P.M.**

**Song Leader**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Opening Prayer**..... Charles Paulin  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Sound Booth**..... Casey Paulin  
**Greeters** ..... Faneufs  
**Att. Cards**..... Colby/Sawyer  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Charles Paulin

**Wednesday, November 28, 2018**

**Song Leader**..... Casey Paulin  
**Opening Prayer**..... Jeff Bingle  
**Closing Prayer**..... Tucker Sweeney

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

**Sunday, December 2, 2018**

**9:30 A.M.**

**Song at Bible Class**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Prayer** ..... Ken Walker

**10:30 A.M.**

**Announcements** ..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer**..... Kyle Fanuef  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer**..... Tim Croson  
**Sound Booth**..... Alex Parramore

**6:00 P.M.**

**Song Leader**..... David Williams  
**Opening Prayer**..... Wayne Shearer  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Sound Booth**..... Alex Parramore  
**Greeters** ..... Williams  
**Att. Cards**..... Willcut boy's  
**Open & Close Building** ..... Bob Cooper

**Wednesday, December 5, 2018**

**Song Leader**..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Opening Prayer**..... Kenny French  
**Closing Prayer**..... Bobby Sheumaker

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Oct. 28.....	\$5,776.95
Nov. 4.....	\$5,717.38
Nov. 11.....	\$6,202.17
Nov. 18.....	\$6,204.30
Contribution Average.....	\$5,926.36
2018 Weekly Budget.....	\$4,887.98

## Sunday 11-25-18 QUESTION & ANSWER SERVICE

Hiram still can use a few more questions in the box!



*New Member Spotlight*  
**George Beals**



George is originally from Brockton, Massachusetts, where, as a child, he wanted to play baseball for the Boston Red Sox, but temporarily settled for being a paper boy as his first job. He is a retired technical writer and minister. Much of his working life was spent in Michigan. He moved here from Pennsylvania. He likes to study and teach the Bible and to watch Celtics basketball. He also enjoys traveling and has visited several countries. He and his wife, Marion, have one daughter and two grandsons. Read more about George on the bulletin board.



*Member Spotlight*  
**David Anderson**



David, who serves in the eldership, was born in Pensacola and moved to Lakeland from Tallahassee. As a child, he wanted to be a Florida Highway Patrolman like his dad. He did work with FHP but has been a detective for the LPD for many years. He enjoys talking with people, and when he has free time, he likes duck hunting (during season) and fishing. The best piece of advice he has ever been given: "Never *try* at anything; just do it." He and his wife, Tonya, have two children and twin grandchildren. Read more about David on the bulletin board.



*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 . . .



We rejoice with the angels that Lashonda, Brittani's sister, was baptized into Christ Saturday, November 17, 2018. She lives in

Daytona and will place local church membership there. We thank the Father for sending His Son (Jn. 3:16). We thank Jesus for willingly sacrificing Himself for our sins (Heb. 9:24-27). We thank the Holy Spirit for His work through God's word (Jn. 16:7-11). We thank the Godhead for giving us the plan of salvation (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). Let's welcome our new sister in Christ!

**Have A Thankfully  
 Happy Thanksgiving!**



Lee, Alex, Dee, Charles, Jeff, Rene, Brian, Kathy, Jimmy, Paul, Ian, and Jagie (who took the picture)

**"Marianna Mission"** team spent last weekend working out of Marianna, Florida, spreading the Gospel while helping with hurricane relief in the Florida Panhandle. Pictured above are the loading crew and "first wave" of workers. Not pictured is the "second wave" (Casey, Kyle, and Tucker). Thanks for your donations! May God bless this sowing of Gospel seed!