

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. 44 11-21-17

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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 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

Remaining Spiritual During the Holiday Season

Hiram Kemp

I love this time of the year. It is a time for family, fun, and happiness. Regardless of what else takes place during the year, this is generally a time when people are kind, excited, and friendly toward others. Because many are given time off from work and school during the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas, we get to spend time with family members that we usually do see throughout the year.

It might be surprising to some that people are not “spiritual” just because they are thinking and talking about Jesus during December. Simply thinking about Jesus without making the commitment to be his disciple year-round does a person no good in eternity (Lk. 9:23; Jn. 12:42-43). This time of the year is extremely busy with shopping, errands, and activities and it can be difficult to keep everything in proper perspective. People may find every minute of the day filled with activities and fun to the point that there is no time for the Lord. We must always “redeem the time” as God’s people, but especially during the times of our lives when we are pressed with duties and obligations (Eph. 5:15-16). Here is some advice on how we can remain spiritual during the holiday season.

Priority

Every day has a first hour. What if we gave the first hour of our day to God in study and in prayer? Jesus would get up early in the morning to go and pray while everyone else was still asleep (Mk. 1:35). David said he would seek the Lord early and that God would hear his voice in the morning (Psa. 5:3; 55:17; 63:1). If we would be sure to begin our days with our devotional time with God, we would not have to worry about getting so busy that we leave God out of the picture. Jesus said that we should seek the kingdom first, which means his kingdom must be more important to us than anything else (Mt. 6:33). If our schedule does not allow us to study early in the morning, set a good time aside at night and prioritize that time or even during your lunch break. Jesus spent all night in prayer before selecting his disciples (Lk. 6:12). Peter prayed on the roof as he waited for a meal to be prepared (Acts 10:9-10). If we do not carve out time to spend with the Lord, it will not get done. We can listen to the Bible on our phone as we run errands. We can pray between or on the way to appointments. We cannot run on empty and must be sure that we are close to God so that we do not drift away (Heb. 2:1). What a shame to read everything this holiday season except the Bible. We could read the New Testament in thirty days by reading no more than nine chapters a day, thirty

minutes each day. If we start today and take the weekends off, we would finish Revelation well before the first of the year. If we listen by audio recording, we could do it on the way to and from work. If we are already on a reading plan, do not allow ourselves to get behind. Be intentional. Be dedicated and stick to it. God is good to us all the time, including the holiday season. Let us be good to him during this time as well (Psa. 107:1).

Opportunity

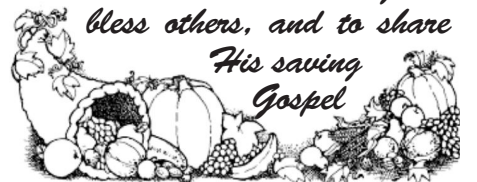
The holiday season provides a great opportunity for Christians. Many of us will spend time with friends and family members this Thanksgiving and Christmas who do not know the Lord and are not interested in Christianity. We need to take advantage of these opportunities and sow the seed as we have the chance (Lk. 8:5-15). Jesus would eat with people from different backgrounds so he could reach them with the gospel (Mt. 9:10; Lk. 15:1-2). We will be around the table with many who have differing views and questions about what we believe. It would be wise to think ahead of ways we will wisely respond to questions asked by friends and family concerning our faith. Maybe our loved one was once a faithful Christian and has drifted. We can lovingly and gently express concern. Are we familiar with Bible verses about the one church, the plan of salvation, or the worship of the church? When Paul went to Athens, he was ready to engage with unbelievers as he challenged their belief in polytheism and pointed them to the one true God of Scripture (Acts 17:22-34). Elijah was aware of the idolatry in Northern Israel and faced the prophets of Baal armed with the truth of God. He caused all Israel to repent (1 Kgs. 18). We can contend for the faith without being contentious (Jude 3). We do not have to be rude, ugly, or unkind to discuss spiritual matters, but we cannot get the job done by being silent (2 Tim. 2:24). We may only have one opportunity to speak to a friend or loved one about the Lord. We should make the most of it. Speak the truth in love and remember that eternity awaits us all (Eph. 4:15). Build common ground and then challenge the thinking of others so that they might consider their ways. It is great to pray for family and friends that are lost, but we must also act on those prayers and do what we can to point them toward Jesus (1 Tim. 2:1-4). We may just give them a tract, point them to a website, or mention the worship services. God will give the increase if we plant and water (1 Cor. 3:6). May we not be guilty of spending all of our holiday conversation discussing, sports, politics, and the social issues of our day. Take advantage of the opportunities the providence of God provides.

Service

So many are in need during this time of year. Many people think of the “big things” that can be done to brighten someone’s holiday season. Maybe we are missing smaller opportunities to do good (Gal. 6:10). Many need our prayers, conversation, and hugs during this season as they experience the first holiday season without a loved one or sickness that has changed their normal routine. Let us be kind as we go about our daily activities (Eph. 4:32). Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan causes us to think of how we can love our neighbor as ourselves (Lk. 10:26-37). If we are honest, few of us will see someone beat up and mugged on the side of the road. Yet, many of us will see someone with a melancholy look or a depressed spirit who could use a smile (Prov. 17:22). We will interact with people who need to hear that we care and are praying for them (Jas. 5:16). I saw a quote today that said, “Few people will remember our words but they will remember our availability.” When Lazarus died, Martha knew the presence of Jesus could make a difference (Jn. 11:21). When Dorcas died, the early Christians called for Peter knowing he could do something about her seemingly hopeless condition (Acts 9:36-43). Though we are without the miraculous power possessed in the first century, our presence can make a difference in the lives of those who hurt this holiday season. Is our family healthy this holiday season? That’s great. Are we looking forward to good food and happy memories? I hope so. We should not feel guilty about the blessings that God has given us, but remember that everyone does not have the same privileges we have. God has blessed us so that we might be a blessing to others. Have eyes for outsiders this holiday season. We should say to ourselves, “Who can I help?” Maybe we can do something to change someone’s life, but even if we can only change their day or their present mood, do not view that as small or insignificant (Zech. 4:10). *(continued on page 4)*

GIVE THANKS & LIVE THANKS FOR GOD

*The best way to show our thanks
to God is to live our lives for
Him, to use His blessings to
bless others, and to share
His saving
Gospel*



SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Joyce Burbage has been transferred to 1st Presbyterian Home. Bill Long fell last Wednesday and was home not feeling well. Also remember Evelyn Wyatt, Genny Johnson, Ginny Hamby, Brenda Mask, Jim Turner and Margaret Coone in prayer.

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

Others: Darnell Kirkland, Ray Parker (friend of the Kirkland's), Joy Baker, (Michelle Paulin's cousin), Duane Nelson, Joyce Stearsman, Jack Pinckert, Debra Enzor (Elizabeth Tubbs Deen's aunt), and Mary Ankroum and her son.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday Nov. 28th: F.S.O.P. Ladie's class at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday Dec. 2nd: Ladies Brunch 9:00 a.m. at the Central church of Christ in Haines City.

Sunday Dec. 3rd: Fellowship In Service after evening services.

Sunday Dec. 10th: Elder/Deacons Meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Saturday Dec. 16th: Annual Christmas party at the Sweeney's at 5:30 p.m.

Saturday Dec. 16th: Men's breakfast at the Hilltop church of Christ in Winter Haven at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday Dec. 31st: Chili Cook-Off after evening services. More details to come.

Save the Date: Saturday January 13, 2018: The Lakeland Police Dept. Crime Prevention section will be giving a presentation for our Senior Saints on scams targeting the elderly. It will be in the fellowship hall starting at 10:00 a.m.

Response

Adam Dyal was baptized into Christ on Friday Nov. 17th. Please let us encourage and welcome him into our family.

Congratulations

Brinlee Mae Alford born 11/18/17 to Christian and Heather Alford. The grandparents are Craig & Tammie Mills and great grandma is Darlene Thompson.

Thank You

Dear Brothers in Christ, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to conduct a World English Institute seminar on Saturday Nov. 11th. My wife and I truly enjoyed our visit. As a bonus, this time our trip allowed us to attend a few nights of your gospel meeting. May God bless each of you at the South Florida Ave. congregation.
Blane Anderson

Visitors

Page Stayer, Tiffany Hash, Megan and Sammy and Dennis & Jean McCarter.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** Josh Estridge
Chaz Hine..... **Assist** David Anderson

Sunday, November 26, 2017
9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer..... C.J. Grimes

10:30 A.M.

Announcements..... Matt Willcut
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Ken Walker
Sermon..... Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer Tucker Sweeney

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Vince Daugherty
Opening Prayer Charles Paulin
Sermon..... Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer Jimmy Sweeney
Greeters Darlene/ Brenda
Att. Cards..... Paul and Ian
Open & Close Building..... Charles Paulin

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

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

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

Sunday, December 3, 2017
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 Bobby Sheumaker
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Tim Croson

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader David Williams
Opening Prayer Kyle Bingle
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Phil Fife
Greeters Longfellows
Att. Cards..... Willcut boy's
Open & Close Building..... Bob Cooper

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Oct. 29.....	\$4,943.57
Nov. 05.....	\$5,581.02
Nov. 12.....	\$6,940.50
Nov. 19.....	\$5,369.11
Contribution Average	\$5,391.55
2017 Weekly Budget	\$4,716.51

Remaining Spiritual During the Holiday Season (continued from page 2)

Conclusion

The holidays are a great time. Let us remember to be spiritual people throughout the entire year. Carve out time for spiritual growth and renewal, and do not surrender that time no matter what (Psa. 119:15-16). Take advantage of the time to talk to people in family and friendship circles about spiritual matters. Be of service to those in need. Christians are the salt of the earth and the light of the world! May we use our influence wisely during this time of the year (Mt. 5:13-16).

“There’s No Place Like Home”

Like the main character in the movie from which these words were taken, there are times when we long for home more than anything. For some, the holiday season fulfills this desire. For others whose memories aren’t so fond of this time, their longing for home is heightened. However the holidays affect our longing, let us realize heaven is the ultimate home for all of God’s faithful. Abraham had his ups and downs, like all people do, but he was looking for a home, “which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). The joys of this life are nothing compared to the heavenly home, and neither are the sufferings



(Rom. 8:18). No matter our longings, we can thank God that “we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1). ❤️ *Brian*



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 in heaven at Adam’s baptism into Christ on Friday, November 17, 2017. Again, this was a team effort that included Steve Higginbotham and our Gospel meeting! This should answer the question of whether Gospel meetings are worth the effort. We thank God for sending Jesus to die on a cross so we could have forgiveness of sins!



Happy Anniversary to **Toney and Stacy Williams** whose wedding anniversary was **Nov. 7**, but was inadvertently left off the calendar. May God bless them!

Can You Still See?

If not, maybe your glasses are part of this collection. As announced, we have found several pairs. Please check and see.



**WE NEED
VOLUNTEERS**

One of the good challenges to have in church growth is the need for more people to be involved in the local work. That is, with more Christians, the need arises to have more church members helping with works that are needed to sustain an active and growing congregation. With that in mind, let our elders and/or deacons know if you are willing to help in **benevolence organization** or in **the sound booth**.