

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.48 11-29-16

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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



James L. Lewis, Jr. Completes Studies with Florida School of Preaching

Brother Lewis is originally from Pensacola, Florida. He came to the Florida School of Preaching from the 201 church of Christ in Bradenton, Florida, where he served in the teaching program. Immediately before enrolling in the school, James worked for the Manatee County Public Works Department. He is a veteran of the United States Army (1989-1996), having served most of his career as a mechanic. He became a Christian, in 2004. In Iraq, as a civilian contractor, he was active in the church of Christ that met on the base where he worked and was assigned to the duty of worship organizer. He is also a cofounder of the Middle Tennessee Christian Singles Group. He has one adult son, DeLarrian. He has preached by appointment while in FSOP. He plans on finding a congregation where he can continue to preach and teach the Gospel of Christ. Let us pray for him and all those who have chosen to preach the Gospel.

Four Lies About the Church

Hiram Kemp

The word "church" means different things to different people. Some people recall their childhood days of being dragged while kicking and screaming to church by their parents or grandparents. Church for some is a time to have a rock concert with the Lord's permission. Others, when they hear of church, think of a group of stuck-up people who pretend to have it altogether but are full of hypocrisy. Still, there are those who think of church as the best people they have ever known and some of the richest spiritual experiences they have ever enjoyed.

While we all have our own thoughts concerning church, much of what is taught and believed concerning the church in our current culture is wrong. However, something is not wrong Biblically because a blogger gets behind a computer and says it is. The Bible needs to be our standard in matters of religion. The Bible has more to say about the church than most people are willing to acknowledge. Maybe you have been misinformed about the church. Perhaps you have had some bad experiences. Let me share with you some lies often taught and promoted concerning the church and share the Biblical truth concerning these lies. Jesus came

so that we would know the truth about Him and all things pertaining to God (Jn. 8:31-32). Let's go to the Bible to discover the truth about the church.

Lie #1: "I Don't Have to Be a Member of Any Church"

It seems every Sunday someone gets on Facebook and says that he or she is having church at home. Maybe you have heard it expressed this way: "I have a personal relationship with God and I don't need the church." While it is true that there are personal aspects to our relationship with God, it is false that our membership to the church is optional. When most people think about Jesus dying on the cross, they readily confess that He died for our sins, and this is true (Mt. 26:28). However, few realize that Jesus also died to purchase the church (Acts 20:28). If Jesus thought enough of the church to die for the church, it should not be passed off as some optional matter. Furthermore, when people became Christians in the first century, they were added to the church by God (Acts 2:47). They became a member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:18). Jesus is coming back to save the church (Eph. 5:25-27). When Jesus returns for His church, I wouldn't want to have to confess to Him that I was on an island with myself rather than in his saving body.

Lie #2: "It Doesn't Matter What Church I Am a Member Of"

While some acknowledge the importance of the church, some mistakenly believe that all churches are created equally. There is a thought that suggests that one church is as good as another. The truth is, it matters what church I become a member of. Jesus promised his disciples that He would build a church and that death would not prevent Him from accomplishing this task (Mt. 16:18-19). When people became Christians in the first century, they did not go church shopping or try and find the church of their choice. There was only one church of which people could become members then and be pleasing to God, and the same is true today. The Bible describes the church as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:21-23). The Bible also affirms that there is only one body (1 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:4-6). Jesus prayed that his followers would all be one, in contrast to the multitude of denominations around us today (Jn. 17:20-21). The church is metaphorically pictured as the bride of Christ. If all churches are Christ's bride, this makes Jesus one of the biggest polygamists of all time (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25). I need to find the church that aligns with the New Testament in doctrine, devotion, and service and become a member of that church. Do not believe the lie that it does not matter what church you belong to. Jesus is described as the Savior of the body, not the savior of the bodies (Eph.5:23). Find the church Jesus built and allow God to add you to it.

Lie #3: "The Church Is the Building"

So many people think church is somewhere they go. The Bible never describes the church as a building. The church is described as the group of people belonging to Christ (Rom. 16:16). The church is mentioned in the New Testament as the household of God (1 Tim. 3:15), and the body of Christ (Col. 1:18). The church is never mentioned as a building. The church is the people that are redeemed and therefore make up Christ's body. While the church is commanded to assemble and a building is an expedient way to do this, the church should not be confused for somewhere we go. This may seem like a harmless lie or misrepresentation of the church, but when people believe the church is the building, they tend to place geographical limitations on their service to God. If the church is just the building, then I can just turn my Christianity on and off at will. As long as we behave on Sunday, we may be fooled into thinking that we are the right kind of people. The church is not the building. We represent Jesus everywhere we go, and thus we need to be sure we are the salt that flavors the life of the lost and the light that points the way back to God (Mt. 5:13-16).

Lie #4: "The Church Is Filled with Hypocrites"

We have all heard this one before. The church is filled with hypocrites! Most people who say that want to use it as a smoke screen to dismiss themselves from church membership. Those who use the hypocrite line as a reason for their absence do not do the same with the grocery store, football games, school, or work. Hypocrites frequent many places, but we only seem to let them hinder the spiritual aspect of our lives. The truth is that the church is filled with people that realized sin was destroying their lives and the only way to fix this problem was Jesus. Are there some who are one thing in the presence of Christians and behave another way in the world? Of course. Yet, we should not allow the inconsistency of *(continued on page 4)*

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Brenda Mask was home sick last Sunday. Please keep Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Joe Dopwell, Kenny French, Genifer Johnson, JoAnn Hoback, Carol Eason, Elizabeth Tubbs, Jim Edmondson, Melody Baxter, Dorothy Trice and Margaret Coone in prayer.

Relatives: Wayne Hendrix, Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Blanche Dopwell and Dayne Romine.

Shut In Members: Virginia Plumlee, Ann Howard, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler and Duane Nelson.

Others: Jackie & Joyce Stearsman and Chrissi Fuesner. Keep all of these in your prayers.

Upcoming Events

Sunday December 4th: Fellowship In-Service following the evening service. Please bring finger foods.

Saturday December 10th: Youth Seminar here at South Florida Ave. Registration starts at 8:45 a.m. Let Hiram know if you plan on attending.

Saturday December 17th: Annual Christmas party at the Sweeney's at 5:30 p.m. Please bring finger foods, drinks and a gift if you plan on participating in the fun and crazy gift exchange.

Christmas Stockings

Rene Bingle is making Christmas stockings for children in a shelter. If you would like to participate, a list of items is in the foyer and are needed by December 4th.

Response

Tiffany Jackson asked for the prayers of the congregation last Sunday. Please encourage and remember her in prayer.

Sympathy

The son of Fran Hinson, a friend of a former member Bill Burton, passed away last Sunday. Please remember the Hinson family in prayer.

Visitors

Peter Saunders and Nellie Anderson.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

Frank Hamby **Table** Jimmy Sweeney
Matt Willcut **Assist** Kyle Williams

Sunday, December 4, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Frank Hamby
Prayer Stacey Paulin

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer Antonio Martin

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer Jeff Bingle
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Greeters The Longfellows
Att. Cards Paul & Ian
Closing Prayer Paul Romine
Open & Close Building Bob Cooper

Wed. December 7, 2016

Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer Steve Hunley
Closing Prayer Bobby Sheumaker

Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - 859-5231 or 602-9005

Sunday, December 11, 2016

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class Ken Walker
Prayer Jim Turner

10:30 A.M.

Announcements David Williams
Song Leader Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer David Anderson
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer David Deal

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader Tucker Sweeney
Opening Prayer John McShane
Sermon Hiram Kemp
Greeters The Grimes
Att. Cards Quadarius & Sebastian
Closing Prayer Kyle Bingle
Open & Close Building Bob Cooper

Wed. December 14, 2016

Song Leader Bill Long
Opening Prayer Kenny French
Closing Prayer Paul Romine

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Nov. 06..... | \$5,565.20 |
| Nov. 13 | \$3,894.00 |
| Nov. 20..... | \$4,152.00 |
| Nov. 27..... | \$4,485.00 |
| Contribution Average..... | \$4,919.37 |
| 2016 Weekly Budget..... | \$4,422.60 |



Tune into AM 1330 (station WWAB) with your friends and neighbors every Monday from 5:00-5:30 p.m. for the "Way of Truth" program. This is a joint effort to evangelize involving Terrance Brownlow-Dindy (of 6th Street) and our own Hiram Kemp. Let's point our community to the Bible!

(continued from page 2) some to blind us to the overall picture of the church. The church at Corinth had many problems: sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5), misunderstandings about idolatry and marriage (1 Cor. 7 and 8), and wrong views concerning the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). When Paul writes his letter to them, he does not call them phony hypocrites who misrepresent Jesus. Paul says that they are saints who are sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2). Christians need to be confronted about their sin just like anybody else, but the church is not full of hypocrites. The church is full of people that still have short comings, but as we walk in the light and confess our sins, Jesus cleanses our failings (1 Jn.1:7-9).

Conclusion

The church has been the easy target for many who want to reject Christianity. However, the Bible is clear concerning the church, though men often distort this view. Let us go to the Bible that describes the church to get our views about the church. The Bible equips us with everything we need, and it even tells us the truth about the church. The church is not an optional social club; neither is it something I can pick like a sports team. The church is not a place I go and the church is not filled with hypocrites. The church is the bride of Christ for Jesus died. Let us cherish and respect her (2 Cor. 11:2). Ω



“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).



South Florida Avenue
CHURCH OF CHRIST
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The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

MARK YOUR CALANDER: FEBRUARY 24-26

YES Weekend

Feb. 24-26, 2017

IDOL FACTORY

YES WEEKEND 2017

See Brian if you would like to attend this uplifting event!

“How Shall They Hear Without a Preacher?”

As announced on the first page of this bulletin, one more graduate from the Florida School of Preaching in going out into the vineyard of the Lord. Since 1969, the congregation here, along with other churches of Christ and individuals who see the importance of training men to preach the Gospel, have made it possible for men to prepare themselves for a lifetime of service in the Lord. The school simply could not function as it has since its inception without financial help. Tuition has never been charged, but students need financial support and the school's operation must be provided. Thank you, elders and SFA members, for your continued support that allows men to “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel.” ❤️ *Brian*



We are gearing up again for a YES II mission trip to Penonome, Panama, July 1-9, 2017. If you would like to go, please see Brian ASAP. If you would like to contribute funds, please see one of our elders. Pray for this!

