

# 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. 45 11-28-17

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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

## **3 Things to Remember When You Want to Quit**

Hiram Kemp

We've all been there before, haven't we? Overwhelmed by a problem or obstacle, it seemed like the best thing to do was to give up altogether. Maybe as you are reading this you are on the verge of quitting. Some are thinking of quitting school, others want to throw in the towel on their marriage, and some want to quit life altogether. Men like Moses, Elijah, and Job all got to the point in life when they would rather die than keep on going or even regretted ever existing (Num. 11:14-15; Job 3:1-16; 1 Kgs. 19:2-4). How do we keep going when everything in our lives seems to only get worse?

### **Circumstances That Make You Want to Quit**

"For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself" (2 Cor. 1:8). Though the apostle Paul is regarded as a giant of the Christian faith (for good reason), there was a time in his life when he wanted to give up. We don't often view Paul as a quitter, but something in Asia brought him to his breaking point. We do not have to be victims of our circumstances. We can conquer with God even in the worst of times (Rom. 8:37-39).

None of us will always be invincible in our faith, but that does not mean we should quit. A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted. We find out who we truly are in the toughest times. Paul and his friends despaired life itself. That is, they felt like there was no point in going on. All hope was lost. Paul learned how to press on, and we can too.

### **Don't Trust in Self**

"Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9). We should make plans and be wise. However, when we trust more in our schemes and agendas than in the sovereign hand of God, we are setting ourselves up for failure. We should trust God with all that we have (Prov. 3:5-6). Paul and his friends were put in a tough spot in order that they could learn not to rely on themselves but on God. God's power is reason enough to trust him (Ps. 62:11). The fact that God can raise the dead is evidence that he has enough power at his disposal to aid us through marriage hurdles, financial hardship, and academic stress.

When you would rather quit because the odds seem to be stacked too high against you, a good question to ask is, "Am I trusting in God or myself?" We will all come up against things that are too hard for us, but God has *(continued on page 2)*

never faced anything that was a challenge (Jer. 32:27). We were never meant to live life on our own. Cast your burdens on God who wants to lend a helping hand (1 Pet. 5:7).

## **Remember Past Victories**

“He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again” (2 Cor. 1:10). If we have a bad memory concerning things we have faced and overcome in the past, each new difficulty will seem impossible. Paul remembered the three-fold deliverance of God: past, present, and future. If God helped in the past and is helping in the present, we can trust him with the future. When David was preparing to fight Goliath, he remembered that God helped him defeat a lion and a bear in the past, and Goliath would be no different (1 Sam. 17:37).

Always remember, all giants are the same size to God. Haven't you had things come up before that you thought would destroy you? Yet, you are still here. Someone has rightly said, “You have survived one-hundred percent of your worst days.” When quitting seems appetizing, keep in mind that God specializes in rescuing his people from the seemingly impossible. If there is anything God can do, it is rescue and deliver. Dwell on past victories and use that as fuel to keep on (Ps. 4:17).

## **Request Prayer**

“You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many” (2 Cor. 1:11). We should not feel too big to ask for the prayers of other Christians. The prayers of the righteous carry a lot of weight in the eyes of God (Jas. 5:16). There is nothing that can change our circumstances like prayer. Paul wanted the prayers of the Corinthians so that he and his friends could press on. If you feel like giving up and life has you on the ropes, lean on the prayer and encouragement of other Christians. When King Hezekiah was told by God that he would die, he prayed and God extended his life fifteen additional years (2 Kgs. 20:1-6). Prayer can change the mind of God.

Every prayer will not be answered the way we like, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't pray (see Mt. 26:39). In requesting the prayers of others for struggles we are facing, we will find we are not alone in our struggles. One of the cardinal mistakes we make in hard times is assuming that we are the only person struggling and hard times are unique to us (1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). In our social media age, where everyone portrays their life as perfect and faultless, we may have believed the lie that no one faces difficulty except us. Rely on the prayers of other Christians and trust that God hears and answers.

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# **“Seeing Him Who Is Invisible”**

The Bible explicitly says of Moses, “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). It is earlier said of Noah, “By faith ... being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Heb. 11:7). The faith by which both these men (and others) operated is defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 1:1). In all three of these verses, the unseen has a significant emphasis. Enduring as a Christian is sometimes difficult, especially when all we consider is what we can see or at least think we see. Like Moses, we may have to face what seems an insurmountable hostile army and deliberately go against the orders of its furious commander. Like Noah, we may have to steadily do what the Lord says despite our limited understanding of God's way and/or the possible ridicule of the masses. Like both these men, though, any obstacle we face can be overcome by obedient faith!

The key to overcoming is to focus on “Him who is invisible.” Paul reminds us that “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). May we take comfort in knowing that God “will never leave you nor forsake you” and that “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear” (Heb. 13:5-6). May we have courage to “put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:10-18). May we with confidence “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). Jesus acknowledged to His disciples, “And you will be hated by all ... But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Mt. 10:22). Let us trust the invisible God to see us through! ♥ Brian

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Bill Long is home from the hospital. Also remember Joyce Burbage, 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:** Hank Bolding (bettye bolding's son), Geri Howell is at Oakbridge Assisted Living after having a stroke, Lynn Stevens (cousin of Daniel Stearsman) has stage four cancer, 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

**Sunday Dec. 3rd:** Lads to Leaders youth meeting at 4:00 p.m. Sunday announcements will have schedule.

**Sunday Dec. 3rd:** Fellowship In Service after evening worship service.

**Sunday Dec. 10th:** Lads to Leaders youth meeting at 4:00 p.m.

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

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

**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.

**Thursday, Dec. 21st:** Senior Saints trip to see local Christmas lights. Meet at the building at 6:30 p.m. Cookies and hot chocolate will be served afterwards in the fellowship hall. Please sign up on the bulletin board.

## Response

Marissa Estridge responded Sunday morning asking for prayers to help her overcome the world's negativity. Let us encourage her and our other family members in Christ.

## Congratulations

Jeff & Rene Bingle are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Heidi to Ty Rhymes.

Brian & Jagie Kenyon are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Ellianet to Andrew Fiedler.

## Christmas Stockings

We will be making Christmas stockings for some needy families this year. If you would like to help please see Rene Bingle.

## Visitors

Nellie Anderson, Mildred Estrella and Martin, James A. Jackson Jr., Dolly Martin, Dennis & Jean McCarter, Mary Moore, Renae Sunanon, and Bitsy Thomas.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### December

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

### 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 boys  
**Open & Close Building**..... Bob Cooper

### Wednesday, December 6, 2017

**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**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 10, 2017

9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Jim Turner  
**Prayer**..... David Anderson

10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... John McShane  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Paul Romine

6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... David Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson  
**Greeters** ..... Bob & Bea Pratt  
**Att. Cards**..... Paul and Sebastian  
**Open & Close Building**..... Bob Cooper

### Wednesday, December 13, 2017

**Song Leader** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov. 05.....	\$5,581.02
Nov. 12.....	\$6,940.50
Nov. 19.....	\$5,369.11
Nov. 26.....	\$4,607.82
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....	<b>\$5,374.74</b>
<b>2017 Weekly Budget</b> .....	<b>\$4,716.51</b>

# DON'T BE TAKEN BY THE SATAN EXPLANATION

When Satan finally got Eve to seriously doubt both the goodness of God and His instruction to eat of every tree in the Garden of Eden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he said to her, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). Satan explained that Eve would not actually die, contradicting what God said (Gen. 2:16-17). Satan went on to explain that God did not actually want good for Eve. After all, according to Satan, God knew the benefits she would gain from the fruit, and He did not want her to have anything good. Adding to the deception, what Satan explained seemed to be true. Adam did not physically die until over 500 years later (Gen. 5:5). Adam and Eve did become like God, and they did know "good and evil" after eating that fruit (Gen. 3:22). However, what Eve thought she was bargaining for did not work out very well (Gen. 3:6-24)! She and Adam were taken by the Satan explanation! We must not let anyone talk us out of what the Bible plainly teaches, whether it be on salvation, the necessity of baptism, church organization, or marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Most Bible doctrines are very easy to understand. We need help to misunderstand ... and plenty of help is available. However, let us stand on God's word and not be taken by the Satan explanation! ❤️ *Brian*



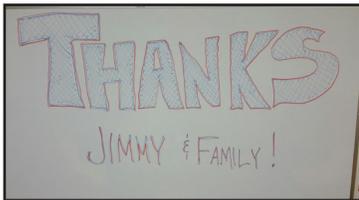
*South Florida Avenue*  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
*1807 South Florida Avenue*  
*Lakeland, FL 33803-2653*

Return Service Requested

The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .



Please let one of our elders or deacons know if you are willing to help in the **sound booth** or in **organizing the benevolence food pantry**. Your help is needed and would be appreciated. The SFA church of Christ grows with your help. To God be the glory!



**Special Thanks** to Jimmy Sweeney & family for sacrificing their time and talents to install white boards in the classrooms!

**Save the Date**  
**Feb. 23-25, 2018**  
**YES Weekend**  
Forrest Park, Valdosta



**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.



Don't limit thankfulness and the spirit of giving to this time of year. God is good all the time!