



The South Florida Avenue church of Christ



MESSENGER

1807 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 73 No. 50 December 15, 2020

ELDERS

David Anderson
Kenny French
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Stacey Paulin
Jimmy Sweeney

MINISTER

Hiram Kemp

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Vince Daugherty

SECRETARY

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.

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WEB PAGE

SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

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SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist

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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.

FAMOUS DONKEYS IN THE BIBLE

Hiram Kemp

The Bible opens with the account of creation in Genesis 1. We are told that God made all of the land animals on day six (Gen. 1:24-25). God showed His creative power and genius by how and what He created. We look at the animals that exist and our world, and we are reminded of the amazing power of God. Animals should be observed because of the appreciation we gain for the aesthetic detail God provided in the world. Still, animals can teach us other lessons. God used the animal world throughout scripture to teach His people important lessons. A fish swallowed Jonah to humble him and change his heart (cf. Jonah 2:1-10). The plague of frogs was used to teach Pharaoh that there was a power higher than him, and he needed to submit (Exod. 8:5-15). Jesus pointed to the birds of the air so His hearers would know there was no reason to fret and worry about their daily provisions because God provided (Matt. 6:26-27).

One of the animals appearing most frequently in scripture is the donkey. The word appears in both the Old and New Testament combined more than 100 times. Some of the mentions of donkeys are incidental and tell us about how much property someone possessed (cf. Gen. 12:16). Other times they are mentioned as the spoil of a town is cataloged (Num. 31:34). But if we read the Bible closely enough, we will see various scenes in scripture connected to donkeys that teach us eternal lessons that we should keep close to our hearts. Here are a few famous donkeys in scripture that we should take note of.

THE TALKING DONKEY: NUMBERS 22

The talking donkey of Numbers 22 may be the most famous donkey or animal in the entire Bible. Long before movies like Dr. Doolittle, which fictionally portray animals with supernatural ability to communicate, the Bible provided us with the true account of what God was able to do. Balaam was a prophet from Moab who was hired by Balak to curse God's people. Balaam initially refused to go along with the plan to curse God's people, and he rejected the offers and gifts sent to persuade him (Num. 22:2-14). He spoke boldly of refusing to go beyond the Word of the Lord (Num. 22:18). However, as the offers and gestures intensified, Balaam eventually caved in and went to do what God had forbidden.

On his way to disobey God, God caused his donkey to see an angel that was blocking their pathway (Num. 22:22-23). The donkey could see the angel, but Balaam could not, and he beat the donkey in order to get the donkey to charge ahead and do what he wanted. The donkey eventually spoke to Balaam and rebuked him for his abuse and foolish decision making (Num. 22:24-28). The Lord allowed the donkey to speak to teach Balaam a lesson (Num. 22:28). God opened Balaam's eyes and asked him why he took his frustration out on the donkey when the donkey was actually saving his life (Num. 22:31-34). This scene of the talking donkey is not put in scripture for comic relief. God is showing that sometimes a heart is so hard that nothing will change the way a person is going (cf. Matt. 13:14-15, Acts 7:51). Sometimes drastic measures are needed to awaken us to our own foolishness. We are often angry at others when the fault lies with us (cf. James 1:13-15).

THE PROVIDENTIAL DONKEY: 1 SAMUEL 9

God can work through miraculous means or providence. Providence is where God uses natural laws to accomplish His purpose without violating the free-will of any of the individuals involved. In 1 Samuel 9, we read of a man named Kish who lost his donkeys (1 Sam. 9:3). Donkeys were valuable to their owners and were a part of their owners' wealth and financial stability. Kish sent one of his servants with his son, Saul, to search for his donkeys (1 Sam. 9:4). When Saul could not find the donkeys, he wanted to turn around and go home (1 Sam. 9:5). Saul's servant told him about a man of God (i.e. a prophet) in the city who may tell them where the donkeys went (1 Sam. 9:6). God had communicated with His prophet, Samuel, the day before about how He would send a man to him from the tribe of Benjamin to be anointed as king (1 Sam. 9:15-16). When Samuel saw Saul, he remembered what God had said and anointed Saul as the first king of Israel (1 Sam. 9:17, 10:1-8, 17-25).

Though Saul did not turn out to be a righteous king, we should appreciate how God's providence worked out at the beginning of his reign. What his father thought was just a mission to find donkeys ended up being his anointing ceremony. Many things in our lives that we think are just coincidence or unimportant may turn out to have great significance (cf. Gen. 45:4-5). Paul spoke of his meeting Philemon's Slave, Onesimus, as possibly being providential (cf. Philemon 15). The lesson from the providential donkey is that we never know what good can come from ordinary things. We do know that God can use all things for His ultimate good, and we should cooperate with that in any way we can (Romans 8:28).

THE ROYAL DONKEY: MATTHEW 21

As Jesus was preparing to make His exit out of the world, He needed to make His entrance into Jerusalem. As Jesus came to Bethpage, He sent two of His disciples into the village to find a donkey that He needed (Matt. 21:1-3). This was not a random act performed by Jesus. We are told that this was done in order to fulfill prophecy (cf. Isa. 62:11; Zech.9:9; Matt. 21:4-5). The disciples found

YOUTH GROUP by Vince Daugherty

Acts 20:35 says, "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" This is a good memory verse to put into our hearts and minds. For a child, this may seem strange. Most people would think it is better to receive a gift, but God says, it is more blessed to give than to receive. During this time of year with all the gifts and presents, think about someone else instead of yourself. Think about what they would like, and you give it to them. To see their faces light up when they receive something unexpected will cause your heart to swell with joy. Trust in the words of Jesus and test what He said and maybe you too will find, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

the donkey just like Jesus told them and brought it to the Lord. Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, and the people praised Him as the Son of David (Matt. 21:6-9).

The royal donkey is special because of who rode it and what it signified. Jesus rode this donkey, fulfilled prophecy, and was also proclaimed as the Messiah from the lineage of David (cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-16). Jesus did not ride in on a horse like many kings might have in His day. He came as a meek and lowly king. As with so many other things in the life of Jesus, He did not do what people always expected. The royal donkey taught us that He is a king (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16). Scripture reveals Him as a king that came in a lowly and meek way to save the world (Matt. 11:28-30). Though men might have expected Him to do things in other ways, He did things as they were prophesied and according to His divine wisdom. The people chanted and praised Jesus as He rode the donkey. He is worthy of the same praise today (cf. Ps. 33:1).

The Bible is filled with lessons for us to learn. Sometimes God uses people like the prophets and apostles to teach us. Sometimes God uses donkeys to get His message across to us. As we study scripture, let us be sure to see what God is conveying regardless of how He chooses to do so.

Senior Saints by John McShane

Many of us Senior Citizens can remember the infancy of television. We had to walk nine miles uphill through shag carpet just to turn the black and white, 19 inch TV on and off or change one of the three channels. We can also remember dialing the rotary telephone if we wanted to talk with a friend. Fast forward to today, and we hold all of that and more in the palm of our hand. It seems that we can watch, hear, and see almost anyone or anything almost instantly. There are so many social media sites we can access and watch and listen to anything anyone wants to say to the world. To me, one of the failures of social media is that we can post anything we want on them whether it is the truth, a half-truth, or an outright lie. We can also repeat other posts without verifying if it is the truth or just someone's opinion without checking the facts for ourselves. If we do copy someone's post and it turns out to be a falsehood, are we guilty of lying? I would like to think that we are not, that it is the originator of the tale that is guilty of telling a lie. The Bible does not specifically mention social media. It does, however, mention lying in several places. **Proverbs 19:9** "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and [he that] speaketh lies shall perish." **Proverbs 12:22** "Lying lips [are] abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly [are] his delight." **Psalms 101:7** "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." Let's be careful about how we use social media. It could have a very detrimental effect on our final destination according to **Revelation 21:8** "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Our Members:

Bob Pratt	Brenda Mask	Carol Edmonson
Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt	Linda McShane	Wayne Shearer
Darlene Thompson	Bernetta Green	Ray Nashick
Bill & Carlene Long	Bobby Simpson	Melody Baxter
Ciera Edwards	Brian Smith	Geny Johnson
Kathy Nester	Jim Turner	Margaret Coone
Sharon M. Washington	Annette Phillip	George Davis
Joyce Williams	Ron & Judy Ford	Nikki Williams
Antoine & Marcella Swain		

(Please update the office of any changes)

The **EXTENDED FAMILY** and **FRIENDS** prayer requests are emailed every week.

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Faith West Joyce Burbage Carol Eason
Ellen Shearer Chuck & Evelyn Wyatt

Phone numbers are in the directory. Let's call to let them know we miss them and love them.

UPDATES & PRAYER REQUESTS

Linda McShane requests prayers as she is about to start new medication.

Geny Johnson is having health complications.

Wayne Shearer is doing much better and has tested negative, but **Anita** is not feeling well.

Nikki Williams is home recovering from her surgery.

Carol Edmonson's biopsy shows that she is cancer free. She will still endure 5 treatments to eradicate the benign tumor.

Carter Hancock's mother, Wendy, has passed away from complications of Covid. Both have been on our prayer list.

RESPONSES

Janis Waldon repents of sins and asks for prayers to be a stronger Christian



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS STOCKING STUFFER PROJECT

Present wrapping for the stockings will be on Sunday, December 20 at 3:00 p.m. We need lots of help!

'TIS THE SEASON FOR CARD GIVING!

Our youth and helpers will be hand delivering your cards throughout December. A basket is on the foyer table. Simply drop your cards in the basket, and they will be delivered for you.

Thank you

Thank you card from **Steve & Kim Higginbotham** is on the bulletin board.

PRAYER LIST

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

December

Designated Elder - Brian Kenyon

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

Song Leader/prayer Ian Enamorado
Devo Rick Kenyon
Closing Prayer Brian Kenyon

Sunday, December 20, 2020

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"Things to do Before Winter"
2 Timothy 4:21

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
"Year End Review 2020"
Acts 14:27

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both services) David Deal
Greeters Stewarts
Song/prayer before class Kyle Bingle
Announcements Brian Kenyon
A.M. Song Leader Rick Kenyon
Scripture reading/Prayer Tyler Anderson
Lord's Table Wesley Brunson
Closing Prayer Andre Medley

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Stewarts
P.M. Song Leader Rick Kenyon
Scripture reading/Prayer Lou Van Allen
Lord's Table Wesley Brunson
Closing Prayer Phil Fife

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

Song Leader/Prayer Kyle Bingle
Devo Eric Bowman
Closing Prayer David Anderson

ASSEMBLING UPDATE

We still encourage those who do not feel well and those who consider themselves high-risk to stay at home.

To side with caution, we are still requiring masks to be worn upon entering the building as we have since July 2.

We will continue live-streaming the services on YouTube as we have since March 22.
Thank you for your cooperation. - Elders

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Nov. 29	\$7,414.00
Dec. 6	\$9,085.00
Dec. 13	\$20,853.00
Contribution Average	\$7,437.22

How Heavy is the Water?

(author unknown)

A young lady confidently walked around the room while leading and explaining stress management to an audience with a raised glass of water. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, "Half empty or half full?" She fooled them all. "How heavy is this glass of water?" she inquired with a smile. Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz.

She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter, it depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes, and that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on.

So, as with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. We must never forget that God can give us the rest we need to carry that glass of water. As early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down and go to God in prayer and you will see that you will be able to carry on tomorrow.

Matthew 11:28 reads: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Why Jesus Came to Earth

Seek and save the lost

Luke 19:10

Fulfill prophecy

Matthew 1:21-25

Reveal God to us

John 14:8-10

To preach the gospel

Mark 1:38

To die for our sins

Matthew 26:28

To bear witness to the truth

John 18:38

Youth Group Christmas Caroling

Saturday,
December 19, 2020

Meet at the building at
3:30 p.m.



After caroling, we will go to the
Daugherty's home for a
Christmas party.

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

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DO NOT BE CONFORMED
TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE
TRANSFORMED BY THE
RENEWING OF YOUR MIND,
THAT YOU MAY PROVE
WHAT IS THAT GOOD
AND ACCEPTABLE AND
PERFECT WILL OF GOD.

ROMANS 12:2

South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Return Service Requested