

The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.
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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

Four Ways to Draw Near To God

Hiram Kemp

The Bible is a book filled with promises. Scripture testifies that God cannot lie and that he keeps all of his promises (2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:18). One of the promises that God makes to his people is that if we draw near to him, he will draw near to us (James 4:8). Many times Christians do not feel close to God. Sometimes people in the world desire to be close to God, but they are not sure how they should go about getting close to him. Allow me to suggest four ways that we can draw close to God, and as a result, have God draw close to us.

Remove Sin from Our Lives

The remaining portion of James 4:8 calls for Christians to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts. God is separated from those who are living in sin (Isa. 59:1-2). All accountable people sin, but not all accountable people are living in sin (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 3:6-9). Those who are living in impenitent sin are not in fellowship with God as they walk in darkness (1 Jn. 1:5). So long as we have a tight grip on sin, we cannot have a tight grip on our God.

In scripture, the hands are referred to metaphorically to represent the entire person (Isa. 59:3; 1 Tim. 2:8). When James calls for a cleansing of the hands, he is actually calling for a cleansing of the individual life of the Christian. The life must be free from sin, but how can this be done? For those who have never obeyed the gospel, the first step is to turn to Jesus in obedient faith. Those who believe in Christ, repent, confess Jesus as Lord, and are baptized are promised the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). After obeying the gospel, Christians must walk in the light and confess sins and repent when they fall (1 Jn. 1:7,9; cf. Prov. 28:13). Christians do not have to be faultless, yet we are called to be faithful (Mt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10). Seeking the kingdom first and leaving the world behind is a sure way to draw near to God.

Study God's Word

Since God communicates to us through his word, it is impossible to claim to have a relationship with God apart from his word (Eph. 3:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). God gave us the word so that it might save our souls (Jas. 1:21). If we want to draw near to God, we will do it as we listen to him speak through his word. The Jews in Jesus' day thought they were close to God, but they rejected the Messiah of which the scriptures spoke (Jn. 5:39-40). Today, many who never crack open the Bible claim to be close to God, but they too are mistaken.

Studying the word of God involves taking the time to do it and also practicing what we read. We must be willing to stop doing other unimportant things to allow God's word to penetrate our hearts. This second step goes along with the first step. Either the Bible will keep us from sin or sin will keep us from the Bible (Psa. 119:11). A dusty and unused Bible is evidence that there is great distance between that individual and God. A Bible that is read, reflected on, and practiced is evidenced that someone is inching closer to God every day (James 1:22-23).

Any relationship with poor communication eventually breaks down and dies. If we will not listen to God, how can we ever hope to be close to him? God promised to be with Joshua and Israel as they conquered Canaan. However, God's presence was contingent upon Joshua meditating on and digesting the word of God (Law of Moses), and then walking by faith (Josh. 1:8-9). We will either walk by faith or walk alone. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). If we want to be close to God we must study his word.

Spend Time With God's People

God has blessed us with the blessing of his people while living on earth. One indication of how close we are to God is how close we are to the people of God. When people obey the gospel, they are added to the church (Acts 2:47). God does not save us and place us on an island or in a monastery. Instead, God places people in his family, the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15). When Saul was persecuting the church, Jesus claimed that Saul was persecuting him (Acts 9:1-6). What people do to the church they do to Christ. Therefore, when people do good with and for God's people, they do it to him as well (Mt. 25:31-46).

Too many people in the world and in the church think they can have a great relationship with God and a poor relationship with his people. No one is on good terms with God who is on bad terms with God's faithful people (1 Jn. 4:20-21). If we want to draw close to God, we should draw close to the people of God. Attend the assembly faithfully (Heb. 10:25). Encourage other Christians every chance you get (Heb. 3:13, 10:24). Bear one another's burdens and lean upon each other (Rom. 12:15; Gal. 6:2). If we want to be close to God we should be as close to his people as we can. God's representation on the earth are his people, and we should be sure not to forget this (2 Cor. 3:2).

Pray Without Ceasing

Drawing close to God involves praying incessantly (1 Thess. 5:17). God has blessed Christians with every spiritual blessing, one of which is prayer (Eph. 1:3). Only the Christian can call on God and be assured that he or she is heard (Heb. 4:16). When we pray according to God's Will, he hears us (1 Jn. 5:14-15). God invites us to cast all of our cares on him (1 Pet. 5:7). Do you want to be close to God? How is your prayer life? How frequent do you pray? What do you pray for?

David was a man after God's own heart. David prayed three times a day (Psa. 55:17). Daniel was in Babylon praying three times a day as well (Dan. 6:10). There is no Biblical quota for how many times one must pray in order to be spiritual, but we must pray. Paul says pray continually. While we cannot pray at every moment of every day, there should not be much time which passes between our talking to God in prayer. God speaks to us through his word and we speak to him through our prayers (Lk. 18:1-8). Prayer is not based on eloquence, but instead it is based on our effort. If we make the effort to pray to God, we will be closer. Our cares will be heard in heaven where we are assured God is working all things for our good (Rom. 8:28).

Conclusion

James tells Christians to draw near to God. This is impressive because it shows that we can, and that it is our choice. How close to God are you today? We are all as close to God as we choose to be. If you want to get closer, take the biblical steps to do so. God will draw close to us if we draw close to him. Ω

Nearer, Still Nearer

Lelia N. Morris

*Nearer, still nearer; close to thy heart,
Draw me, my Savior, so precious Thou art.
Fold me, O fold me close to Thy breast,
Shelter me safe in that haven of rest.
Shelter me safe in that haven of rest.*

*Nearer, still nearer, Lord, to be Thine.
Sin with its follies, I gladly resign.
All of its pleasures, pomp and its pride;
Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified.
Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified.*

*Nearer, still nearer, while life shall last,
Till safe in glory my anchor is cast;
Thro' endless ages, ever to be
Nearer, my Savior; still nearer to Thee.
Nearer, my Savior; still nearer to Thee.*

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

Prayer List

Our Members: Faith West, Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Sharon Washington, and Margaret Coone.

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

Others: Larry Lester, (Toney Wilson's brother), Paulisky Irizarry, Chrissi Fuesner, Tonya Mathis, Chip Bolding, Tony Seibert, Neil Entwistle's father, Peggy Nabors, Virginia Walker's sister was in a car accident and is now on life support at Tampa General.

Upcoming Events

Sunday June 9th: Elders/Deacons meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Saturday June 15th: Men's breakfast at the Central church of Christ in Haines City at 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday June 18th: Senior Saints meeting. Coffee and doughnuts at 9:30 and the presentation at 10:00 a.m.

June 20th-22nd: Weeki Wachee K-5 Camp for ages 5yr thru 5th grade. Register online at wwcc.camp/k5-weekend. Contact the Tagtow's for any questions at 863-412-0022 or 863-286-5811.

June 30th-July 6th: Central Florida Bible Camp for ages 10-18. If you are interested in sending your child, please see Vince Daugherty.

Thank You

My family and I don't know what we would do without the church here. We hope you all know how much your appreciated. Thank you so much for all the love through cards, prayers and calls you have bestowed upon us. In Christian love, Stacey & Toney Wilson and Toney Wilson's brother, Larry Lester.

Sympathy

Wilma (Gerri) Howell, a former member and Dorothy Craig, Janie Wise's aunt, both passed away on Saturday May 25th. Please keep these families in your prayers.

Responses

Stacey Paulin, Vince Daugherty and Jim Turner responded to the fine lesson we heard Sunday morning on the Christian home. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Update on the House

Anyone who bought or took original doors, glass, or fixtures from the old house next door when we thought it would be demolished, and no longer has a need for them, please bring them back. The contractor would be delighted to rework them into the restoration of the home. If you need help transporting them back to the building, please contact the office.

Visitors

Jerry Green, Sherman Williams, Heather Glass, Tiffany Hash, Sam and Megan, Stacey Wilson, Virginia Rupert and Paul & Janet Kee.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

June

Open/Close building-Tim Croson

David Williams..... **Table** Charles Paulin
Fred Strickland..... **Assist** Matt Willcutt

Sunday, June 9, 2019

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class..... Kyle Faneuf
Prayer..... Jeff Bingle

10:30 A.M.

Sound Booth..... Phil Fife
Announcements..... Wayne Shearer
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Bobby Sheumaker
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Dustin Walling
Greeters..... McShane/Smith
Cards..... Willcutt boy's

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Vince Daugherty
Opening Prayer..... Jim Turner
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Ken Walker

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

Song Leader..... Kyle Bingle
Opening Prayer..... Tim Croson
Closing Prayer..... Tucker Sweeney

June- Clean-up Wayne Shearer (L-P)

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

Sunday, June 16, 2019

9:30 A.M.

Song at Bible Class..... Paul Romine
Prayer..... John McShane

10:30 A.M.

Sound Booth..... Alex Parramore
Announcements..... Wayne Shearer
Song Leader..... Jason Hendrix
Opening Prayer..... Ken Walker
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Kyle Faneuf
Greeters..... Walker/Kenyon
Cards..... Caelen/Cam'ron

6:00 P.M.

Song Leader..... Vince Daugherty
Opening Prayer..... Alex Parramore
Sermon..... Hiram Kemp
Closing Prayer..... Kyle Faneuf

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

Song Leader..... Paul Romine
Opening Prayer..... Frank Hamby
Closing Prayer..... John McShane

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

May 12.....	\$6,357.70
May 19.....	\$5,674.07
May 26.....	\$5,515.32
June 2	\$8,170.90
Contribution Average	\$6,655.66

~ Communion to Shut-ins ~

June 9th..... Youth Group
June 16th..... Van Allen

New Member Spotlight

Tiffany Daugherty



Tiffany was born in Mexia, Texas, and has also lived in Arkansas and Oklahoma. As a child, she wanted to be a writer or a music teacher. Her first job was a reference library assistant. She is currently a part-time intake assessor/therapist with HEADS. In her free time, she likes to read. Her most satisfying accomplishment is earning her master's degree and becoming a licensed marriage and family therapist. The best advice she's been given is "You can't pour from an empty can." She and her husband, Vince, have two sons, Ellis and Judah. Welcome!

New Member Spotlight

Vince Daugherty



Vince was born in Monfalcone, Italy, and grew up in Florida and Ohio. He attended Harding in Arkansas, where he met Tiffany. As a child he wanted to be a football coach. His first job was packaging toys for a toy company. On June 1, he "officially" began working with us as our associate minister. His favorite dessert is popcorn cake. In his free time, he likes to play video games, watch Lightning hockey, golf, and play sports. His most satisfying accomplishment is getting Tiffany to go out with him. They have two sons, Ellis and Judah. Welcome, Daughertys!



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 . . .



VBS
Continues
Thru
Thursday!



MISSION TRIP PERU

Pray for our young people and their chaperones as they gear-up for a mission trip to Haucho, Peru, July 19-27, 2019. They will knock doors, pass out tracts, and conduct one-on-one Bible studies.

We appreciate our elders for seeing the value in involving our young people. If you would like to contribute, see our elders.

We are **A MISSION-MINDED CHURCH!**

In addition to the large-group mission trip to Peru, several of the members here are going on other campaigns. **Casey** and **Tucker** are in Costa Rica, scheduled to return, Lord willing, June 8. **Dee & Alex** are going to the Philippines. **Casey** is also going to Panama. Let us continue to pray for their safety and the Gospel's free course into honest hearts! To God be the glory!



By God's grace, part of the work done in Ghana, was plant a local church in a village called Big Ada. Six souls were baptized there, ten on the 3-week campaign.