



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 78 No. 18 April 30, 2024

ELDERS

David Anderson
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Stacey Paulin

MINISTER

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

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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.....6:30 p.m.

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Ted Wheeler Ghana, W.A.

ESSENTIALS OF CHURCH HISTORY

Brian R. Kenyon

History is very interesting, even intriguing, and is something people must learn lest they repeat the atrocities in it (cf. Judges 10:11-16). This is especially true of church history. From the New Testament church to the Roman Catholicism to the multiple thousands of denominations today, there are many lessons to be learned. However, the basics of church history are found in the God-breathed history of the church found in the Book of Acts and throughout the New Testament. With an understanding of the facts of church history below, we can better understand and evaluate what has happened to “Christianity” over the past two thousand years and, more importantly, we can be better equipped to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

CHURCH ESTABLISHED

In response to Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus promised, “on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:16-18). Although future from when Jesus spoke, the building of that church would be during the life of some present (Matthew 16:28), including Peter (Matthew 16:19). That future time came in Acts 2, when the Lord singled out the twelve apostles as His spokesmen (Acts 2:1-4). Although Peter’s sermon is the one detailed, all the apostles preached on that first Day of Pentecost following Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:14, 37). As Peter concluded, some hearers responded, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?,” to which Peter replied, “Repent, and ... be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37-38). Further exhortation occurred so that “those who gladly received his [Peter’s] word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:40-41). Who were the “them” to which these souls were added? Luke revealed, “the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). Thus, the church that Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16:18 was built in Acts 2 and has existed ever since! Any church that began after the first Day of Pentecost cannot be the church that belongs to Christ!

CHURCH MULTIPLIED

From his evangelistic insights from the Book of Acts and the life of Paul, Jackie M. Stearsman, Florida School of Preaching director and instructor, ingrained in his students’ minds the truth, “We cannot evangelize the world any faster than we can plant and stabilize local congregations.” Acts 2:41–8:3 focuses on the newly established church in Jerusalem. This church preached the Gospel (Acts 3:12-26), answered questions before civil authorities (Acts 4:1-12), overcame

persecution (Acts 5:24-42), witnessed severe church discipline (Acts 5:1-11), and dealt with various benevolence challenges (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6). Only after being grounded through learning and applying God's word was that initial church ready to move forward with the evangelistic plan Jesus gave to "be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Thus, "those who were scattered [by persecution] went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). The church multiplied by preaching the resurrection (Acts 2:24-36; 13:16-47), by their devotion to spiritual things (Acts 2:42-46), and by their carrying the Gospel beyond themselves (Acts 1:8; 8:4; 16:10). Only obedience to the word of God can save souls and thus multiply local churches (1 Corinthians 12:13)! Creating and/or perpetuating denominations will never multiply the church (Romans 16:17-19; Galatians 1:6-9). Any church whose membership is based on anything other than Gospel obedience cannot be Christ's church!

CHURCH OVERTAKEN & RESTORED

Jesus told Peter when He promised to build His church, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). The tenses of these verbs actually carry the meaning, "whatever you bind on earth shall have [already] been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have [already] been loosed in heaven" (NAS95). It was *not* the case that Peter or the apostles invented doctrine, then God ratified it! Rather, Peter and the apostles simply bound and loosed what God had already bound and loosed. No apostle, preacher, nor anyone has a right to bind or loose what God has not already bound or loosed (Galatians 1:6-9). Churches that bind what God has loosed are in error (Acts 15:1, 5; 1 Timothy 4:1-3). Churches that loose what God has bound are in error (2 John 9-10; Revelation 22:18-19). May God give us wisdom to ascertain the difference between what God truly requires and what He deems optional (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). Churches can be in error and those in them spiritually lost, no matter how much "good" they do!

When churches are in error, they need to be restored (Revelation 2:5, 16, 22; 3:3, 19). Denominations are built on either binding what God has loosed or loosening what God has bound. People in these erroneous churches must have the attitude displayed by the eunuch, who sought guidance to understand God's word (Acts 8:30-34), and like Cornelius, who sincerely wanted to "hear all the things commanded ... by God" (Acts 10:33). With those kinds of attitudes, the outcome of obedience is predictable. The eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? ... Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38). With Cornelius and his household, Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). Not only must there be the proper attitude for restoration, there must be the desire to know the truth and be a part of God's revealed plan (John 7:17; Revelation 22:17). Finally, for restoration, there must be penitent obedience to truth (Acts 8:13-24). History tells us many "churches" and their members need to turn from error and obey what God requires (Acts 2:38; Romans 1:5; 16:26).

CHURCH GLORIFIED

When the church glorifies the Lord, God will glorify the church. Note the comparison husbands' loving their wives "as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her ... that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:25-27). The church can only glorify God by "whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17 cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31). Doing something in the "name of the Lord" is not merely dedicating to Him what we think He wants (cf. Matthew 7:21-23), but it is actually doing and serving as He directs (Luke 6:46). Whether preaching/teaching or in other service to the Lord, it must be done as God has given and/or supplies, "that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:11).

CONCLUSION

Understanding church history is vital, especially the God-breathed church history found in the New Testament. We must learn from that inspired source what made the New Testament church the body of Christ, how this church grew, what it meant to fall into error, how those in error could be restored, and how the church could glorify God. May we learn from church history never to "be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17).

PRAYER LIST

Current: Jeff Bingle will be having more medical tests soon, Jim Turner is in the VA hospital in Tampa, Phil Fife will have surgery soon for a torn rotator cuff.

Continual: Sharon Mathis Washington (Health & family) Fran Gabaldon (health), Stacey Wilson (health) Debbie Bush (struggles); Bill & Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health); Jim Turner (health)

Shut-ins: Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin, Helen Perrin, Bettye Bolding, Sharon Roy

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

SAVE THE DATE: VBS here at S. Florida Ave.

Saturday, June 8, 2024

Sympathy

Bill Anderson (brother of David Anderson and son of Nellie Anderson) passed away on Monday April 29. Let us keep the family in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.



Door Knocking Evangelism Campaign

May 13-18, 2024

We will be having a door knocking campaign along with the FSOP Students.

Please make plans to join us in this local mission work.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Dear church family,

We would like to let you know how much you are appreciated! It's the thoughtfulness of people like you that makes the world so bright! We are truly grateful for all the prayers, well wished, cards and phone calls that we have received during Stacey's health crisis. Our God is an awesome God and we know He is in control and we truly thank you for representing Him on earth. Stacey is still struggling with heart issues, so please continue to keep us in your prayers. We love you and thank you for being the wonderful people you are.

In Christian love, Stacey and Toney Wilson



IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER WHO WILL BE GRADUATING THIS YEAR, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE WITH THEIR INFORMATION SO WE CAN INCLUDE THEM IN THE BULLETIN WITH THE OTHER 2024 GRADUATES!

Scheduled to Serve in May

Designated Elder	Bobby Sheumaker
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Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Announcements	Stacey Paulin
Song Leader / Prayer	Landon Willcut
Devotional / Invitation	Carey Gillis
Closing Prayer	Lou Van Allen

Sunday, May 5, 2024

10:30 am Sermon	Brian Kenyon
"For God to Give the Increase..." (1 Cor. 3:6)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Rick Kenyon
The Unchanging God of Change (Ps. 102:23-28)	

Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	Brenda/Darlene
Song/Pray before class	Frank Hamby
Announcements (both)	Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader (both)	Andre Medley
Prayer / Bible reading	Josh Estridge
Lord's Table (both)	George Davis
Closing Prayer	Joseph Faulk
Open/Close Building	Jason Hendrix
Attendance Cards	Klark Kenyon
Sound Booth (both)	Hendrix

Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Fifes
Announcements	Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader	Andre Medley
Prayer / Bible reading	Roberson Louissaint
Closing Prayer	Rick Kenyon

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Stacey Paulin
Devotional / Invitation	Brian Kenyon
Closing Prayer	Jarred Spivey

How We Are Giving

April 14	\$7,708.75
April 21	\$4881.50
April 28	\$5,640.00
Contribution Average	\$6,987.95
Weekly Budget	\$7,410.00

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!

Women of the Word

Casey Potvin

BIRTHDAY MEMORIES

As my children's birthdays near, I see and think about all the good times we have shared, the laughs, the tears, and the scares. I think back to the days they were born. I don't remember the pain or the fear of going into labor. I remember looking at their faces and the first time I held them in my arms (John 16:21). There have been many ups and downs, trials and errors, good days, and bad days, but no matter what the day before was like, I wake up and try to be better for them. I have made many mistakes as a mother, and I am sure I will make many more in the years to come but raising them in the church and learning the Bible is not one of them (Proverbs 22:6). I thank God every day for both of my boys. They are truly a gift from Him (Psalm 127:3)



Rick Kenyon has accepted a preaching position in Portales, NM with the Third and Kilgore Church of Christ. We will miss this family so much and we appreciate all that **Rick, Stephanie, Klark and Karissa** have done here at SFA in service to the LORD. We are happy for them and this great opportunity they have been given but sad to see them go and pray that all goes smoothly for them. They plan to leave around the beginning of June.



FSOP Graduation Ceremony

May 19, 2024

Following the evening service.

Join us as we celebrate the graduation of
Roberson Louissaint

Please bring finger foods to share and stay to enjoy the fellowship. There will probably be guests so bring enough for your family and some to share.

Team 1 will be in charge of the kitchen duties and clean up.



LADIES' BIBLE STUDY



A abide in Him

1 John 2:18 - 3:15

May 7, 2024
7:00 PM

TAUGHT BY SUSAN STEARSMAN

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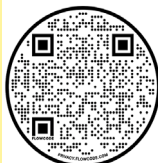


South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

**"I have trusted in the Lord without
wavering."
Psalm 26:1**



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.