

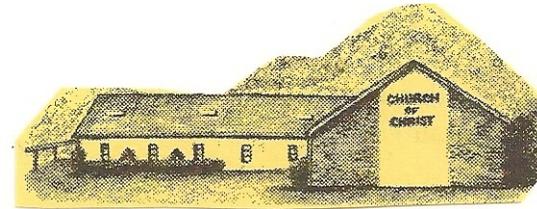
News & Notes

Upcoming events: Every 2nd Sunday of the month we have an afternoon song practice (*Next Week*). Ladies' Bible class is held every second Monday of the month (*Next week also*), the men's Bible class is scheduled for the 4th Sunday of each month (*June 22nd*), and our next Young Adult's study will be on *June 27th*.

Keep in Prayer: Mike & Tammy Sadler both were not well on Wednesday evening, as was the case for Lilah Wisdom. Prayers have been requested on behalf of Denise Israel (Kurt Dickie's sister) who had a brain aneurism last week. Please continue also to keep in mind our friends and family — Betty Eubanks (Sandy Rawdon's mother), Karen Stanley, Naydene Fields, Jerry Jordan, Jimmy Johnson, and Brian James.

Out of Town: Ronnie Henderson is preaching for Azalea Park this morning, James VanDoorn is visiting with his brother, and Audrey Davis is out of town as well.

Group Meeting: Group (2) meets tonight after worship. Please make it a point to help out in this work — *as well as* continuing in prayer, making calls, and visits.



**Lakeland Hills
Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

2510 Lakeland Hills Boulevard Lakeland Florida 33805 (863) 688-4336

www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com

ELDERS

Larry Hicks (863) 899-7405
Leon Miller (863) 640-6378

SERVICES

Sunday
Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
Morning Services 9:50 A.M.
Evening Services 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday
Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
Michael Sadler
Eric Stevens
Moses Stevens
David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

“Snake-Handling”

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 6/4/14

Song Leader: Keith Marschall
Opening Prayer: Eric Stevens
Invitation: Colby Sadler
Announcements: Mike Sadler
Closing Prayer: David Williams
Parking Lot: Ed Lawson

Sunday Evening: 6/8/14

Song Leader: Keith Marschall
Opening Prayer: Colby Sadler
Lord's Table: Charles Rawdon
Announcements: Leon Miller
Closing Prayer: Eric Stevens
Parking Lot: Larry Hicks

Sunday Morning: 6/8/14

Lord's Table: (B) Charles Rawdon
(C) Ben Cunningham
Serving: Ed Lawson
Kirk Marschall
Song Leader: Larry Wisdom
Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot

Announcements: Leon Miller
Closing Prayer: Paul Lloyd
Parking Lot: (9:00) David Williams
(9:50) Mike Sadler

The following associated Press news item appeared over the internet and in the Sarasota Tribune: “MIDDLESBURG, Ky. – A snake-handling Kentucky pastor who appeared on the National Geographic television reality show “Snake Salvation” has died, after being bitten by a snake. According to a news release from the Middlesboro Police Department, someone called first responders at about 8:30 p.m. Saturday regarding a snake-bite victim at a church. When the ambulance arrived, they were told that Jamie Coots had gone home. Contacted at his house, Coots refused medical treatment. Emergency workers left at about 9:p.m. When they returned about an hour later, Coots was dead.” Through the years, Eastern Kentucky and Eastern Tennessee have been known for the existence of churches in which snake-handling is practiced. The members believe that an evidence of their faith in the Lord is demonstrated by the handling of poisonous snakes. Though the practice has been outlawed in some areas, as we can see from this news article, the practice still exists in some places. This pastor, Jamie Coots, who died due to the snake's bite, was arrested in January 2013 for transporting three rattlesnakes and two copperheads through Knoxville, Tennessee to be used in his church's services. Coots pleaded guilty to illegal wildlife possession and

was given a year of unsupervised probation. It appears from this information that not only the practice of snake-handling in church services is illegal, but also the possession of them is illegal wildlife possession. The scripture which is used to authorize and justify the practice of snake-handling in church services is found in Mark 16: 17-18: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." There are five signs mentioned in this passage as signs which follow them that believe. In the name of Christ, they could cast out devils; speak in new tongues; take up serpents and drink any deadly thing without it hurting them; and lay hands on the sick and they would recover. To my knowledge, no one of these five signs are more important than the other. As we view this passage and the practice of snake-handling, there are a number of important principles we need to consider regarding the scriptures. We Need To Consider And Appreciate:

To whom a passage is addressed. In Mark 16: 17-18, Jesus is speaking to the eleven apostles. He gave them the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel with these signs following to confirm their word. The word at this time was within the man. The canon of the New Testament had not been developed at this time. These signs were given to confirm that the word they preached was from God. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." (Mark 16:20).

We do not need these signs today because we have that which is perfect to confirm the word which we are to preach. Paul wrote: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (I Corinthians 13:9-10). The part represented the time of miraculous signs while that which is perfect involved the completion of God's revelation in the New Testament books. These signs had a purpose and they served their purpose before the coming of that which is perfect in producing the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. We Also Need To Consider And Appreciate:

The unity in a passage. All five of these signs could be performed by those to whom they were given. Why pick out the one dealing with taking up serpents and neglecting the existence of the others? The passage does not deal with one exhibiting his faith by performing these signs. The modern snake-handlers use this passage to contend that they are to perform such an act as proof of their faith in the Lord. These signs were given to confirm the word and not for exhibiting one's personal faith in God. Furthermore, if one can take up serpents and not be hurt, why aren't they drinking poison to exhibit their faith without being hurt? The unity of the passage sanctions both of the practices along with the other three which are mentioned. Mr. Moots evidently was lacking in the proper faith for he was bitten by the rattler and died from the bite. Perhaps the only time a snake-handling example is found in the New Testament is when Paul was shipwrecked on the Island of Melita. "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand." (Acts 28:3). Seeing this, the barbarous people on the island felt he was a murderer that was being pun-

ished with death by the viper. When he did not die with no harm coming to him, they viewed him as a god. It was evidently a sign which prompted the people to bring their sick to Paul that he might heal them in performing another of the signs confirming the word. Furthermore, We Need To Understand:

That zeal without knowledge exists. I don't question the zeal of those like Mr. Moot. I don't question their sincerity in thinking that they prove their faith by picking up poisonous snakes. Paul expressed my view of them by saying, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Romans 10:1-2). God has never commanded me to take up serpents. I am thankful for this, and I do not intend to start doing so!

Bobby K. Thompson