

### News & Notes

**Upcoming Events:** Afternoon song practice in the auditorium **this afternoon is at 5pm.** Women's monthly Bible study resumes **tomorrow evening** at Paul Sullivan's house. Next men's Bible study will be on October 26th, and the next young adult study will be on November 7th.

**Prayer Requests:** Butch Morgan, Suzette Stevens, and Nick Groenhof were all out on Wednesday because of illness. Dottie Reynolds is nursing a broken elbow, Linda James is now battling an infection in her shoulder, and Charles Goodall has been feeling very weak since being put on antibiotics. Please continue to pray for and encourage these brethren, along with others who have been on our list lately.

**Out of Town:** Audrey Davis, Diana & Ken Jordan, and Kirk Marschall; Ian Rice - October 13-20.

**Teachers' Meeting:** It is encouraging to see so many expressing their willingness to teach the Bible classes next year. This is absolutely a sign (one indicator) that we are growing spiritually as a congregation. If there are any questions, or if you'd like to make any changes, please see Larry Hicks.

**Is something in the water?** Nick and Emilee Ross are thankful for the support they've received since Emilee gave birth to Isla; Nick and Cassandra Groenhof are expecting their second child due November 11th, and *now* great news has been announced - that Ben and Kayla Cunningham are expecting!! Please continue to support and encourage these young families!

**Group Meeting:** Group (3) meets tonight after worship.

**Gospel Meeting:** The Southwest church of Christ in Lakeland is holding a meeting this week, Oct. 12th-15th, with Mark Copeland. Let's seek to support their meeting.

### Assignments for Worship Service

**Wednesday Night: 10/15/14**

Song Leader: Ben Cunningham  
 Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson  
 Invitation: Eddie Lawson  
 Announcements: Mike Sadler  
 Closing Prayer: Nick Ross  
 Parking Lot: Colby Sadler

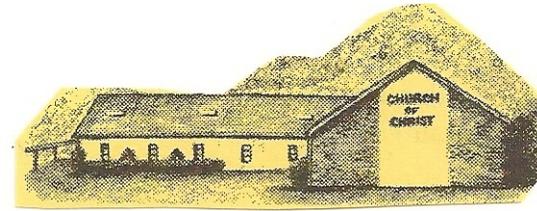
**Sunday Evening: 10/19/14**

Song Leader: Eddie Lawson  
 Opening Prayer: Colby Sadler  
 Lord's Table: Charles Rawdon  
 Announcements: Leon Miller  
 Closing Prayer: Jim Elliot  
 Parking Lot: Larry Hicks  
**Sermon: Mike Sadler**

**Sunday Morning: 10/19/14**

Lord's Table: Clay Sadler (B)  
 Colby Sadler (C)  
 Serving: Keith Marschall  
 Trent Stevens  
**Song Leader: OPEN**  
 Opening Prayer: Sherman Johnson

Announcements: Larry Hicks  
 Closing Prayer: Nick Groenhof  
 Parking Lot: (9:00) Norm Blackburn  
 (9:50) Ed Lawson  
**Sermon: Charles Rawdon**



# Lakeland Hills Leader

## LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

[www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com](http://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

### Why Do "Churches of Christ" Differ so Widely?

A sign reading "Church of Christ" in front of a building tells you very little these days. Most any doctrine or practice may be found inside. This is frustrating to many people. Outsiders make fun of the situation, saying, "You preach unity but you are the most divided people we know." They may add, "This just proves you are not the true church." This last statement shows a total misunderstanding of what the true church is, but it is a misunderstanding shared by far too many "members of the church."

#### *How Can We Explain It?*

First, many churches that claim to be churches of Christ are not "of Christ" at all. Any church can claim that designation, but only one that truly recognizes Christ as its head is justified in using it. There is no denominational accrediting board that can certify a church as a true church of Christ — the Lord Himself is the judge of that.

In addition, there are churches, claiming to be churches of Christ, that intend to follow Jesus but have widely differing ideas of what that involves. Some, like the Sadducees, "*are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God*" (Mt 22:29). Others know the scriptures but construe them loosely, rejecting only those things that are forbidden. Still others believe that only those things clearly authorized are to be practiced; but even among these there may be differences as to what is authorized. When such congregations are truly autonomous, it is inevitable that there will be noticeable differences.

**Such Differences Are Not New** Differences existed among churches established by the apostles even while the New Testament was still being written. The "seven churches of Asia" (Revelation 2 and 3) provide good examples.

A visitor in Ephesus would have found an old established church that was doing everything right but with a lack of love (Rev 2:4). Moving on to Smyrna, he would find a rather poor little group that had a bad reputation among the Jews in town (Rev 2:9). Visiting the church in Pergamum, he might well

hear a teacher defending idolatry, approving the eating of meat sacrificed to them (Rev 2:14). And if that was not shocking enough, going on to Thyatira he might meet a woman in the church who claimed to be a prophetess and was actually teaching and seducing the men to commit fornication (Rev 2:20). If the traveler expressed concern about what he had found thus far, he might well be told that he would find things better in Sardis where there was a church widely known as a really lively church. But on arriving there, he would be disappointed to find that, as far as doing what God wanted them to do, they really were dead (Rev 3:1-2). Moving on to Philadelphia, he would find a church made up of good people, but relatively small and with "little strength" (Rev 3:8). Finally, in Laodicea, visiting the church he might be met by greeters at the door offering him a brochure and telling him how rich and self-sufficient the church was; but on closer inspection he would find that they really were spiritually "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" (Rev 3:17). At least, that's what the Lord found.

Were all of these churches right because they would claim to be "of Christ"? **No!** Two of them were threat-

ened with total rejection by the Lord (Rev 2:5; 3:16) and three others were warned of dire consequences if they did not repent. Did the remaining congregations comprise the "one true church?" NO! The one true church is not composed of congregations but of faithful individuals saved by the Lord (Acts 2:47). In spite of the false teaching and immorality in some of the churches there were still some who had "not defiled their garments." The faithful remnant in these and other churches made up — and make up — the "one true church."

**What All Churches Must Do** In John's epistles, written about the same time, we see echoes of the same problems. He speaks of those who questioned both the divinity and humanity of Jesus (doctrine of the Nicolaitans?); of those claiming they could sin without guilt and of some who hated their brethren. There had even been divisions which John explains by saying, "*They went out from us because they were not of us*" (1 Jn 2:19).

John stated the solution. Approximately ten times in 1 and 2 John he speaks of "the beginning." Most often that expression seems to refer to the beginning of

the church on Pentecost under the direction of the apostles of Jesus (see 1 Jn 2:24). After warning of false teachers (1 Jn 4:21) he provides the standard by which they are to be tested. As an apostle he writes: "*We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*" (1 Jn 4:6).

We cannot be responsible for every church in the world that calls itself a church of Christ. Our responsibility as congregations is to go back to be the church as it was in "the beginning" and to the apostles doctrine in which that church continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42). As individuals we must make sure that we are a part of the faithful remnant that makes up the "one true church."

- By Sewell Hall

