

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Margaret Blackburn, Joe Brown (*cancer*), Marian Church (*back*), Betty Eubanks, Linda James (*on-going medical*), Gus Johnson, Paul Lloyd, Leon Miller (*bip*), Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Wayne Ryland (*is in rehab in Winter Haven; Astoria, At the Village @ Vienna Square, 701 Overlook Drive, Winter Haven, FL 33884, Room 408B; Family has asked to please keep any visits short*), Mike Sadler (*neck*), and Ken & Arlene Turner.

Our family and friends: Mildred Church (*Shut-in*), Charles Goodall's aunt Nell, Ned Hicks, Brian James (*cancer*), Rowena Lawson's mother, Ardis Tucker (*at Arbor Hills, room # 221*), and Charles Woods (*Ed and Terrell's brother-in-law in need of a heart transplant*).

Out of Town: Audrey Davis, Ed Lawson, David & Kyoko Williams are all out of town.

Bible Class Review: The next kid's review class will be October 2nd, shortly after the evening services, in classroom # 7.

Group Meeting: Group (2) meets tonight after worship.

Gospel Meeting (s): The Plant City Church of Christ has a meeting planned for Sept. 25th-30th. Our meeting will be here before you know it. Terry Benton will hold a meeting with us from October 16th through the 21st. Mark your calendar.

Upcoming: Teachers, just a friendly reminder to please be prepared for the upcoming new quarter (*Begins in two weeks*).

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 9/21/16

Song Leader: Keith Marschall
 Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot
 Invitation: Clay Sadler
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: David Williams
 Recordings: Clay Sadler
 Usher: Mike Sadler

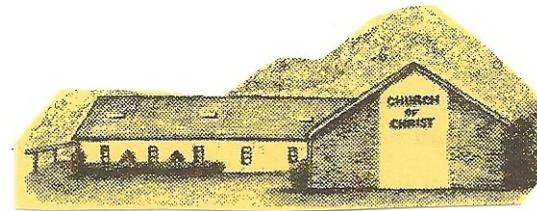
Sunday Evening: 9/25/16

Song Leader: Ben Cunningham
 Opening Prayer: Ronnie Henderson
 Lord's Table: Charles Rawdon
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: David Williams
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Mike Sadler

Sunday Morning: 9/25/16

Lord's Table: Charles Rawdon (B)
 Trent Stevens (C)
 Serving: Ed Lawson
 Eddie Lawson
 Song Leader: Larry Wisdom

Opening Prayer: Nick Ross
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Neil Miller
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Mike Sadler



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

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ELDERS

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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
 Charles Rawdon
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

“That You May Believe”

Many of us have heard the story about “Doubting Thomas”. It concerns how, after Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He appeared to His closest disciples who'd been gathered together -- without Thomas present. The disciples had the doors shut where they gathered for fear of the Jews, and when Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst, they were all terrified! They thought they were seeing a ghost!! To ease their troubled minds, Jesus offered them all words of assurance, telling them, *“Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. ⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, “Have you any food here?” ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³ And He took it and ate in their presence.” (Luke 24:38-43)* The disciples would finally accept the fact that Jesus was indeed alive, but Mark describes that Jesus had to rebuke them first, saying that the Lord ***“rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart,***

because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen" (Mark 16:14). Even before mention of that rebuke in the Scriptures though, Mark also had recorded that Mary Magdalene is the one who brought news of Jesus' resurrection. "And when **they** heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, **they did not believe.**" (Mark 16:11) It is important to note that Mark explicitly mentions all of their disbelief concerning Mary's testimony, as well as Jesus' rebuke. Again, He rebuked ALL OF THEM for THEIR unbelief.

The gospel of John records that Thomas, who was one of the twelve, was not with the rest when Jesus came on that particular occasion. The other disciples therefore told Thomas, when he came to them, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "**Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.**" (John 20:25) This is where many criticize

Thomas' unbelief more so than the others', but that may be a bit unfair to him. Thomas indeed refused to believe in Jesus' resurrection at this point, but why severely criticize him - - any more than the others? Remember, the others did not believe either; until they were shown the evidence by the Lord Himself!

The rest of the account in John speaks of how Thomas was provided evidence to believe in the resurrection, "And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷ **Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."** ²⁸ **And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"** (John 20:26-28). Considering that the Lord rebuked the other disciples for their unbelief (Mark 16:11, 14), and also that He provided them all with the same evidence of His resurrection (Cf. Luke 24:36-43; John 20:26-28), let us be careful in how we speak of Thomas.

In truth, Thomas' confession of belief is one of the strongest testimonies to the resurrection! Like all of the rest of the disciples, he did not accept the first reports that some had seen Jesus alive. He even declared that we would not believe until he could actually touch the wounds in the Lord's body. Yet, *when he did see Jesus*, he declared, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). That is actually the most forceful pronouncement of faith in Jesus, and His true identity, that one could possibly make!

There is no need to unnecessarily damage Thomas' character because of this occasion. Rather, may we acknowledge that ALL of Jesus' closest disciples were skeptical of the news they'd received? These were not men who plotted a way to deceive the multitudes about Jesus coming back to life (as some suggest)...These are men who were extremely grieved over the loss of their Master, and who were all skeptical of the news they'd received -- until they were given strong evidence! And boy, were they given strong evidence!! Furthermore, after being presented with that evi-

dence; they believed, and responded in a very positive fashion! The point being; we today can believe their testimony!! They were all skeptical, but were made to believe upon examining the evidence put before them.

I pray that you will examine the evidence in which God provides for establishing our faith today (Romans 10:17), in order that you may believe and respond, accordingly. In closing, consider how our Lord instructed Thomas on that occasion: "Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" ³⁰ *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;* ³¹ *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:29-31). Let us all earnestly examine the evidence of God in Scripture, that we may believe.

All Bible quotations provided from the New King James Version.