

**Noteworthy**

**Prayer Requests:** Margaret Blackburn, Joe Brown (*cancer*), Betty Eubanks, Linda James (*on-going medical*), Paul Lloyd, Butch Morgan (*ongoing medical*), Isla Ross, Wayne Ryland (*at home*), Tammy Sadler, Suzette Stevens, Ken Turner, Arlene Turner, Jerry Williams, and Larry Wisdom.

*Our family and friends:* Mildred Church (*Shut-in*), Susan Combre (Bonnie Meagher’s neice), Charles Goodall’s aunt (*Nell Goodall*), Brian James (*cancer*), Jesse Jordan, Rowena Lawson’s mother (*Lourdes*), 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 and Bonnie Meagher are both out of town..

**Bible Class Review:** The next kid’s review class will be November 6th, shortly after the evening services, in classroom # 7.

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

**Gospel Meeting:** Our meeting with Terry Benton, from Gardendale Alabama begins today and will run through Friday (*Note: It is NOT too late to take some flyers and invite your loved ones!*)

**Ladies Bible Class:** The next Ladies’ Bible class is November 14th at Keri Rice’s home (7PM). In preparation, please study lesson number V that begins on page # 120 in the book, “Some Do’s and Don’ts for the Christian”. (*See the sign-up sheet in the foyer*)

**Assignments for Worship Service**

**Wednesday Night: 10/19/16**

Song Leader: Joe Brown  
 Opening Prayer: Ben Cunningham  
 No Invitation: **MEETING**  
 Announcements: Larry Hicks  
 Closing Prayer: Clay Sadler  
 Recordings: Bucky Day  
 Usher: Leon Miller

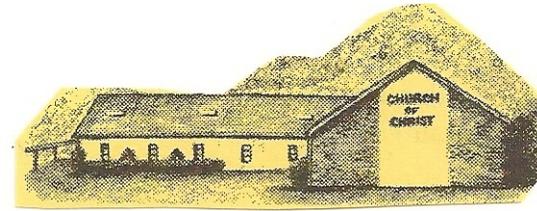
**Sunday Evening: 10/23/16**

Song Leader: Jeremy Wharton  
 Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot  
 Lord’s Table: Ben Cunningham  
 Announcements: Mike Sadler  
 Closing Prayer: Jerry Williams  
 Recordings: Bucky Day  
 Usher: Gus Johnson

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**Sunday Morning: 10/23/16**

Lord’s Table: Ben Cunningham (B)  
 Clay Sadler (C)  
 Serving: Sherman Johnson  
 Norm Blackburn  
 Song Leader: Charles Rawdon

Opening Prayer: Leon Miller  
 Announcements: Mike Sadler  
 Closing Prayer: David Williams  
 Recordings: Trent Stevens  
 Usher: Gus Johnson



**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  
 Larry Wisdom (863) 583-4311

**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  
 Moses Stevens  
 David Williams

**EVANGELIST:**

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

***Another Factor in Lack of Numerical Church Growth...***

As we have noticed at other times, a new generation of Christians has come along and have heard of the great periods of numerical growth in congregations in times past, but are not seeing it happening now. They sincerely want to see growth and have come up with a number of *fixes* for the problem that would attract more “prospects.”

One of these is that we need to scrap the “worn out relics” of past generations, like gospel meetings, public Bible classes, and home studies – all geared to turning people from error to truth. While these may have worked at one time, but no more, we are told. We need to do and say things that will get more in touch with how people feel today. They are more interested in merely enhancing their lives (by feeling good about themselves) than they are in completely changing their lives.

It is my firm persuasion that most of the lack of growth of the past decade or two can be traced to a drifting away from the distinctiveness in our message in

our meetings and classes. Most of what comes from our pulpits could be preached without descent in any pulpit in town. The prevailing philosophy of preaching/teaching is to emphasize how much we have in common with our religious neighbors rather than to emphasizing the vital points of difference. Most preaching done now Sunday after Sunday and in “gospel meetings” consist of either pop psychology with little or no Scripture or the reading of some Scripture and drawing a few moral platitudes from it with little reference to the real gospel message or to the danger of going beyond the doctrine of Christ. Along with this they are given some reasons why we think they would find our “church family” a place where we think they would be happy – none of which have to do with sound doctrine.

Obviously, the “prospect” is searching for something or else he would not likely be coming our way. So, it is our hope that if we shower him with compassion, friendliness, and love, **without** referring to anything that might be wrong with his present “church affiliation,” or any convictions that he would need to

change, or any clear line between what the Bible teaches and what he believes or feels, or any life-style changes he will have to make, that he will like us so much that he will change over to us.

So as he assesses the matter, he may think that since there is little difference in the compassion, friendliness, and love where he is presently a member and that offered by this group and that there are other groups he has attended in his search for a “church home” that are just as compassionate, friendly, and loving— so maybe that “something missing” that he is searching for is not available, so he will return to where he was, or try another group, or just give up and quit.

Remember, by offering folks the distinctive gospel message we are offering them something they cannot find anywhere else. I also believe there are people who are looking for that “something” but will not find it in much of the preaching/teaching efforts today.

- Ed Bragwell Sr.

### *Truthful Excuses*

An excuse need not be a lie. It is because, factor, or circumstance that frees from blame or releases from obligation. Many excuses are both truthful and legitimate; some are outright lies; while others may be very truthful, yet reveal a most unbecoming character in the maker.

When someone explains his absence from worship with, “We had visitors,” this need not be a lie. It may be truth — which tells us that this person regards social amenities as being more important than worship.

“No one is perfect!” How very very true. So — there can be no standards, no right or wrong? There can be no ideals to which we can press, nor should we urge such elevated goals upon others? Can’t we see that the imperfection of man is the very reason for recognizing *our* failures as such, and helping one another to get up and try again?

“Many people do it,” to which we all must agree. Does that make it the will of God? Many people think that man made God in his own image, and accept a situation-ethics standard; but it can not

be demonstrated that such a philosophy has ever elevated mankind, or promoted a stable society. This is a poor substitute for faith in God and individual character.

“There are hypocrites in the church,” — and the world has none?? Do you think that using a hypocrite as your excuse makes you a better man? And how is it that one is able to see the **truth** with reference to hypocrisy in others, and be blinded to the same in themselves? (Matt. 7:1-5)

“But I meant well!” This also may be the truth. It commends, to some extent; but it remains a commendation only as our honest heart leads us to further consider God’s truth, and make corrections accordingly.

A radio commercial of some years back has one man excusing himself (?) from worship with, “Things are so unsettled these days. There is so little time. Why, the whole world may be blown apart at any moment.”

And the reply was, **“That’s right!”**

- Robert F. Turner