



Eastern Meadows Church of Christ

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July 30, 2020

ELDERS:

Alan Kaye
Roy Mulkey
Mike Norman
Ted Norton

DEACONS:

Adam Bass
Allen Clements
John Cole
Michael Crow
Ryan Gotkiewicz
Tim Gotkiewicz
Tim Hatch
Steve Housley
Marquez James
Joel Kelly
Jimmy Mathews
Danny Moore
Lindsey Mulkey
Dean Norton
Randy Porterfield
Steve Sewell
Jeff Simpson

MINISTERS:

Tim Gotkiewicz, Youth
& College
David Hester, Educa-
tion & Involvement
Steve Housley, Pulpit

SCHEDULE:

Sunday:

9:00 a.m. Bible Class
10:00 a.m. Worship
5:00 p.m. Worship

Wednesday:

6:30 p.m. Bible Study

WELCOME!

The guidelines for keeping worship safe are still in effect. Please come Sunday for 10 a.m. worship. Remember it will be a sanitized, masked face, social distanced worship assembly. I look forward to seeing you then!
—Steve

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING:

There will be Meeting for all the Men of the Congregation this Sunday, August 2, 8:45 AM. Breakfast will not be served.



ELDER-LED WORSHIP: The Sunday, August 16th Worship will be led by the Eastern Meadows Elders.

Budget: \$14,100.00 Contribution, 7/26: \$11,621.00 YTD: - \$35,574.56

FROM THE MINISTER – STEVE HOUSLEY:

There have been changes. We have seen changes this year. There was a “shut down.” Worship assemblies were primarily “streamed” enabling people to worship at home so that they “social distanced.” (Thankfully we are assembling again!) Now everywhere you go you see masks – Alabama even has a mask law. Many, many countries have banned travel from the United States (not that I was going anyplace myself). Changes of all sorts!

But some things have NOT changed. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8). There is still God. There is still heaven and hell. God’s love is constant. God’s plan of salvation has not changed.

And some things need to change. Sinful hearts need to repent. Possibly the best synonym for repentance is change. No man can be saved from his sin, unless he repents from his sin. We need to do better. No matter where we find ourselves, we need to be always trying to change for the better. Have we really reached at point where we are perfect and cannot improve?

Ignoring Laws. We see it all the time. Just yesterday I saw someone race through a stop sign, without any attempt to stop. (I can only hope he just did not see it rather than flagrantly “run” the stop sign). Last Friday I stopped at the only store in Newbern, AL (population 186 – no, I did not do a count). We dutifully went inside with our masks on. We were the only people either outside or inside of the store with a mask on. Everywhere in Montgomery you see masks by almost everyone! But not in Newbern! I wondered if the little town had seceded from the state of Alabama. But their not wearing masks did not change Governor Ivy’s mask mandate. Don’t we see the same thing with God’s law, only worse? God has made laws. God’s law for us is the “perfect law of liberty” found in the New Testament. It is the law of Christ. Now to what extent do folks flagrantly disobey God’s laws. Or to what extent do folks now-a-days completely disregard God’s law, as if there is not law. But that has not changed God’s law. Let’s obey.

Jesus Didn’t Beg Anyone to Follow Him

In John 6 we see the account of Jesus feeding the 5,000. The crowd’s instant reaction was to declare that He truly was the prophet they had been anticipating and was the one they wanted as their king. Even as He got away with His apostles and crossed the sea, they still pursued Him.

Isn’t that exactly what we’d want? Thousands of people who believe in Jesus and are ready to follow Him, even making Him their king? Even the greatest of our seeker-sensitive, producer/consumer churches couldn’t dream of starting with a dedicated following 5,000 strong. If Jesus believed in our business-like approach, He would have been well on His way. He would’ve kept the meals coming, even offering variety because, like Israel in the desert, people aren’t going to stay on board for a steady diet of the same meals that brought them in. He would have set the apostles about the business of making sure each demographic was being kept content and connected. In short, He would have done whatever it took to keep those numbers up and offered them whatever they needed to stay.

And yet, despite this situation that many church leaders would give their right arm to have, Jesus did the unthinkable. First, He ran away and left the crowd behind (6:15). Then, when they persisted in following Him, He told them straight to their faces that they only wanted Him for the free meal He provided (6:26). Finally, when the people refused to pick up on the hint that He didn’t want them following Him because they didn’t accept Him as He was, He went for the one of the most strange-sounding teachings He could give. “Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you” (6:53).

The crowd struggled greatly with this teaching (6:52, 60). You can almost picture the perplexed looks on their faces – “He wants us to do what?”

The result? "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (6:66).

All of those followers... gone. Even after His greatest miracle of rising from the tomb we see only 120 gathered in the upper room in Acts 1. He turned a following of 5,000 into a following of 120. At His ascension He left behind a group that was 1/40th the size it had once been. Not exactly a great church growth strategy, right?

Did He really have to send them away though? Sure, they were following Him for the wrong reasons, but maybe over time they would have come around if He could have just kept offering the right things to keep them coming. Likewise, people who come to our churches because we have advertising that speaks to them and their wants might not be coming for Jesus, but maybe if we keep them coming, we can turn them into real followers eventually. Thankfully, Jesus did not and does not think like us.

Jesus knew that if they didn't accept Him as Lord it didn't matter how dedicated they were; they were unfit to carry out His purpose. It's the same reason why He turned away the would-be followers who wanted to say farewell or bury their dead in Luke 9:57-62. It's the same reason why He turned away the rich young ruler despite the man's supposedly impeccable dedication to law-keeping. If people didn't value Him above all else, He knew they weren't fit for discipleship.

That's why the people He ended up making His followers were those who dropped their nets and left their boats or hopped up and left the tax booth behind. He meant what He said when He told the disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). Jesus didn't want customers who liked Him for what He had to offer them. He wanted disciples who were ready to take up their crosses for Him.

Why did Jesus demand so much more commitment than we do? Because He wasn't here to amass a crowd. He was here to train people to be like Him in order to launch the kingdom, a worldwide project predicated on preparing people and sending them rather than attracting people and keeping them. He knew that unless people were following Him as both their Savior and Lord of their entire lives, they weren't fit for carrying out the goals of the kingdom. With such a lofty, worldwide purpose in mind, His method was to establish a church to carry it out. Why would He want a church system that turned around and viewed crowds and success exactly the opposite of the way He did?

--Jack Wilkie, focuspress.org

Sharing God's Word

God's desire is that everyone be saved (1 Tim.2:4) but that does not mean that all will be saved. Why not? Well, Paul wrote and said God also desires all come to a knowledge of the truth. Have you ever met someone who does not care about learning the truth?

So, how does God expect people to come to a knowledge of the truth? The answer is that God gave His disciples instructions to share the message of salvation to others (Matthew 28:16-20).

There are numerous opportunities to tell others the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Sharing with others the word of God is like planting seed into the heart of another (Luke 8:4-15). It is important to understand that not everyone will accept the truth. But, that does not relieve us of the responsibility to share the message.

-- Rob Albright, via *BulletinGold Online*

August 2, 2020 / Leading the congregation in:

Scripture Reading:

A.M.: Austin Brown

Main Prayer:

A.M.: Tim Stevens

Closing Prayer:

A.M.: Norton Sewell

Singing:

A.M.: Paul Clements

Security (During Services) - Sunday AM: Michael Crow / Security (Building Lock-up After Services): James Kelley

ANNOUNCEMENTS 7/30/20

With the restrictions caused by COVID-19, it is difficult to have an accurate report of our members who are ill.

SICK: WIMA MILLICAN is in Baptist East Medical Center but hopes to go home today. LEIGH SANDLIN is in the hospital following surgery on Tuesday but hopes to go home today. STEVEN HULETT had cataract surgery on the other eye July 28 and is scheduled for hip-replacement surgery Aug. 17. TA'NISHA NORMAN has been sick for several weeks with her back. ELLA HANKINS is suffering with breathing difficulties. PHYLLIS ALLEN and MARSHA SUTTON continue to recover from surgery. Sick at home Sunday: MILLIE THOMAS. Continue to remember our members listed on our Sunday-Evening-Evangelism Prayer List. Shut-ins: LANETTE TAYLOR, OPAL SULLIVAN, MARIAN SIKES, MARGARET DAVIS, and MARGARET GRAVES. Battling Cancer: MIKE NORMAN, HOLLY THOMASSON, CHARLES HENDERSON, JAY ROBERTS, ALICE HANDLANG, SARAH HOUSLEY, DUSTY POUNCEY.

PRAYER REQUEST LIST: (Various Issues): CARSON DAVIS, DON SIMMONS, KATHRINE LESTER, LINDA DOBYNS, LUKE & HEATHER BROOKS. (Battling Cancer): LANISE KIRK, DARNELL STROTHER, NINA JOSEPH, LISA DOBBS, BJ BUCHMANN, PAT NORMAN, SANDRA MISSILDINE, ANDY MULLINS, DANNY MOORE (*This is the Sutton's nephew, Not EM's Danny Moore*), CHRIS HETHCOX. (Other) The SPIRITUALLY ILL—weak and wayward members.

NEW PRAYER REQUEST: Prayers have been requested for CHRIS HETHCOX, who has been diagnosed with cancer. Surgery is not an option but will begin treatments soon.

THANK YOU: Dear Church Family, It is with a full heart that I thank your for your many expressions of love for our family in the recent passing of our beloved James. Your cards, calls, food, visits, and prayers were so very appreciated. I love each of you beyond measure. In Christian love, Jan Hilyer and Family

THANK YOU: To My Church Family. Thanks for the many prayers offered on my behalf and for the cards sent and phone calls made as I underwent and recovered from shoulder surgery. Love, Wilma Berry

THANK YOU: Dear Eastern Meadows, Thanks for praying for our friend, Linda Dobyns, who had successful surgery and is recovering. From, David & Lydia Eguebe

THANK YOU: Thank you, dear brothers and sisters, for your prayers during this time before and after my surgery. I also appreciate your calls, cards, and notes. Love, Marsha Sutton

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING: There will be a business meeting for all the Men of the Congregation this Sunday, Aug. 2, 8:45 AM. Breakfast will **not** be served.

SHEPHERD'S TALK: The elders will give a brief update on Eastern Meadows' business and events this Sunday, Aug. 2, immediately after worship service.

PANAMA MISSIONS OPERATION CHRISTMAS JOY: The empty shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Joy, Panama Missions are available for pickup in the Resource Room. Please indicate the number of boxes taken as well as your name on the sign-up sheet. If you would like to donate money to purchase candy or to have someone else purchase items to fill a box, please do so. The filled boxes are to be returned to the Resource Room no later than Sunday, September 13, 2020. Please indicate that you have returned your filled box(es) in the space indicated on the sign-up sheet. If you have any questions, please see Sarita Strother, Latasha Kelley, or Sally Gotkiewicz. Thank you so much for your willingness to brighten the life of a child!

GOSPEL MEETING: There will be a Gospel Meeting at Georgia Road Church of Christ Aug. 9-12 with Mel Futrell speaking. Sunday schedule—9 AM Bible Class, 10 AM & 1 PM Worship. Monday-Wednesday—7 PM.

ELDER LED WORSHIP: The Sunday, Aug. 16, Worship Service will be led by the Eastern Meadows Elders.

SONGS & OUTLINE FOR SUNDAY'S WORSHIP: The songs and sermon outline for Sunday's worship will be emailed on Saturday to EM members.

AUGUST STANDBY TEAM—#3 (GOTKIEWICZ) / AUGUST SPECIAL NEEDS TEAM—#1 (PORTERFIELD)

ELDER OF THE MONTH / ON CALL: The Elder of the Month for August is **MIKE NORMAN**. Contact information for Mike: (334) 306-7583; mikenorman7583@yahoo.com.

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

