

From the Preacher's Pen... As we begin a new year we begin a new opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those around us in this world. We have several new tools (both books and DVDs) to help us with both what we should say and with reaching out to others.

Without the knowledge of and obedience to the Lord everyone on earth faces a dim future. Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that we all have an appointment with death, and then an appointment with judgment before God.

What happens in that final appointment to your family, friends, neighbors and others you meet begins with you! Ezekiel chapter 18 is a great lesson from God about our personal responsibility. If we share the truth of God and His will, then we accomplish our part of that duty. If we fail, then we must bear the responsibility for each and every soul we lose.

Let's think for a moment about the starting point for us in...

Faith

Faith is not just a "religious" word, but a word that we understand in almost every area of life. Faith is putting your complete trust or confidence in someone or something. The opposite in someone is literally betrayal and disloyalty, and in something it is uselessness.

Think about that a moment. A person or a thing that you cannot depend on is dangerous. Even if you try to make sure that you never have to depend on someone or something that is dangerous, you still must be careful knowing that you can never really trust them. Faith or trust, *real* trust is reserved for very special people and things!

The real reason that Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land was because he broke God's trust in him. Isn't that a shocking thought? That is exactly what God told Moses in Deuteronomy 32:51 and, to make things worse, God goes on to describe that as a failure to respect or treat God as holy.

The writer of Hebrews (in Hebrews 11:6) explains it like this: *without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

We often imagine that *faith* as a Christian is a one-way street. It isn't! In reality the faith that God calls us to is a two-way street. ***Faith is trusting God so completely that He can trust us!***

In Hebrews chapter 11 that is the very point the writer is emphasizing. By faith (verse 4) Abel offered a better sacrifice and God, Himself, became the proof, the testimony, the witness of that faith. Faithful to God means God will be faithful to us!

Psalms 146 is a great song of praise to the Lord and the author reflects that he is unable to trust earthly people, even royalty, in the same way that he can trust God (cf. verse 3). Not only is God the creator of all things, but God is the one that keeps faith, is trustworthy, forever (verse 6)!

In working rescue, we inspected and tested our equipment every single day. A rope that might be called upon to lift you or someone else to safety could never be just okay or good enough. If it had the slightest flaw, the tiniest break or abrasion, it was considered unsafe. After all, it could easily be my own life that depended on it, so no one would ever take the chance of what was unworthy of complete trust.

Do we see the point and make the spiritual application? Faith is *not ever* just a whimsical liking or fondness or even a half-hearted belief in God. Faith is the knowledge that God has been tested and proven faithful (actually what Hebrews 11:1 says!). Faith is never wishful thinking. Faith is confident, intelligent trust.

Peter and the other Apostles came to know that Jesus was really the Promised One (John 6:69). Paul was willing to suffer things on this earth without shame because he was convinced of his God's faithfulness (2 Timothy 1:12). And John (1 John 4:16) calls us to know and believe the love God has for us.

When it comes to our God, there is no room for wishy-washy faith. As His own chosen family, His Royal Priesthood, His Holy Nation, we are called to, not just trust (if that is even possible!) but to trust and obey. Indeed, we are called to ***proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*** (cf. 1 Peter 2:9).

Faith is our firm foundation, our starting point to reach out with the Good News! Will you be displaying *real* faith this year?

— Lester P. Bagley

Opportunities to worship, study & serve:

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY 10 AM

WORSHIP 11 AM

EVENING WORSHIP 6 PM

WEDNESDAY 7 PM

THURSDAY LADIES' BIBLE CLASS 10 AM

Congregational Potluck 3rd Sunday
each month after morning worship
(except June, July & August)

Welcome to all!
We are glad you are here!

Enter to Worship...
Leave to Serve



Welcome to our visitors today! We hope & pray you'll be blessed by your time with us & will join us again soon!
Last Week visitors included: Ray & Oral Nutt of Kingman, AZ.

Our Prayer List: Keep the following in prayer this week as you "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17): Nora McNeil, Matthew Odom, Heather Ries, Hunter Shirley, Rene Turner, Ruth West, Everett Martin, Anna Mae Hardin, the Najera family, Bill Hall, Reta Wallace, Jim Holder, Kristi Martin, Wally Myers, Cindy Turpin, Millie Cunningham, Michael Hill & family and...

Our Missionaries: Jack Farber and Aaron Knotts and families.

Previously Announced Family & Friends: Robin & Marc Estabrook (Julie Evan's sister & nephew), David Reffner (Flora Doster's grandson with MS), Art Stoneking & wife (friends of Carl Catozzi, cancer), Jeremiah Haller (Flora Doster's grandson), Annette (Cindy Turpin's sister), Cole Myers (grandson of friend of Myers), Sheila Simpson, Lillian Wilhite & Mirlene Smith (relatives of Lynn Shirley), Teresa Acosta, Rosemary Glasier (Crystal Mora-Landroth's mother), John Hoover's relatives with personal difficulties, Shelly Cooper (friend of Carl Catozzi), Lucas Espinoza (Brian Campbell's friend), Kaesha Raffterfer (Gene Pinkston's cousin, cancer), Chuck Keels (friend of Grubbs with cancer), Terri Fillipski (cancer, Julie Evans' cousin).

Special Requests: WBS & WEI Bible study students; Kevin & Nancy Chambers & World Christian Broadcasting; Judy Hagner, son Preston, daughter Angela & son James. Brandi Schroeder (Flora Doster's granddaughter with MS); Dallas Purcella's mother; Paulina's father (Arnold); Julie's father; Laurel's father.



OUR MILITARY PERSONNEL: Nate Panka (Cleo Wise's grandson); Javier Najera; Fernando Najera, Frank Torres (Javier's brother & cousin); Eric Shirley; Trevor Farrow (Allen's son); Scott Hoover (John's son); Ariel Gomez; Paul Sipes & April Belovedstone (Sue Wolfe's son & daughter); Robert Strickland (Cleo Wise's grand-nephew); Ismael Lopez; Robinson Goldman (Cindy Turpin's son-in-law); Destanie Aragon; Nathan Bagley.

New: Jason: son of Carl Catozzi in need of prayers; Dr. Yanni: friend of John Hoover with cancer; Susan Fowler: friend of Bob & Sherry Harrison with MS; Michelle Harrison: daughter of Bob & Sherry, spiritual struggles; Michael Lighthead: son-in-law of Flora Doster, health problems; Jimmy Handtegen: friend of David Davis following a stroke; Derwin Jackson & family: with his job; Sean & Vickie: Carl Catozzi's friends with struggles in their lives; Terri Hoover: John's daughter-in-law with serious health issues; Monica Lopez: George Mora's aunt with breast cancer; Jacob Shirley: struggles; Rhett Booher: Gary & Toni Pierce's grandson: Traumatic Brain Injury while in the Army; Ray Stephenson family: youngest son's cancer has spread; John Mark: in Afghanistan in danger for his faith; Jimmy Davis: friend of Mike Evans with melanoma; Adele Fink: recovering from colon cancer; George Ponter: Brian Campbell's cousin with multiple struggles; Amy Vestal: lupus and intestinal problems;

Anna Price: via Kimberlee Myers; Chuck Hedrick family: with multiple health problems; Kathy Gonzalez: grandmother of Heavyn & Tatum with cancer.

Sue Wolfe; LaVerne Jackson's mother; Celeste Wallace: health problems; Sandra Watson, Sue Shepperd & Elzie Shirley: Lynn's family with illnesses; Ed Baum; Chuck Hedrick; Ray Stephenson.

Thomas Vestal: Amy's cousin having head surgery February 5.

Steve McDonald: Jean Grubbs granddaughter's husband, tests.

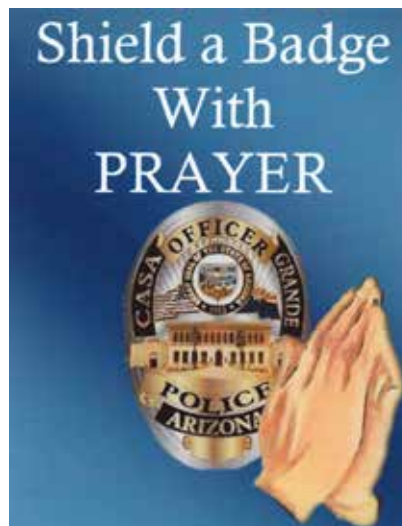
Larry West: in ICU with complications from diabetes & infections.

Jerry Odom: recovering from a stroke.

Anna Mae Hardin: is home (at her daughter's) but may be returning to Oasis soon.

Several of our families: have been passing around the winter "bugs." Keep them ALL in your prayers!

Also Our New Christians, those travelling and especially those with spiritual struggles.



Upcoming Events...

Men's Business Meeting: January 14 after evening worship.

Potluck: January 21 — Group #4 [Laverne Jackson's group] set-up, serve & clean-up

Monthly Singing: January 28 at 2:30 in Coolidge.

5th Wednesday Prayer & Song Meeting: January 31.

Men's Training Class, 5 pm today...

for leading prayers, doing talks & devotionals, & song-leading.

New Teen Bible Classes on Wednesday night & Sunday morning. Don't miss out!!!

2018 Directory Update

NEW DIRECTORY sheets are available in the foyer.

If you need a complete directory with a binder, they are also available.

Updated birthday and anniversary lists are coming soon!

Last Week: 5+ Pew-Packers



Be "in the picture" every week!

✓ Checkup ✓
How are we doing?

Attendance Last Week:

Sunday Morning Bible Class = 41

Sunday Morning Worship = 90

Sunday Evening Worship = 46

Wednesday Evening = 37

Giving

2018 Weekly Budget = \$3,015.00

Contribution Last Week = \$1,974.00

Church of Christ
805 East Racine Place
Casa Grande, AZ 85122

Postage

TO:

Privileged to Serve

Sunday Morning January 7

Adult Bible Class: • *Acts of the Apostles* Lester Bagley
Announcements: Curt Odom
Song Leader:.....Allen Farrow
Prayer:.....Derwin Jackson
Serve Communion:....Brian Campbell, John Hoover, Tom Haney, Delbert White, Max Compton
Sermon: • Kim Myers
Closing Prayer: Mike Evans

Count Contribution: Curt Odom & Max Compton

Sunday Evening January 7

Song Leader:.....Allen Farrow
Prayer:..... Ron Cook
Sermon: • Don Humphrey – Sudan Report
Serve Communion:..... John Hoover
Closing Prayer:Bill Hall

Wednesday Evening January 10

Song Leader:..... George Mora
Prayer:.....Delbert White
Devo:.....Lester Bagley
Closing Prayer:David Davis

Anniversaries



January 15: *David & Joan Davis*
January 17: *L.Z. & Lynn Shirley*
January 20: *Will & Alexandra Beyer*
January 22: *Gary & Toni Pierce*
January 25: *Allen & Brenda Farrow*
January 29: *Frank & Cheryl Campbell*

Birthdays



January 7: *John Hill*
January 10: *Brenda Farrow – Pamela Kimberlin*
January 10: *Jeffery Coleman*
January 11: *Mia Grubbs-Powell*
January 12: *Kennie Prock*
January 15: *DeVaughn Jackson*
January 16: *Shirley Stephenson*
January 17: *Brian Campbell – Dennis Mince*