

# The South Louisville Christian Church

**SOUTH LOUISVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**SUMMER, 2015 – EDITION SEVEN, ISSUE TWO**  
*A Christian Church for South Louisville*

**E-NEWSLETTER**

## **A Word From Our Newest Elder**

***Bv: Mark Braun***

Hello, Church Family!

I am writing a letter of introduction as your newest elder. I realize that, for the most part, all of you know who I am. And, for the most part, I know each of you. It was over three years ago that my wife, Kathy, and I attended South Louisville Christian Church for the first time. We were amazed by the warm, loving welcome we received. While we actually already knew some of you, the welcome we received from total strangers was absolutely fantastic. We heard a wonderful message from Theo. We left thinking that we must have just caught you all on a "good" day. We made several sporadic visits after that and found that we seemingly always caught you all on a "good" day. We began to attend on a regular basis and two years ago made the decision to place our membership at SLCC. As Kathy said it that Sunday, "Who wouldn't want to be a part of this." Since that day, we have never regretted that decision. We love being at SLCC and love each of you. We look forward to worshipping with you all each Sunday and enjoying fellowship with you each time we get together. God's love is evident at SLCC.

Kathy and I both grew up in the Louisville area. Kathy in Fairdale and me in the south end of Louisville. As a matter of fact, I grew up on Woodruff Ave four doors from Camden Ave Christian Church. Some of you may have chased my friends and me

off that fire escape at Camden. We have been married almost 39 years and have 3 sons. We also have 4 wonderful grandkids, two granddaughters and two grandsons, with our fifth grandchild, a third granddaughter, due in July.

Finding SLCC was an answer to our prayers. We were searching for a church home when we found the place where we couldn't possibly not fit in! We have never attended a church like this. This is what church should be, a diverse group of God's people gathered to worship Him and serve ALL of His people.

That's what God placed on my heart when I stepped up to become an Elder this year. I am to serve. Scripture puts it best in 1Peter 5:2-3 "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be . . . not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." Yes, Elders are called to lead, but in the example of the greatest leader to ever walk the earth, Jesus, we are to serve our flock. So, while I am very honored that you entrust me to be one of your Elders, I am humbled to be your servant. I am honored to serve along side with the other men that have been called to this position at SLCC. I can assure you that we are constantly seeking God's will and direction for His congregation here and we seek your prayers as we follow His will for SLCC's future.

## **This Summer's Events**

- June 13, 27; July 11, 25; August 8, 22 – Food Distribution
- June 26, July 31, August 28 – Craft Night
- June 21 – Father's Day
- July 12 – 17 – Vacation Bible School
- June 8, July 13, August 10 – Women's Ministry Meeting

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## Salvation and Works

*By: Pastor Theodore Dues*

Last Wednesday night, in our mid-week Bible study, Dr. Clay Gilbert tackled a very difficult and controversial subject. He taught us about the connection between salvation and works. For some of you, just reading those words – salvation and works – it makes the hair stand up on the back of your neck. Because many of us have been taught that there is NO connection between those two things. Like so many others in the evangelical churches – we have wholeheartedly embraced the words of the Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 2:8-9** – “**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.**”

Dr. Gilbert did a brilliant job of illuminating this verse – but also of putting this verse in the larger context of ALL of Holy Scripture. The problem, he explained, is that if you take this verse from Ephesians all by itself – and use only this verse to define your salvation, then it is dangerously easy to assume that you have absolutely no role to play in your salvation. It is dangerously easy to conclude that your works are in no way connected to your salvation. The problem with that conclusion is this: It’s not what Jesus taught. Jesus taught over and over and over again – that our works DO matter. That our works are the evidence that we belong to Him – and that in the absence of godly works – we simply do not belong to Him. **John 14:15** – “**If you love me, you will obey what I command.**” **John 15:10** – “**If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love.**” On another occasion, Jesus was teaching us what happens when we do not obey what He commands. He told this story about a fig tree that was planted (and the fig tree represents YOU). The owner of the vineyard comes to inspect his trees (and the owner of the vineyard represents God) – and he discovers that this fig tree is not bearing any fruit – which is another way of saying that the fig tree is not doing what it is supposed to do – which is another way of saying that YOU are not doing what God commands – your life and your works do not reflect your relationship with God. So what does the owner of the vineyard say about this tree? **Luke 13:7** – “**Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?**”

I would not dare to reject the idea that we are saved by grace, through faith – and that this is a free gift from God. Neither would I dare to reject all of Jesus’ teachings that tell us so clearly that we are not saved if our lives and our works do not reflect our relationship with Him. The conclusion that Dr. Gilbert so skillfully led us to was this: It is grace that puts us on the vine – and it is our works that keep us on the vine. In other words – our salvation is not possible without what God has done for us; and our salvation is not possible without what we do for God.

And when it comes to our salvation – when it comes to our eternal home in heaven – consider what

Jesus said in **Matthew 16:27** – “**For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.**” The Bible teaches that some of us will reign with Christ (**Revelation 20:6**). Faithful servants will be put in charge of many things (**Matthew 25:21**). Christ will grant some followers leadership over cities, in proportion to their service on earth (**Luke 19:12-19**). Some will command angels (**1 Corinthians 6:3**). We will be given rewards in heaven for generous giving on earth (**Matthew 19:21**).

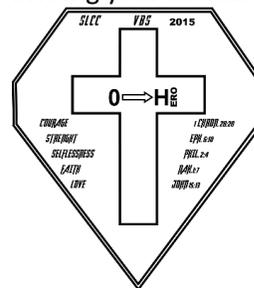
All of these rewards, according to Scripture, will be given based on one thing: Our works. These are rewards for doing good works – for enduring under persecution, showing compassion to the needy, treating our enemies kindly, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and for generous giving. You are saved by grace, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Truer words were never spoken. But don’t you dare forget this: Jesus is keeping track of what you DO. Jesus is keeping track of all your acts of kindness – and all your acts of selfishness. What you DO matters. What you DO has an impact on your salvation.

**Matthew 10:42** – “**If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.**” Here is my challenge to you: Read all the verses I have listed in this article. Meditate on them. If you do that, and then you still don’t think that your works are related to your salvation – I will give you the opportunity to meet with me and convince me that I am wrong.

## Greetings from the Family Ministry

*By: Ron Matthews*

Well, summer is here, let the fun begin! Here are some things you can look forward to attending and inviting your friends to come too.



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** – This year’s theme is ZERO to HERO, and as you can probably tell by the theme, VBS will be about Heroes in the Bible. Our youth will meet a super villain and a super hero this year as well as a past friend. We have super crafts, lessons, and games planned for our youth. If you have never been to an opening exercise or it has been a really long time, (Cont’d. next page, left column)

we encourage all to visit for the brief 20 minutes to see some new and exciting ways we are reaching the youth. If you would like to assist or donate items, please talk with Melissa Matthews, she is directing this year's Super VBS.

The dates will be July 12-17<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 -- 8:30 pm.

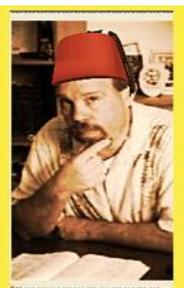


**Puppetology** – The study and workings of puppets as a science for God.

South Louisville Christian Church will be sponsoring youth in grades 5<sup>th</sup> and up, and they will have the great opportunity to join in a wonderfully fun and exciting ministry. The youth that will partake of this ministry will develop discipline, creativity and spiritual strength -- and last but not least, lasting, wonderful memories. The team mentoring this ministry is Stephanie and Justin High and Ron Matthews. If you have had any past experience or have not but would like to help mentor the youth in Puppetology, please talk with me. We are currently meeting every Sunday from 2-4 pm at the church. Please watch the bulletins and newsletters for items or skills that the Puppetology team may need in the near future.

### **Wednesday Summer J.A.M./B.O.L.D. Changes**

It is summer and with that comes Summer Camps and other fun events. So there are going to be some minor changes to several days this summer. On June 10<sup>th</sup> the J.A.M. youth will be watching a movie and enjoying some yummy food, instead of our normal activities. On July 15<sup>th</sup> all J.A.M. activities will be cancelled, as that is VBS week. And then on July the 22<sup>nd</sup> we will be hosting a second movie night for them. The B.O.L.D. ministry will not host the full two hours of service on Wednesdays, instead they will only be meeting from 6-7 pm beginning June 3<sup>rd</sup> until August 26<sup>th</sup>. If you have a youth in that group, and would like them to be a part of a ministry from 7-8 pm every Wednesday, please see me.



Thank you, and have a wonderful summer!

## **The Church Then and The Church Now**

**By: Jason Horn**

To investigate the state of the church and whether it still exists to fulfill that which Christ set out to do over 2000 years ago; one must study and understand the reason for its establishment and the purpose Christ had in dedicating a life to building it.

**“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).”** Was Jesus telling Christ that on that very place they were standing, He was going to construct a temple, a place of worship? This is one of the most controversial and debated passages in all of Scripture. Roman Catholics have contended that the passage refers to the idea that Peter was the first pope. The key question here is whether Christ was speaking of Peter as the “rock” since other names for Peter are “stone and rock” in Aramaic and Greek. The question remains, what was meant?

Protestants generally have thought that it refers to Peter *in his role of confessing Jesus as the Messiah*, and that the other disciples would share in that role as they made a similar confession. Ephesians 2:20 tells us the church was built on all the apostles, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.” Jesus’ statement did not mean that Peter would have greater authority than the other apostles, Paul corrects him publicly in Galatians 2:11-14 and Jesus rebukes him in Matthew 16:23. Also Jesus did not imply anything about a special office for Peter or successors to such an office. Certainly in the first half of Acts Peter appears as the spokesman and leader of the Jerusalem church, but he is still “sent” by other apostles to Samaria (Acts 8:14), and he has to give an account of his actions to the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:1-18). Peter certainly has a role in the establishment of the church, but he disappears from the Acts narrative after Acts 16.

*Ekklesia*, the Greek word for “church” is used only in Acts 16 and Matthew 18:17 in the Gospels. Jesus points ahead to the time when His disciples, His family of faith, as described in Matthew 12:48-50, will be called “My church.” Jesus built His church, and though it is founded on the apostles and prophets, “Christ Jesus Himself is the Cornerstone!” (Ephesians 2:20). Some scholars object that Jesus could not have foreseen the later emergence of the “church” at this time, but the Greek *ekklesia* to refer to God’s “called out” people has substantial background in the Septuagint.

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Deuteronomy 9:10 tells us that “the Lord gave me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the Words that the Lord had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.” In the accounting of the golden calf incident, Moses refers to the people as an assembly. We see this again and again in Deuteronomy 31:30, 1 Samuel 17:47 and 1 Kings 8:14, showing a community of believers.

Jesus predicts that He will build a community of believers who follow Him. This “called out” community would soon become known as “the church, a separate community of believers, as described in the book of Acts...and not even death will overpower the church.

As we can see from above, ministry is all about building lives. It is what you and the church are called to do. Ministry is done so the body of Christ may be built up, and it begins with the church...His family. Are we doing that? This is the question when questioning if the church is doing the work it was created for. There are many books and curriculums aimed at the functions of the church and how to get back on track with the gospel. It seems every time one is written it flies off the shelves. I chose a book to use for this paper to show some of the questions and answers when studying the church and how it should and can function.

The book *Simple Church* by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger is a great book when looking at the church of today. The purpose of the book is “returning to God’s process for making disciples”. This is exactly what the church is for according to Scripture. The book demonstrates a process: Clarity followed by movement, alignment and finally, focus. This is the author’s prescription for success with getting a church (the church) back on track.

Clarity is to have an understanding that you as a Christian are a builder. You are partnering with God in a great building project. As a builder you need a good set of blueprints. No one tries to build anything without blueprints. There is a high significant relationship between church vitality and the clarity of the process. Clarity is the ability of the process to be communicated and understood by the people.

According to the research of Rainer and Geiger, defining your ministry process within the church is crucial. Fifty-three percent of church leaders in vibrant churches say that they have a clear definition of their ministry process. Without

definition, people are uncertain about how the church is making disciples. Without clear definition, people are clueless about how the church is designed to bring people toward spiritual maturity. People need a clear interpretation on the direction of the church. Many churches of today are congested. Spiritual movement is slowed. The building of lives is slowed. Churches today are filled with the same people. I am not referring to the absence of new people, although that is telling as well. I am referring to people staying the same. Unchanged. Unmoved! Congestion is people not being transformed. Sadly, many churches are stuck in the same place spiritually. If the church is to function as a Christ driven church then it should be filled with people who are becoming more like Christ. Becoming more loving and joyful. Being transformed.

Alignment must be next; even Paul knew the importance of alignment and unity. “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10). Unity is part of alignment. Through the sacrificial death of Christ, believers are one with God. Not only should we be unified with one another but with God. The miracle of salvation is a holy God and sinful man unified.

Focus is truth taught and affirmed throughout Scripture. As a Christian, you are partnering with God to build the lives of people. If God has given you a clear process for making and maturing disciples, you must focus on this one thing in your life, in your church. Then people may run the race without ankle weights! “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it” (1 Corinthians 9:2).

If you read any part of this newsletter, please reply by email to S.L.C.C.

