

Prayer List of the Sick and Afflicted:

Ray Sturgill is suffering from Bell's Palsy, causing numbness on one side of his face. Mike Parnell's sister-in-law, Ethel Parnell, is in the early stages of dementia. Jesse Riddle is on hospice care but is often able to attend Sunday AM service. Connie Davis is recovering well after surgery to replace her left hip. Charlie Henard's niece, Brittany Henard, is battling cancer. Scott Williams, grandson of Floyd and Judy who lives in Florida, has a hernia causing bowel issues and is considering having surgery. Karen Sproles is scheduled to have a nerve stimulator implanted May 31st to help with problems in her knee. Karen Sproles's son has moved back to this area and will have knee surgery at a later time. Iris Hash is having knee problems and recently had a steroid injection. Linda Jones will have eye surgery to correct the iris in one of her eyes. Surgery will occur within the next four months when a special lens coming from Germany is available. Linda also will have surgery to remove a malignant growth. She will undergo a MRI to examine other spots prior to the surgery. Her prognosis for a full recovery is good. Randall Jones recently underwent cataract surgery and is doing well.

Pray For Our Shut-Ins:

Gloria Hale, Karen Sproles, Iris Hash, John & Terry Richardson

Pray For The Mission Works We Are Supporting:

John Grubb (Mission work in Asia), Daniel Goshorn and family (Mission work in Peru). See latest mission reports on the bulletin board in the back of the auditorium.

Stop 11 Road Church of Christ Gospel Meeting:

A gospel meeting will be held at the Stop 11 Road Church of Christ in Indianapolis, June 2 – 6. Services on Sunday are at 10 and 11 AM and 2 PM. Services Monday through Thursday will be at 7 PM. Brother Garland Robinson will be the speaker.

2024 Fall Gospel Meeting:

A fall gospel meeting will be held September 6-8 with brother Tom House of the Plainview Church of Christ in Fulton, MS.

Monthly Pitch-in Dinner:

Our next pitch-in dinner will be Sunday, June 2nd, following the AM services. Following the pitch-in we will have a service in song at 1:00 PM.

Men's Business Meeting:

The next men's business meeting will be Wednesday, June 5th at 5:00 PM.

Radio Program:

Please remember to tune in every Sunday morning at 8:00 AM to WCBK 102.3 FM to hear our radio program which is entitled: "Preparing For Eternity".

God's Plan For Our Salvation

Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
Faithful Christian Living, after the above five steps (I Peter 2:11, 12; Rev. 2:10).

May 26, 2024

MORGAN STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

**540 E. Morgan Street
Martinsville, IN 46151
(765) 342-6027**



Schedule of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study – 9:30 AM
Worship – 10:30 AM
Evening Service - 6:00

Wednesday

Bible Study – 6:00 PM

Thursday

Ladies' Bible Study – 11:00 AM (March through October)

Radio Program:

"Preparing For Eternity"
Sunday Mornings 8:00 AM, WCBK 102.3 FM

Website:

www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org

Gospel Preacher – Bob Hawkins

THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The meaning of “autonomy” is independent or self-governing. The church we read about in the New Testament is made up of autonomous congregations. The word “church” means “the called out.” It is used to describe God’s people who have been called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). They have been called out of the world and into the service of Christ.

The word “church” is used in the New Testament in only two senses. First, it refers to the called out people of Christ in all the world. This is the universal sense. When Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18: “Upon this rock, I will build my church,” He was including all believers in all the world in His church. Thus, He was speaking of the universal church.

Second, the word “church” is used in the local sense. When Paul addressed the First Corinthian letter to “the church of God which is at Corinth,” he was speaking to a group of Christians in Corinth who met together to worship and serve God (1 Cor. 1:2). The universal church is made up of all the local congregations everywhere. Paul referred to this when he said: “The churches of Christ salute (greet) you” (Rom. 16:16).

The word “church” is never used in the Bible in a denominational sense. A denomination, by its own claims, is not the universal church. Most denominations claim to be a part of the universal church along with all the other denominations. Therefore, a denomination is smaller than the universal church. But most denominations are made up of many congregations. Therefore, a denomination is larger than the local church. An organization smaller than the universal church but larger than the local church is not found in the Word of God! Denominations were established by men. They exist without the blessing of God for they are completely unknown in God’s Word!

Churches of Christ are autonomous in government. Each one is independent of all others. Each one has its own leadership. We read in the New Testament of churches in a district or region such as “the churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:2). However, there was no district organization. Each of the churches in Galatia was self-governing.

It is easy to see that God’s plan for His church was for each church in each place to be self-governing. Their rule of government is from the Lord in heaven, not men on earth. When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey, they visited the churches they had established. They appointed “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23). Every church had its own eldership. When Paul wrote to the church of Christ in Philippi, he addressed his letter to “all the saints in Christ Jesus...with the bishops (shepherds, elders) and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). The apostle Peter commanded elders to “feed (tend, shepherd) the flock of God which is among you” (1 Peter 5:2). They were not to feed other flocks, but they were to shepherd the flock which was among them. This is the local congregation where they were members.

Paul wrote to Titus: “For this cause (reason) I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you” (Titus 1:5). The Lord told John to write letters to each of the seven

churches in the Roman province of Asia (Rev. chapters 2-3). The church at Jerusalem had its own elders (Acts 15:4). The church in Ephesus had its own elders (Acts 20:17). The church at Philippi had its own elders (Phil. 1:1).

In each local church, we always read of more than one elder. Paul and Barnabas “appointed elders in every church” (Acts 14:23). Never do we read in the New Testament of a church having only one elder! In order to serve as an elder, a man must have the qualifications God has given in His Word (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). It is wrong to appoint men to serve as elders who are not qualified!

Congregations can cooperate with one another in doing the Lord’s work. We have examples of this in the New Testament. The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to help the church in Antioch (Acts 11:22-26). The congregation in Antioch sent help to the churches of Judea when they were in need (Acts 11:27-30). Paul received support from other churches in order to be able to preach the Gospel to the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:8). Titus and another brother were chosen by the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to take a contribution from them to Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:16-24). These churches cooperated with one another to do the Lord’s work. However, they did not form a separate organization apart from the local church. There was no city, province, state, or regional organization. They recognized their headquarters is in heaven.

God’s wisdom is seen in the way He has organized His church. If a window is made of a single piece of glass, just one stone hitting the glass will break the whole window. If the window is made up of several panes of glass, a stone hitting one pane will break only that one pane. The rest of the window will not be broken. The same thing is true of God’s church. If there is a central organization of all the churches, and false teachers come in, all the churches will be led astray. If there is no central organization, then false teachers might lead one congregation astray, but the others will not be harmed.

God’s way is best! The church belongs to the Lord. He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). Often men are not happy with the way God has organized His church. They think they can improve upon it. They must understand they have no right to change what God has done (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18-19). If they change the organization, name, worship, or work of the Lord’s church, they are disobeying God, not man. Let us be content to do the things God has told us to do. Let us do them in the way God has told us to do them. Let us call them by the names God has given in His Word. When we do this, we can be sure we are pleasing the Lord (John 14:15).

- Author unknown