

DUTY ROSTER FOR APRIL 21, 2019

Usher for This Week: Ron Dixon

9:00 AM

Song Leader:

Thom Steger

Scripture Reading:

Chris Huffines

Scripture:

Matthew 16:13-20

Prayer:

John Fix

Lesson:

Stacey Durham

Peter's Confession

Closing Prayer:

Jim Stubblefield

11:00 AM

Song Leader:

Jim Barton

Scripture Reading:

Bill Duryea

Scripture:

Matthew 6:31-34

Prayer:

Chris Huffines

Lord's Supper:

David Bansemer

Alex Bansemer

Gary Sells

Andrew Durham

Lesson:

Stacey Durham

Don't Get It Backwards

Announcements:

John Fix

Closing Prayer:

Ron Hunt

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

Song Leader: Alex Bansemer

Invitation: Ron Hunt

Closing Prayer: Doug Thweatt

Creekview church of Christ
930 Long Hollow Pike
Gallatin, TN 37066
615-452-8212

Service Times:

Sundays 9:00 AM Worship
10:00 AM Bible Study
11:00 AM Worship

Wednesdays 7:00 PM Bible Study

creekviewchurchofchrist.com

LORD'S SUPPER PREPARATION

April: Steger
May: Stubblefield

SIGN MESSAGE CHANGING

April: Steger
May: Stubblefield

Elders: Ron Dixon, John Fix, Stacey Durham Deacons: David Bansemer, Kevin Hayes, Thom Steger, Doug Thweatt Preacher and Editor: Stacey Durham

CREEKVIEW BULLETIN

APRIL 21, 2019

Volume 34 Number 16

Unrequited Love

We all know John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Sadly, the world has not reciprocated that love. "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). Not only did His own people fail to receive Christ, but the world even hated Him (John 15:18). Likewise, the world also hates the children of God (1John 3:1). Nevertheless, God will continue to extend His mercy in love, and we in His image should do the same (1Tim. 2:1-4; 2Pet. 3:9). Let us love, give, teach, and pray for others, even if our love is unrequited.

To Our Visitors:

We are delighted to see you in our midst today. Thank you for joining us on this blessed day to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to our Father in heaven. May God bless you and your family.

news and notes:

- A meeting will be held for the men of Creekview on Saturday, April 27, at 10AM in the church building. All men are encouraged to attend.
- Please keep the following members in your prayers: Maddy Clemens, Wilma Deering, Mary Ham, Donella Jones, Kay Lanius, Dot Long, Pat Ridings, and Bessie Short. Also remember Peggy Bailey's daughter Sherry and Dot Long's sister Melissa.

52 Week Reading Plan: Week 16

Sunday-1Corinthians 15-16

Monday - Exodus 9-12

Tuesday - 1Samuel 26-31

Wednesday - Psalms 45-47

Thursday - Job 31-32

Friday - Jeremiah 17-21

Saturday - Mark 11-12

Gospel Meetings:

Bethany (Orlinda) - Apr. 21-26

Church Membership in Steep Decline

A new Gallup survey was released on Thursday (4/18/19) that finds church membership among Americans is at an all-time low. Similar surveys done in the past showed that church membership was 70% or higher from 1937 through 1976 and then averaged 68% for the rest of the century. In 2018, church membership in America was found to be 50%. More than half of this decrease has occurred since 2010, which indicates that the rate of decrease is accelerating quickly.

Gallup's findings should be considered with a few qualifications. The study lumps membership in any kind of house of worship into one analysis. This includes churches, synagogues, and mosques, so Gallup is using the word "church" loosely to indicate any kind of organized religion. Therefore, it is more accurate to state that Gallup found that a lower percentage of Americans now belong to religious organizations than in the past. That said, churches that claim some kind of affiliation with Jesus still comprise the great majority of religious organization in America.

Gallup attributes the decline in membership to two factors. One is an increase in the percentage of Americans who have no religion. The other is an increase in the percentage of Americans who are religious but are not members of religious organizations. These trends are found in all generations of Americans, but they are more prevalent in the younger generations. For example, from 2016 to 2018 54% of Generation X members (born 1965-1979) were members of a religious organization compared to only 42% of millennials (born 1980-2000). To compare apples to apples, 62% of Generation X members belonged to a religious organization when they were about the same age as millennials are now.

What does all of this mean for Christians in the churches of Christ? First of all, these findings pass the eye test. In other words, they confirm what we are seeing, which is that fewer Americans are interested in spirituality. When we attempt to talk to unbelievers about Christ, there is mostly apathy or opposition. Arranging for Bible studies or convincing an unbeliever to attend a service of the church is very difficult. Even within the church, too many members are lukewarm at best. Their attendance in church assemblies is sporadic (Heb. 10:25), their Bible study habits and knowledge of Scripture is poor (2Tim. 2:15), and their lifestyles are more influenced by the world than by the Lord (1John 2:15-17).

No one should be surprised by this, for humanism has been installed as the national religion of the United States, and the results were entirely predictable. Humanism is a philosophy that embraces human reason and experience as the only guides for human life. Belief in this philosophy is cultivated in nearly every facet of our society including public schools, where

neither God nor the Bible are allowed in the explanation of anything. Those whose minds have been indoctrinated with this philosophy find no appeal in the spiritual message of the gospel. Consider 1Corinthians 2:14, which speaks of a "natural man," meaning a person who is not spiritual in his thinking:

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Likewise, Romans 8:5 says, "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

What can we do about this trend? Gallup's report suggests that churches will need to make big changes in order to keep up with the culture and attract new members, but that is not the answer. There is not a new answer to the question of how to influence the world to believe in God. The answer today is the same one that was given in 2Timothy 4:2, which is to "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." We must understand that we have arrived at a time when the word is "out of season." In other words, a time has come "when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2Tim. 4:3-4). Paul told Timothy about such times long ago, and his advice was still to "preach the word."

This mandate for preaching the word abides in three realms: the world, the church, and the home. Even when the world rejects the word of God or becomes violently opposed to it, we must preach on. In the church, we are always to be "speaking the truth in love" as every member works together for the edification of the whole body of Christ in the faith (Eph. 4:11-18). In our homes, we must be ever-diligent to cultivate faith in Christ within ourselves and our children. This can be done only by the constant teaching, learning, and practicing of God's word "when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7).

The sad fact is that membership in the church may decline as a result of our stubborn refusal to compromise the word of God. There is nothing we can do about that, for we only plant and water while God causes the growth (1Cor. 3:6). We pray for a bountiful harvest of saved souls, but Jesus Himself taught that "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). We cannot control what happens in the world or force anyone to believe in Jesus, but we do have great influence within the Lord's church and our own homes. Therefore, let us exercise our influence for Christ as well as we can to reach unbelievers (Matt. 28:18-20), preserve unity of the Spirit within the church (Eph. 4:3), and lead our own families (Josh. 24:15).

Stacey E. Durham