

# Report of the 2022 Work of the Trilacoochee church of Christ

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## I. AUTHORIZED BY GOD

- A. How the work of the Lord is to be supported:
  - 1. The uses made of the contribution as instructed in The New Testament
  - 2. How Evangelism is to be supported
  - 3. How Edification and Limited Benevolence are to be supported
  - 4. The scriptures authorize a public report of the work of the local church
- B. How the work is supported here:
  - 1. The work of the Lord is supported by the freewill offerings of Christians, as instructed in the Word - 2Cor. 8:1-5
  - 2. The members of this congregation do so with purpose of heart, pleased to do the will of God without public acknowledgement - Matt. 6:1-4
- C. The uses made of the contribution as instructed in the New Testament:
  - 1. Evangelism: teaching the Gospel to the lost
  - 2. Edification: building up Christians through preaching and teaching (includes providing and maintaining a place for worship and Bible study)
  - 3. Limited Benevolence: ministering to the physical needs of poor saints
- D. How evangelism is supported:
  - 1. Phil. 4:16-17; 2Tim. 2:2
  - 2. But how are we to fund the preaching of the Gospel? What are the scripturally authorized means and methods of supporting the work of the church? - 1Cor. 16:1-2; 2Cor. 8:1-12
- E. But who is to support this work and who is to do this work? Do the scriptures supply a plan?
  - 1. Every member of a local congregation has a Christ-ordained role and purpose - Eph. 4:11-13, 16
- F. Do the scriptures authorize a public report of the work of the local church? Should we keep these matters hidden or speak openly of them?
  - 1. The Bible authorizes a public report - Acts 14:21-23, 26-27

## II. 2022 EVENTS AND WORK ACCOMPLISHED

- A. There were several events of note:
  - 1. We experienced an increase in our attendance over the years of 2020 and 2021. While we are not completely back to our attendance levels of 2019, our increase over the past year has been substantial and consistent.
  - 2. We noted a considerable increase in our offerings in 2022. We were able to replace some old and failing equipment that facilitates our assembly and worship, i.e. the HVAC and projection systems.
  - 3. We experienced the passing of souls precious and dear to our hearts: Chuck Feduccia, Opal Bracewell, as well as family members of disciples here.
  - 4. We witnessed the baptism of Aaron Fink in July.
  - 5. We witnessed a few persons restored by confession.

6. We were delighted to receive as members of this congregation persons who placed membership with our family: Les & Donna Heiden, David & Paula Balderson, and welcomed little Landon Goodell.
  7. Sadly, we were compelled to exercise local church discipline for those who departed the faith: Joel Morrison, Travis & Lana Loyed, Jeff & Holly Huffer, and Barbara North. In addition, Ron & Janice Byers moved their membership to a congregation in north Brooksville.
  8. We had two Gospel meetings with Thaxter Dickey in the Spring and with Wilson Copeland in the Fall.
  9. We planned for our annual sing and diligently spread the word about it; and, recently held it as one of the best I have ever shared in.
  10. We have had the custom of having Doug Sanders present a sermon on fifth Sunday evenings, for which I am grateful (four times each year). We also enjoy the practice of having different brethren present Wednesday invitations: Scott Black, Larry Winn, Steve Melton, Dennis Kenaston, Les Heiden, Doug Sanders, and also Haden Black. We look forward to encourage others to participate as well.
  11. We have had challenging Bible studies in the adult Bible classes. We studied the Holy Spirit with Scott Black, the Wisdom Literature, Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom, and The Life of Jesus Christ Through the Eyes of John.
  12. Our Thursday Indepth Bible class on second and fourth weeks each month typically has about twelve persons in live attendance, and about 15 who view the live stream. However, within a week, we have between 80 and 100 persons who view the class online.
  13. The women's Bible study meets on first and third Tuesday afternoons each month at the Melton residence and usually has 15 or more in attendance.
  14. We currently have an archive of over 600 videos of Bible classes and sermons on Facebook available to anyone who wants to view them. We average between 60 and 120 viewers each week.
  15. We updated our website, and according to the raw data get over 100,000 hits on it per year. All sermon recordings, including outlines and charts, all classes, invitations, and bulletins are uploaded weekly.
  16. Our daily Bible message has grown to well over 1,400, and we get an average of 200+ views per day including an average of 7 shares.
  17. Our world has changed; electronic media is the way people are most commonly reached today. At the same time, personal, face to face contact is still the most effective.
- B. We engaged a few physical work projects:
1. Work parties to take care of maintenance; Jay Wininger cleaned the outside of the building, Andy repaired the soffit and fascia, the fence was repaired twice, and there were two work parties to clean the building before our Gospel meetings and area wide singing service.
  2. Max Campbell and Andy Castle take care of mowing the lawn.

3. And what often goes unnoticed, but should never go unmentioned: the sisters in this congregation have cleaned it every week and maintain it beautifully; and every week the communion is carefully prepared without fail.
  5. Jill Campbell along with the help of several volunteers upgraded the supplemental song book twice.
  6. Max & Jill Campbell and Donna Heiden have done the work of providing pictures and updated information for our new directory soon to be published and distributed.
  7. And what is often taken for granted: Max and Jill arrive early to open up the building, and Scott Black lingers afterward to close it.
- B. This is a fact that goes often unstated but should be repeated frequently: the bulk of all the work of a local church is not done by the evangelist; his role is only a minor portion of the sum total of all of the work accomplished. By a wide margin, most of the work of a local church is done by volunteers, members who give of their time and energy to do the countless things that need doing. The work of elders, deacons, teachers, song leaders, treasurer, members who encourage each other and share the Gospel with others, and all of those who give untold hours to maintain a place of assembly is done by unpaid workers in the Kingdom of our Lord. And, in my experience, never has that been manifested better than it has been here. God bless you for this!

### **III. 2022 ATTENDANCE**

- A. Average attendance was 50 in Sunday morning services; highest was 66 on 7/3; lowest was 39 on 9/11. This represents an average increase of 8 persons per Sunday AM service.
1. Sunday evening average attendance was 39, representing a 22% drop from morning. This is good in view of the fact that most congregations with a Sunday evening service have a 40% drop in attendance. Highest was 61 on 7/3; lowest was 29 on 7/17.
  2. Wednesday attendance average was 29; highest was 38 on 4/20; lowest was 24 on 8/17. This represents a 42% drop in attendance over Sunday morning. We can do much better. Denominations and weak congregations have a Wednesday attendance drops like that.
    - a. Many have chosen to stay at home on Sunday evenings and Wednesday Bible study and watch the services via live stream. This does not and never will meet the New Testament doctrine of assembling for worship. It is not a substitute for coming together in fellowship to worship God. We live stream services for those who are too ill to come to worship, not as an attempt to supply some form of worship for them, but to encourage them with Bible teaching and hymn singing. Those who are able to assemble but choose to stay home and watch the live streamed services have failed to keep the scriptural instruction to assemble.
    - b. In addition, for those who log into the live stream and post a note that they are present, please know that the length of time you are

logged in and watching is displayed for the moderators of the page, Scott and me. Some have the practice of logging in for a moment and then dropping out, implying that they are present for the entire service. This is dishonest. If you do not intend to remain for the entire service, please do not suggest otherwise by logging in and then dropping out moments later.

3. Average attendance for past years:
  - a. 2019 Sunday AM 53; PM 41; Wednesday 33
  - b. 2021 Sunday AM 42; PM 31; Wednesday 25
  - c. 2022 Sunday AM 50; PM 39; Wednesday 29
- B. Visitors -- We had over 800 visits from persons who are not members of this congregation. Most of the visits were from members of the church and their families. Non-member visitors received follow up contact.
  1. Average of 15 visitors per week, with 5 visitors per service.
- C. Gospel Meeting average attendance - 44 at ten weekday services.
  1. High - 58; Low - 36
    - a. Attendance by members - an average of 31 per service; high 41, low 22 (We must do better!)
    - b. Attendance by visitors - 13 per service; high - 26, low - 7 (Note: visitors outnumbered members at two services)
  2. Annual singing service in January 2022 - attendance 88.
  3. Note that Scott Black takes the attendance at every service and uploads it to the members' only section of our website. This task goes unnoticed and un-thanked by most, but is very helpful to the elders and to me as the evangelist.

#### **IV. 2022 OFFERINGS**

- A. 2022 offerings = \$113,906.60; monthly = \$9,492.22; weekly = \$2,190.51
  1. Largest 2/27 - \$2,819.00; lowest 4/3 - \$1,660.00
- B. The Lord has richly blessed us and the disciples who were abundant in giving.
- C. Average offerings over the years:
  1. 2019 offerings = \$98,650.63; weekly = \$1,897.13
  2. 2021 offerings = \$101,466.00; weekly = \$1,951.27
  3. 2022 offerings = \$113,906.60; weekly = \$2,190.51
- D. Total expenditures = \$123,943.66 representing a loss of \$10,037.09
  1. Monthly average expenditures - \$10,328.64; weekly - \$2,383.53

#### **V. SUPPORTING EVANGELISM IN 2022**

- A. We suspended our support for evangelists until such time as we grow in number and offering. At that time this congregation will resume that work.

#### **VI. SUPPORTING LOCAL EDIFICATION IN 2022**

- A. Two Gospel Meetings: Spring - Thaxter Dickey; Fall Wilson Copeland
  1. Two additional men received compensation for preaching: Noah Works and Jesse Flowers.
    - a. Total for Gospel meetings and guest speakers: \$3,378.08

2. Total for class materials, Internet, and livestreaming of classes and services - \$6,712.79
3. Paul R. Blake's salary as evangelist
- B. Total for local edification in 2022 - \$89,265.87
  1. As a percentage of total expenses - 72% That means that 72 cents of every dollar contributed goes for preaching/teaching the word of God in this community.

## **VII. 2022 OPERATIONAL EXPENSES**

- A. Total expenditures - \$123,943.66
  1. Operational expenses - \$34,681.79 (28% of total expenditures)
  2. Operational expenses: maintenance, utilities, cleaning supplies, insurance, repairs, replacements, and miscellaneous.
  3. In addition, we replaced our HVAC system, the projection system, and the dehumidifiers in the class room annex, all of which were old and failing. Those expenses came to \$30,388.14 or 88% of our operational expenses.
- B. 2022 Limited Benevolence
  1. There were no benevolent needs that required use of the local church treasury to relieve.
  2. There were individual benevolent efforts by kind hearted and generous disciples here. Some known to me; most are known only to the persons involved and the Lord.
- C. Policy of Financial Disclosure: Jay Winger, who serves this congregation as treasurer, generates a monthly financial report distributed in the business meeting, and it details every use made of the offering to the Lord in this place. We wish for all to be informed of the fact that all uses of the offerings are limited to scripturally authorized activities for the church.

## **VIII. UPCOMING WORKS FOR 2023**

- A. It is our hope that we will continue to increase in number, both by encouraging our own members to return to worship who have become accustomed to staying home and life streaming services, as well as reach out to others and gather them into our family here.
- B. We are planning two Gospel meetings for this year, and will be planning meetings for coming years as well. We are considering having a second area-wide singing service this year.
- C. We have Bible studies prepared for this year: Sunday morning Bible class will be taught by Steve Melton and Scott Black on a Harmony of the Parables of Jesus, followed by a Harmony of the Metaphors of Jesus taught by Paul Blake. The Wednesday class will be studying the subject titled The Life That is to Come taught by Paul Blake.
- D. We encourage in home Bible study efforts to continue as well as to grow in the number of persons involved.

- E. We will continue to handle our own minor repairs, maintenance, and cleaning, which will require volunteers. We have never seemed to have a shortage of volunteers here at Trilacoochee.
- F. In view of the healthy and substantial offerings of the disciples here, we will consider whether we can offer some support to evangelists in other places.
- G. As always, we strongly encourage you to be diligent in efforts to find persons with whom you can share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Psalm 133:1