

2021 Report for 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. 2021 EVENTS AND WORK ACCOMPLISHED

- A. There were a few events of note
 - 1. We experienced a sharp reduction in attendance that carried over from 2020 due to the COVID crisis; however, by the middle of the year the attendance rose to about 85% of what it was in 2019.
 - 2. We noted a significant increase in our offerings in the second half of the year and ended the year with a substantial increase in total offerings.
 - 3. We experienced the passing of four souls precious and dear to our hearts: S.J. Barthle, Dwight Boyett, Jim Cooper, and Robert Luffman
 - 4. We witnessed the baptism of three who have committed their lives to the service of our Lord: Verlyn Bullington, Jeff Huffer, and Holly Huffer.
 - 5. We witnessed a few persons restored by confession including Joel Morrison and Phyllis Henderson, and we were moved and refreshed by their return.

6. We were delighted to receive as members of this congregation eight persons who placed membership with our family: Dennis and Dianna Kenaston, Terrell and Jill Boyett, Kristin Boyett, Beth Goodell, and Katrina and Opal Bracewell.
 7. We had a Gospel meeting with Barry Hudson in the Fall. After canceling three meetings over the past two years, it was wonderful to begin having meetings again.
 8. 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. 88 persons attended, 16 song leaders led songs, and it was great to do that after missing it in 2021.
 9. We have had challenging Bible studies in the adult Bible classes. Steve Melton and Scott Black have taught the adult Bible classes on a Comparison of the Old Law and the Law of Christ, as well as our current study on the Holy Spirit. We have also studied the Book of Romans and the Wisdom Literature.
 10. Our Thursday Indepth Bible class was held weekly during the bulk of the COVID crisis; however, we returned to holding it every other week. We typically have about ten persons in live attendance, and about 15 who view the live stream. However, within a week, we have between 70 and 100 persons who view the class online.
 11. We currently have an archive of over 200 videos of Bible classes and sermons on Facebook available to anyone who wants to view them.
 12. We updated our website, and according to the raw data get tens of thousands of hits on it per year.
 13. Our daily Bible message has grown to well over a thousand, and we get an average of 180 views per day including an average of 6 shares.
 14. 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. Jay Wininger cleaned the outside of the building.
 2. We had a work party to level the parking lot.
 3. Max and Andy take care of mowing the lawn.
 4. 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. We had a major repair on the air conditioning system.
 6. There were a number of minor repairs made by volunteers.
 7. Jill Campbell along with several volunteers upgraded the supplemental song book.
 8. Max and Jill have done the work of providing pictures and updated information for our new directory soon to be published and distributed.
 9. 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 is often unstated but should be repeated often: 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. 2021 ATTENDANCE

- A. Average attendance was 42 in Sunday morning services; highest was 60 on 7/18; lowest was 26 on 3/7
 - 1. Sunday evening average attendance was 31, representing a 26% 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 52 on 7/18; lowest was 15 on 4/25.
 - 2. Wednesday attendance average was 25; highest was 40 on 11/24; lowest was 15 on 3/3. This represents a 40% drop in attendance over Sunday morning. We can do much better.
 - 3. Average attendance for past years is not calculated at present
- B. Visitors -- We had 840 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 - 34 at seven services
 - 1. High - 45; Low - 27
 - a. Attendance by members - an average of 20 per service; high 28, low 13 (We must do better!)
 - b. Attendance by visitors - 14 per service; high - 26, low - 6 (Note: visitors outnumbered members at three services)
 - 2. No annual singing service in January 2021.

IV. 2021 OFFERINGS

- A. 2021 offerings = \$101,466.00 -- Average monthly = \$8,455.50 -- weekly = \$1,951.27. (A comparison to previous years will be compiled for next year)
 - 1. Largest 10/31 - \$2,984.00; lowest 4/4 - \$1,271.00
- B. The Lord has richly blessed us and the disciples who were abundant in giving.
- C. Total expenditures = \$91,348.09 representing a gain of \$10,117.91
 - 1. Monthly average expenditures - \$7,612.34; weekly - \$1,756.69

V. SUPPORTING EVANGELISM IN 2021

- 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 2021

- A. One Gospel Meeting (Barry Hudson in Fall)
 - 1. Three additional men received compensation for preaching: Andy Brenton, Theron Smith, and Jesse Flowers
 - a. Total for Gospel meeting and guest speakers: \$1,597.00
 - 2. Total for class materials, Internet, and livestreaming of classes and services - \$2,435.22
 - 3. Paul R. Blake's salary as evangelist
- B. Total for 2021 - \$81,532.22
 - 1. As a percentage of total expenses - 89% (That means that 80 cents of every dollar contributed goes for preaching/teaching the word of God)

VII. 2021 OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

- A. Total expenditures - \$91,348.09
 - 1. Operational Expenses - \$9,815.87 (11% of total expenditures)
 - 2. Operational Expenses: maintenance, utilities, cleaning supplies, insurance, repairs, replacements, and miscellaneous
- B. 2021 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 2022

- 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 yet come back, 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.
- C. Other works we can consider are a VBS, et al
- D. We encourage in home Bible study efforts to continue as well as to grow in the number of persons involved.
- E. We are planning to continue to handle our own minor repairs, which will require volunteers.
- F. 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