

The Sower

Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4th Street
Arthur, IL 61911

Times of Worship

Bible Classes.....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study.....6:00 p.m.



Ron Bartanen, Minister

WELCOME to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a VISITOR, we especially appreciate your decision to meet with us. It is our hope that you will return at every opportunity.

Have you visited our website lately?
(www.arthurchurchofchrist.com)

Be sure to check out the "Christian Evidences"/"Apologetics Press" links Now in both English and Spanish.

January 6, 2007

A NEW YEAR—A NEW LIFE

Did you ever think that you would like to begin life all over again? Maybe you wouldn't make the same mistakes that you have made the first time around. The fact is, God gives us that opportunity. Jesus taught that this new life is the result of a new birth—not physical, but spiritual. Jesus, in conversation with Nicodemus, a Jewish teacher, said, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5).

The new life is accomplished through the gospel, "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16), the incorruptible seed, "the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). The gospel calls us to accept this new birth provided through the blood of Christ in our response of a trusting faith, repentance and baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). Paul speaks of the coming forth from the waters of baptism as a resurrection to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4)

Have you yet begun the new life? If so, are you still walking in it?
--Ron

"O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name: shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people" (Psalms 96:1-3).

NEWS & NOTES

- **WELCOME** to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly this first Lord's Day of 2008. We are grateful you have chosen to be with us. We especially want to thank you for coming if you are a VISITOR. We hope you will return at every opportunity.
- **"GREAT BEGINNINGS"** will be this morning's message, with Matthew 4:12-17 as the reading.

This evening's lesson will be the second in a series on "**A Growing Church**": "**A Church With Convictions**." The reading will be 2 Corinthians 4:8-13.

- **NEXT SUNDAY morning** the message will be, *The Spirit of Christianity*," and the reading will be 1 John 4:7-21. The **evening** lesson will be "**A Growing Church—A United Church**", with John 17:20-26 as the reading.
- **BIBLE CLASSES:** **Wednesday** evening's lesson will begin with "9-a" under the heading, "xxiv. Consideration of Baptism" on our lesson-sheets. We will then go to the next lesson sheet. Copies of both are on the literature table.
- **POTLUCK:** Please stay following this morning's service and join us for our **birthday/anniversary potluck and fellowship**, recognizing those with birthdays or anniversaries in November, December and January. To refresh our memories, those with birthdays were Linda and Donna (both on 12-18). With a January birthday (1-4): Doris. There has been one anniversary in these 3 months: Howard and Carol (11-17).
- **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Paul suffered a heart at New Year's evening, and also a blood clot that shut off oxygen from his brain. Two arteries were 100% clogged, and stents were put in. However, he has been slow in regaining consciousness. As this is being written (Friday a.m.) he is now starting to respond by opening and closing his eyes. Improvement is expected to be slow. Keep him and his family in your prayers in this trying time. He is in Carle Hospital. *** Continue to remember Carol (broken wrist), Linda (knee injury), Dean, Inez, Mary Taylor, Tina, Jay, Lester, Woody, Boyd's brother (Vic), Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis Carter (Ind.), our service men and women, and our nation's and world's leaders as a way for peace is sought. Most of all, pray that all will find Him who is the Prince of Peace.
- **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING REPORT:** It was proposed and decided that because of the financial situation, due to the loss of \$750 per month outside-support since our coming in

2001, that the weekly newspaper ad will be dropped, and my income will be reduced. Outreach to the community will be sought in other ways such as benevolence (including the community food bank, with an ad) and having a booth at Arthur street-fairs. We will also have quarterly newspaper ads in which the gospel will be presented.

- **OUR SYMPATHY** is extended to the family, church-family and friends of Harriet Bolin who passed away this past week. A member of the church at Hammond, she was a frequent visitor here at our meetings and when the Hammond church was not meeting. She will be greatly missed.

GOD NEEDS YOU

Technically, the title of this article is not a true statement. God is perfectly capable of being Himself without our help. Jesus said in John 5:26 that the Father has life in Himself. God is not dependent on any "outside" force or substance for His existence.

But God's work on earth is to be accomplished with the help of humans. The apostle Paul writes that we are God's fellow-workers, field and building (1 Corinthians 3:9). In this way, God needs our help to carry out His will for humankind.

The preaching of the gospel to the lost will not be done by the angels or any world governmental organization. It is the task of the church to declare the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10). As the old book title says, "Go ye means go me," we are to share in Jesus' mission of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10) by taking the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

God needs you to do the following in 2008....

1. Be the very best disciple you can be (Luke 9:23).
2. Be the very best husband, father, wife, mother, grandparent, uncle, aunt, child, grandchild, niece or nephew that you can be (Ephesians 6:1-4).
3. Be in attendance at every scheduled worship service and Bible study of the church (Hebrews 10:24, 25).
4. Be a participant in the various fellowship functions (Acts 2:42).

5. Be aware of and take your opportunities to share the gospel with the lost (Matthew 28:19, 20).
6. Be a good student and handler of God's word (2 Timothy 2:1q5).
7. Be aware of situations to help those physically in need (Galatians 6:10).
8. Be a person of prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).
9. Be gracious in giving regularly to support the various ministries of the body of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:3-6).
10. Be faithful in living up to the talents and abilities that He has given each one for the building up the body of Christ (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16).
11. Be faithful unto death; enduring suffering, hardship and persecution (1 Peter 2:21; Revelation 2:10).

God needs you! How are you going to respond?

--Greg Swango, Sunnyside Rd. Church, Decatur, IL

SAVED BY THE BIBLE

Pfc. Brendon Schweigart, 22, was on a mission to recover a tank that had broken down in Baghdad, Iraq. Upon reaching the tank, he was struck in the chest by a sniper's bullet. Fortunately for Schweigart, the bullet became embedded in a Bible he carried in his shirt pocket. The Word of God had quite literally saved his life!

Mr. Schweigart's experience reminds me of a passage in the Bible: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

Pfc. Brendon Schweigart learned that keeping a Bible near your heart can literally save your life. But more important than that, by keeping a Bible near your "heart" you will also be able to stop the attacks of the devil and will save your soul.

--Steve Higginbotham, *House to House/Heart to Heart*

(EXTRA COPIES of the latest HTH/HTH, compliments of the Highway church, Sullivan, are on the literature table. Take a copy (or more) and pass them on to others.)

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