

The Sower

The Lord's Day-----September 10, 2017

Arthur Church of Christ

415 W 4th Street, Arthur, IL 61951

Preacher: Ron Bartanen

Times of Worship

9:30 a.m. (Bible Classes)-----10:30 a.m. (Morning Worship)----1:30 p.m. (Wednesday Bible Class)

New Web Site: <http://arthurcoc.com>

Check out the **Apologetics Press Website**

<http://apologeticspress.org>

“WHAT’S A CHURCH FOR?”

What do people look for when searching for a church? What should a person look for when searching for a church? Those looking for a church should, first of all, ask, “What is a church for, according to the Scriptures?” Does the Bible speak of the church as a place of entertainment? Or is it a place for the performance of certain traditional rituals? Or is it a place for “Bingo Night” or bake sales? Or could it be for simply socializing with a bunch of friendly people? Or maybe the keeping of a family tradition? Motives for choosing a church are many and varied.

While many sincere, good-hearted people may be moved by the above, or similar, motives, in making a choice, they fall short of what the Bible teaches as to the purpose for the church. Isn't it time for discarding the frivolous in religion, and seek the basics as set forth in God's word, the Bible?

The “Great Commission,” given by the Lord to His disciples, establishes in a few words what He intended to be the church's purpose for being. It was not complex, though often ignored. He instructed before His ascension into Heaven, saying, “Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthews 28:20). So, what's a church for? It is to fulfill the

commissioning of the spiritual body of Christ to present to the world the gospel (good news) of Christ, baptize believers, and to nurture them in the word of God. The apostle Paul indicated as much to the elders of the church at Ephesus: “I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). He also made clear to the church at Philippi their basic purpose, saying, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15-16a). That’s exactly what a church is for. –Ron

“But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee: there you will see Him, just as He told you’.” Mark 16:7

Peter was definitely down in the dumps. Denying Jesus three times on the way to the cross, he must have certainly thought he had disqualified himself as a disciple. The message was clear. Make sure to tell Peter. His job is about to begin. It reminds me of Ron Riegels, a UCLA football player who picked up a fumble at the Rose Bowl and ran 80 yards the wrong way. After halftime, he has no desire to return to the field, but the coach told him the game was only half over. Ron, like Peter, redeemed himself in the second half. Let’s get back in the game.

–David Grubb

TWO ITEMS OF INTEREST

Sometimes news that we don’t learn about on TV, radio or newspaper we may be able to find on the Internet. This past week I noted 2 items of special interest on News With Views. They illustrate the dangers we face as our nation, in many ways, has cast off God.

The first item is that of a public school program called “Access Islam,” a federally funded program designed for the most vulnerable in today’s society—public-school children. While we Christians have caved in to pressure to accept the idea that even the mention of God or the name of Jesus is somehow unconstitutional and objectionable, seventh-graders in New Jersey are taught, “May God help us find the true faith, Islam.” Those opposing such indoctrination are, of course, being labeled as “bigots,” “Islamophobes,” “hateful,” “ignorant,” “xenophobes,” “intolerant,” “racist,” and “close-minded.” High-school children in

Maryland, as part of a World History class, are “taught extensively about Islam—without any context of current events—and required to list the benefits of the religion.” Have you heard of any World History curriculum teaching the benefits of Christianity? Predictably, Islam is portrayed as a “religion of peace.” While we cannot discuss the Ten Commandments in school, Maryland students must acquaint themselves with “Islam’s Five Pillars.” A parental request that a daughter be excused from the class was denied, the parents being informed that non-compliance would bring a grade of a zero. Newton, Massachusetts students are taught materials provided by Islamic Middle Eastern states. School officials refuse requests of citizens to view the materials. The use of these materials is defended on the grounds that it helps develop students’ “critical thinking skills.” I wonder, would the Bible not also help with “thinking skills”?

The second item may be judged as more political in nature, but illustrates how idiotic people can become as “the blind who lead the

blind.” California’s Governor Brown, a Buddhist, has established a program to help solve a problem brought on by the allowed immigration of a vicious gang from Guatemala, called the Ms-13 gang, which has “committed countless murders, thefts, drug dealing, prostitution, human trafficking and overall violence.” The governor’s program, called, “Advance Peace,” sets up a budget of \$1.5 million “to offer cash stipends to gang members who remain peaceful and not kill anyone.” Want to move to California, anyone? Reminds me of the New York mafia that would sell “protection” to businesses to keep their businesses safe. As we allow our nation to depart from its more-Christ-ian culture, we will probably see more and more of such senselessness. Pray for our nation. Pray for our leaders. –Ron

STORM RELIEF

You, no doubt, are aware, through TV, radio and the Internet, of the hurricane situation our nation faces. I cannot imagine being in a situation where so many find themselves devastated. They need our prayers. They also need our help financially. A highly reputable source for assistance is the **Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team, 836 S. Brownschool Rd., Vandalia, OH 45377.** Their phone number is [214-734-9647](tel:214-734-9647).

Their web site is www.churchesofchristdrt.org.

“NOAH—A TIME FOR WAITING” will be today’s message, with Gen. 8:1-15 as the reading. The account of Noah and “The Great Flood” hold many lessons for us as we await the coming Great Judgment.

IN OUR PRAYERS: Be in prayer for the many victims of the hurricanes. *** Pray for our church. With Eva’s death, and her sister, Lyla, now in the Arthur Home, our number of active members is greatly depleted. *** Continue to remember: Lyla; Nadine; Boyd; Linda; Rodger; Ron (fighting infection and bladder stone); and our nation’s leaders, that their hearts will turn to the Lord, and lead us in conformance with God’s will. Pray for the many persecuted in Islamic nations and China.