



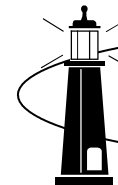
and your anniversary, too!

- 02– Alan Lawhon
- 04– Lori McCants, Charles Crosby
M/M Harold Anderson
- 05– Rhett Bacot, Laverne Holloman,
Thomas Hinnant
- 06– Wilbur Cole
- 07– Jamie Frazier, Dusty Herring,
Mandy Herring, Ted Huber
- 09– Eddie Jones, Brandon Moore
- 10– Forrest Ham
- 11– Marty McCants
- 12– Debbie C. Lawhon, Merlene
Wiggins
- 13– Gelene Anderson, Kay Flowers
- 14– Robin Turner
- 15– Ivy Whitehead
- 16– Brooklyn Cottingham
M/M Mickey Matthews
- 17– Shannon Lawhon
- 19– Jackie Hill
- 20– Jeffrey Lawhon, Diane Lee
- 22– Donna Robinson
- 24– Cory Hill, Chandler Dennis,
M/M Steve Lawhon
- 25– Holly Whitehead, Katherine Kirven
- 27– Jay Flowers, Diane Ingram
- 28– Phyllis Owens, McKayla Cox,
M.M. C.B. Hardee
- 29– Belinda Whitehead
- 30– Dale Dennis
- 31– M/M Bobby Welch
- Feb. 02– Harold Reynolds, Legrand
Weaver, Wendell Dennis,
Robert Gaskins
- 03– Sandra Kazlieris

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**...And they came to Elim.
Exodus 15:27**

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The Elim Light

Volume 32

Issue 1

January 2008

I Do Not Go to Church, I Am the Church

I don't go to church anymore. That may sound shocking coming from a pastor writing a column in the Faith and Value section of the local newspaper, but it's true. I stopped going during the past year. It wasn't a decision that I suddenly made one Sunday morning. It wasn't a conclusion that I came to easily. My not going to church has been a result of a gradual shift in priorities and a gradual change in attitude toward one of the oldest institutions in our society.

Believe me, I know all the reasons why I should go to church. I grew up going. I know people expect me to go because it's what people do here in the South. I know that some churches spend large amounts of money, time, and energy to make church exciting and relevant so that I will want to go. But I stopped going to church because I began to learn something that profoundly changed my view of church. I was never supposed to go in the first place. You read that right, I was never supposed to GO to church in the first place. As a follower of Jesus Christ, I am supposed to BE the church. I am to be the church no matter where I go, what day of the week it is, or whom I may encounter along the way. Being the church has nothing to do with actually going to a place we call "the church." It's really all about being what Jesus told me to be — a person who loves God and loves people.

In the Bible, Jesus was having a discussion with an expert in Jewish law. This expert asked Jesus to answer a question that the scholars of the day frequently debated: "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus gave an answer that is both incredibly challenging and life-changing. He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 'This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

Jesus said to love God and love people. That is how I am to be the church. Jesus did not say that the greatest commandment is to go to church so that I may fulfill my religious duty. He did not say to go to church because everyone else is going or because that is what is expected of me. Jesus said that the work of His followers is to love God and love people.

I've stopped going to church because I now understand that I am the church. As a Christ-follower, my mission is not confined to a building for an hour on Sunday morning. It is about caring for the lonely man at the coffee shop and feeding the hungry person on the street. It's about helping the stranger whose car has broken down and praying with a friend who just lost his job. It's about worshipping God in the stillness of the early morning and recognizing His hand at work throughout my day. It's about teaching His ways through the life that I live and the words that I speak. It's about loving Jesus and loving His people. That is my mission and that is the mission of the church, because I am the church.

So where will I be Sunday morning? I will be the church with other Christ-followers who gather to worship, fellowship, study God's Word, pray and encourage each other. I will not go there out of obligation or duty, just because the place is called a church. Remember, I don't go to church anymore. I will go there because I am the church. And when I leave, my mission of being the church, of loving God and of loving people, will go with me wherever I go.


— Jerry Chapman, Pastor Capstone Community Church

This and That . . .

- ◆ The Joy Club will travel to Charlotte on January 15th and visit the Bill Graham Library. Admission is free. The time and other details will be announced.
- ◆ Ladies of the church are invited to a wedding shower for Landon Reynolds and Leah Williams on Saturday, January 5th, from 2-4 p.m. in the Moore Family Life Center. The shower is hosted by the Janie Chapman Group.
- ◆ The church will license Landon Reynolds into the Gospel Ministry on January 5th during the 11 a.m. worship service. It's not often a church has the privilege to send out a person from its congregation into a Christian vocation. Be here to show Landon your support!
- ◆ Our youth will heading to Chilipepper the weekend of January 25th.
- ◆ Rev. Al Green, pastor of First BC, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, will be our guest for Baptist Men's Day on January 20th. The day will begin with a men's prayer breakfast. Men are encouraged to bring their sons and grandsons.
- ◆ Basketball and volleyball will resume at the regular time beginning January 3rd.
- ◆ Discipleship Training will resume on January 13th at 6 p.m. Topics for the four adult classes will be announced. There will be children and youth classes, too.
- ◆ 2008 Women's Lifestyle Evangelism Conference is January 26th in Columbia. The cost is \$20 and includes lunch. Ladies, this is a fantastic day. If you have never been, come on and let's go! Deadline to register is January 7th. Contact Gloria McKay or the church office.

My Place of Service—

Date	Ushers	Nursery AM	Nursery SS & PM	Children's Church
Jan. 6	Bacot Floyd Jordan Anderson	Dexter & Diane Lee Sally Ham Carolyn Carmon	SS-Carolyn Carmon PM-Ann Floyd Linda Gibson	Maggie Kirven
Jan. 13	L. Bacot Ham Whitehead L. Lawhon	Johnny & Lisa Floyd Ricky & Beth Moore	SS-Barbara Moore PM-Gloria & Freddie McKay	Brett Price Family
Jan. 20	McMillan Hardee Kirven Carmon	Maggie Kirven Gloria McKay Connie Dean *Rebecca Reigel	SS-Lisa McClure PM-Wayne & Betty Ham	Ricky Moore Family
Jan. 27	J. Floyd R.W. Dennis E. Jones H. Reynolds	Sheryl Evans J.J. Hill Beth Moore Fredda Irving	SS-Robin Turner PM-Lana Jones Barbara Moore	Barbara & Amber Reynolds

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 	2 7 pm Business Mtg. 7:45 pm Adult Choir	3 7 pm Volleyball	4	5 2-4 pm Wedding Shower for Landon & Leah
6 9:55 am Sunday School 11 am Worship/ License of Landon Reynolds 6 pm Worship	7 7 pm Lalla Carter Grp. w/ Barbara Reynolds	8 3:30 pm Frances Johnson Grp. In MFLC 7 pm Basketball	9 7 pm Prayer Mtg., Mission Org. for kids 7:45 pm Adult Choir	10 7 pm Volleyball	11	12
13 9:55 am Sunday School 11 am Worship/ Children's Sermon 6 pm Discipleship Training Resumes 7 pm Worship	14 7:30 pm Janie Chapman Grp. w/ Carolyn Cox	15 Joy Club to Billy Graham Library in Charlotte (tba) 7 pm Basketball	16 6 pm Mission Night Supper 7 pm Mission Organizations 7:45 pm Adult Choir	17 7 pm Volleyball	18	19
20 7 am Men's Prayer Breakfast 9:55 am Sunday School 11 am Baptist Men's Day 6 pm Discipleship Training 7 pm Worship	21	22 7 pm Basketball	23 7 pm Prayer Mtg., Mission Org. for kids 7:45 pm Adult Choir	24 7 pm Volleyball	25	26 Women's Lifestyle Conference
27 9:55 am Sunday School 11 am Worship/ Lord's Supper Children's Sermon 5 pm Building & Grounds 6 pm Discipleship Training 7 pm Worship "We Can" Collection	28 7 pm Deacons Mtg.	29 7 pm Basketball	30 7 pm Prayer Mtg., Mission Org. for kids 7:45 pm Adult Choir	31 7 pm Volleyball		