

## CHURCH OF CHRIST

Somers Ave Church of Christ  
4801 Somers Avenue  
North Little Rock AR 72118

Phone: 501-758-5256  
Fax: 501-758-1047

Office@somersavenue.org

### Schedule of Services:

Bible Classes: 9:00 A.M.  
Worship: 9:45 A.M.  
Evening Service: 5:00 P.M.  
Midweek: 7:00 P.M.

### For Our Guests:

**Attended Nursery** at  
back of the Auditorium—  
infants

**Attended Training  
Room** at back of the auditor-  
ium (East side)  
[for 1-3 Yr. olds]

**Wireless Hearing** receiv-  
ers available in sound booth at

### Coming Soon

- May 30th, Fifth Sunday evening service at Burns Park, 4:30 Worship, then picnic & games.
- VBS-Mars Hill Vilonia, AR June 13-17 7:00-8:30 P.M.

# The *OBSERVER*

Volume 42, Issue 22

May 30, 2010

## “There but for the grace of God go I.”

Sean Ashberry

Tuesday evening I had the blessing of preaching for a group of men incarcerated at Wrightsville Prison, a medium security state prison. I am thankful to Charles Voyles, Allen Parker, Michael Evans, and Jovan Hill for wanting to participate in the worship service and ministry to these precious souls. We provided copies of songs to sing, read Scripture, and prayed with close to 100 men having varying backgrounds of religious experience.

When we arrived, we proceeded through the entry building where we had to do the typical metal detector, pat down, and sign in. Then we were given a Visitor's Badge to wear around our neck while we were in the unit. One of the guards escorted us through the maze of sidewalks and locked gates to the Chaplain's office.

Ross Woodbury, the facility chaplain who invited us, then escorted us to the building where the chapel service would be held. It is actually the main visitation room (complete with visitation windows and a snack bar for guests - but there were no nachos available this night!). They use it for the larger chapel services on Sunday and Tuesday. The concrete room would probably hold 200 chairs if needed but this night there would be around 100 set up.

As the men arrived in their white shirts and pants to sign in at the door, I stood with the Chaplain to welcome them while Charles, Allen, Michael, and Jovan shook hands in the aisles.

Every man greeted me with a smile, handshake, and word of appreciation for our being there. They each offered their name but I was quickly overwhelmed by the number of attendees. I couldn't even remember the name of the last man who told me! Good thing it was printed on their shirts!

When it was time to begin the Chaplain introduced us and we interspersed songs and prayers with readings from Psalm 119. We sang from copies of songs we had brought and distributed. Some knew them and some didn't but they tried to sing out when they could. My lesson, titled "But God", was from John 3 and designed to give them hope, reminding them that God loves them even in Wrightsville Prison.

We signed up 25 new students for the Bible correspondence course and are sending Randal Matheny's new book, "Choose", to one inmate who conducts Bible studies. We met two members from McAlmont who are serving sentences and countless other struggling Christians.

For me, the most profound moment of the night happened after the service. An inmate approached me requesting prayers. He said that he had sinned, not been living for God like he knows he needs to, and wanted to repent. Wow! All I could think was how much I needed to repent for not living for God like I know I need to and not even thinking about these men (and women). We were both sharing a spiritual prison cell. I was praying for him but at the same time I was praying for myself.

The isolation I sensed while walking along the concrete pathway of Wrightsville Prison brought a deeper awareness of what it might be like if "there but for the grace of God go I."

Consequences of choices these men made requires them to pay a debt to society while locked away from the world. Some consequences are short-lived and some are life-long. The wondrous commonality we share is that while living in this world has eternal consequences the God who created us in His image has paid our debt through His son Jesus.

There is an eternal isolation that awaits those who refuse to accept the covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We are eternal beings. That is, we have an eternal aspect of our being called a soul. God will require our soul at our death and we will hear our sentence for eternity...Heaven with God or eternal isolation in Hell.

Jesus described the righteous as those who visit the prisoner (Matt. 25:36). I can scarcely imagine a place more lonely and discouraging than prison. It is our Christian duty to reach out, visit and encourage those who are in prison. Many have and are doing that by working with the Bible correspondence courses, writing cards and letters, visiting and studying with those incarcerated, and praying for them.

I hope and pray we will get another opportunity to worship with these precious souls. I still see their faces but I can't recall their names nor can I recall their inmate number. But God knows their heart. And He has challenged mine.

### Our Record May 23, 2010

Sunday Bible Classes  
187  
A.M. Worship  
275  
P.M. Worship  
209  
Ladies Bible Class  
NA  
Midweek Classes  
5/26-178

Budget \$9,080.25  
Contribution \$10,004.54  
Average \$9,918.13

**Volunteers are needed for the Wednesday Night Meal for the 3rd week of the month beginning in September. If we do not have volunteers we will skip that week.**



#### MONTH OF MAY:

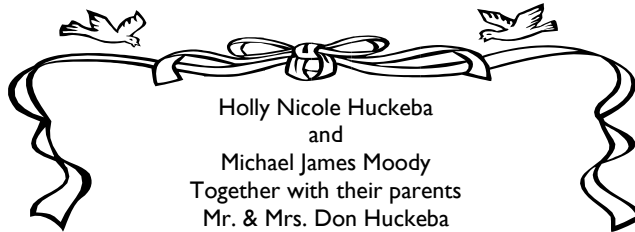
Sugar  
Pancake mix & syrup  
Muffin mix  
Instant potatoes

### Family News

**Fifth Sunday Picnic** will be held tonight at Burns Park (Pavilion # 10). The worship service will begin at 4:30, then the meal and play time. Please bring your favorite sandwiches, finger foods and drinks. Invite your family and friends to come and join in the fun and fellowship.

**Responses:** Holly, Don & Judy Huckleba for prayers.

**Attention Ladies:** You are invited to a Ladies' Salad Supper (potluck) on Friday, June 4th at 6:30 p.m. at Somers Ave. MPB. Dessert will be provided.



Holly Nicole Huckleba  
and  
Michael James Moody  
Together with their parents  
Mr. & Mrs. Don Huckleba  
and  
Mr. & Mrs. James Moody  
Request the honor of your presence  
At their wedding  
Friday, the eleventh of June  
Two thousand and ten  
At seven in the evening  
Somers Avenue Church of Christ  
4801 Somers Avenue  
North Little Rock, AR  
Reception to follow

### In Our Thoughts

#### Health Concerns ~

- **Gerald Hale** remains in Springhill Hospital, room 343.
- **Joe Gibbins** is home from the hospital. He will be on IV antibiotics for at least 10 days to treat an abscess on his liver. No visitors at this time please.
- **Neva Raper** (Neita Phillip's mother) recovering from following vocal cord surgery. She remains in ICU.
- **Cheryl Fossler** had surgery on Tuesday at Springhill hospital and is recovering at home.
- **Marshall Sexson** (brother of Matt and Micah Sexson) remains in the VA Hospital receiving treatment for an abscess on his liver.
- **Jonathan Barfield** is feeling better, but has been referred back to his leukemia doctor for further marrow testing.

### FRIENDS & FAMILY Prayer Requests

~ **James Akins** (Akins' grandson); **Janet Akins**; **Ruby Chandler** (Shirley Whitfield's mother); **Susan Cloninger** (Tom & Barbara's daughter-in-law); **Annie Culpepper**; **Betty Eddlemon**; **Jonathan Esquivel** (Wilma Ingram's nephew); **Bill Frazier** (friend of the Haggards); **Ruth Fuller**; **Wanda Gadberry**; **Ann Ghee**; **Joe Gibbins**; **Page Gibson** (Treva Voyles' family); **Billy Hale** (brother of Gerald); **Gerald Hale**; **Myrtle Henry**; **Gail Jenkins**; **Vivian Johnson** (Carl Reynolds' sister); **Henry Huckleba** (Don Huckleba's father); **Bob Mauldin** (NLR Fire Chief/boss of Steve Smith); **Alice Miller** (Haggard's friend); **Carolyn & Charles Moore** (Contessa Moore's parents); **Juanita Nance**; **Marie Necessary** (Chad's mother); **John Noles**; **Neva Raper** (Neita Phillips' mother); **Kyle Rye** (Danny & Judy's son); **Mary & Radine Shock**; **Jenny Smith** (Steve Foster's aunt); **Wanda House**; **Jane Weare**; **Shirley Whitfield**; **Jourdan Wood** (friend of Kathy Trickey) and **Harry Word**.

Contact Elder for May — Mike Penrod

## “Somertime”

It's hard to believe that this will be the 5th year of Somertime. We have almost graduated our first group of kids who started while in Kindergarten. Somertime is a combined Bible hour held on Wednesday evenings for kids who are in K-6th grades.

Each year the steering committee selects the theme and puts together the lessons and learning stations which the kids will experience. Many volunteer their time and creativity to put together a meaningful and beneficial plan for our children's spiritual and social development.

I appreciate so much the work of Clarice Langat who has been involved since year

one and has been instrumental in the growth and development of this ministry to our children. Space does not allow me to mention everyone who has volunteered year after year but we appreciate so much the dedication and effort of our “faithfuls.”

At the heart of Somertime are the learning stations consisting of memory work and learning to find passages in the Bible. In years past we have had volunteers to portray Biblical characters each week to reinforce the theme or the week's lesson.

The kids love to sing and spend time together which makes Somertime a unique experience. It's the only time at Somers Avenue when this

wide range of ages will be together in one learning environment.

This year's theme is “Finding My Place.” Because of the public nature of the assembly sometimes it appears that the only important contributions are those made by the public workers. We intend to help these young people find ways they can contribute to the overall life of the congregation now so that when they are adults they will have developed a heart for service.

We will be working with them to identify their talents, interests, and opportunities to serve not only within the congregation but also their friends at school, family, and

others with whom they have contact.

Let me invite you, all of you, to consider volunteering one week this summer. Not only will you be blessed by the experience but you are certain to bless these children.

Somertime is also intended for outreach so seize the opportunity to invite a child outside of the congregation.

**Sean Ashberry, Involvement**

Check out my blog:  
[seanashberry.wordpress.com](http://seanashberry.wordpress.com)

Follow me on Twitter:  
[@seanashberry](https://twitter.com/seanashberry)

Connect on Facebook:

## The Imitation of Christ: Until Christ is Formed In You

**Summer Series 2010**  
**Auditorium Class Wednesdays 7:00 P.M.**

**Imitating Christ: Until Christ is Formed in You** June 2—John Gipson

**Imitating Christ's Focus on His Mission & Purpose in Life** June 9—Leon Barnes

**Imitating Christ's Submission to the Father's Will** June 16—Bruce Grice

**Imitating The Courage of Jesus in Temptation** June 23—Bruce McClarty

**Imitating the Solitude of Jesus** July 7—Greg Clark

**Imitating the Compassion of Jesus** July 14—Nick Hamilton

**Imitating the Intercessory Prayers of Jesus for Others** July 21—Bill Laird

**Imitating the Servant Heart of Jesus** July 28—Bobby Boaldin

**Imitating the Patience, Perseverance and Steadfastness of Jesus** August 4—David Riley

**Imitating Christ in His Empathy for Others** August 11—Dan Lightfoot

**Imitating the Love of Christ** August 18—Ted Knight

**Imitating the Boldness of Jesus in Conversation** August 21—David Sweet

“There is no better way to resist the devil than to draw strength from the words of our Father!”

We're On the Web:  
www.somersavenue.org

### Upcoming Teen Events

#### This Month

- May 28-30—Summer Kick Off

#### Looking Forward

- August 2-8—Florida Trip

*The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift his countenance upon you and give you peace.*



John Gipson

## Summer Series Begins Wednesday, June 2nd

“Imitating Christ: Until Christ Is Formed In You”

Our first speaker for this year’s summer series will be John Gipson, who will give the keynote message, “Until Christ is Formed In You.”

John was born in Turkey, Texas, and grew up in the west Texas town of Odessa. He began preaching by appointment at age 16. During his senior year at Abilene Christian College, Gipson was preaching each Sunday at Evant, Texas. In 1953, he married Beth Stirman, and they moved to the church in Stratford, Texas. This was followed by churches in Sherman, Odessa, Lamesa and Fort Worth. In 1968, he moved from Texas to Little Rock, where he was the pulpit preacher for the 6th & Izard church of Christ for the next 32 years. In 1977, he became one of the elders for that congregation and continues to serve in this capacity. In 2002 the building at 6th & Izard was sold, and the congregation moved to a new building at #3 Windsong Drive in North Little Rock. For many years Gipson preached on radio and television; served on various boards; co-authored three books; lectured at almost all of our Christian Colleges & Universities. The Gipsons have one son, two daughters, & five grandchildren.



#### More Things You Can Do On Our WEBSITE:

- Link to other sites

- Check Calendar of events
- Read Blogs from Somers
- Print picture directory or pdf

list of members & much more: [www.somersavenue.org](http://www.somersavenue.org)

### Alex Wells, Youth and Children’s Ministries

#### Exodus and Conquest

Throughout the pages of scripture we see Biblical authors using history and imagery to help us understand ourselves and our current situation. We see this most often in the New Testament. Jesus, John, Paul, and the author of the letter to the Hebrews each made several references to the nation of Israel and their relationship with God in order to help us better see our place in the divine perspective.

One strong image that describes our spiritual journey so well is the Exodus. I think that we can see this in two ways, and they need not be mutually exclusive. The most obvious and most frequent connection is seen in our journey from the desert of sin into the promised land of God’s favor, the

Church. I think that there are very strong connections there, and that such imagery is profound.

However, the stronger connection for me is in our ongoing spiritual journey. God heard the cry of his people who were suffering under oppression, and he delivered the nation of Israel. Still they had to journey on through a land that was foreign to them. They had to struggle through deserts as well as conflicts with the nations who dwelt there. They had to leave the place where they were and follow God’s lead. With God’s leading they would find themselves blessed beyond measure. They would find themselves in a land of their own possession.

Just as the people of Israel were liberated, and wandered for years longing for the promised rest of God; so we have been liberated

from the slavery of sin, and now journey on through a land where we do not belong, longing for our eternal rest and reward. With every step of this journey we come closer to the ultimate realization of our deepest longing – we come one step closer to full union with our God.

Check out my blog:  
[alexwellss.wordpress.com](http://alexwellss.wordpress.com)

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