

News

Yvonne White spent Tuesday night in the local hospital. She was diagnosed as having a TIA. She will have a heart monitor and therapy—**Meredith Biblo** was pushing her boys on a tire swing and felt a pop in her leg. She went to a doctor in Pittsburg, was diagnosed as having a torn muscle and was advised to stay off of it for 2 weeks—**Deborah Brown** has been more alert and doing better since she has been home. She has some trouble with her speech because of the stroke she had—**Tonette Harrel** is facing breast cancer (continued on page 3)

ELDERS:

Bob Arnold 563-2977
Leon Goff 572-6809
Kendall Johnson 717-0265
Richard Montgomery
936-577-4819

DEACONS:

Ricky Davis 572-9428
Ken Ferguson 572-4135
Pat Marshall 572-9347

SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study 9:45 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Class 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

PREACHERS:

Drew Nelson 254-541-3815
Leon Goff 572-6809

ASSIGNMENTS FOR:

May 31, 2020 been home. She has some trouble with her speech because of the stroke she had

Serving The Lord's Supper

Sunday Morning

Scripture: D

Sunday Evening

PRAYERS

Sun. AM--- (Opening)

— (Closing)

PM— (Opening)

— (Closing)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A.M.—

Southside
Church of Christ
P.O. Box 242
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456

Think It Over—If you were to die today...Where would you spend eternity? To all who love God, and to those who do not, but should, to all who are weary and heavy laden; to all who are lonely and sad; to all who sin and need a Savior, and to whosoever will come a hearty welcome is extended.

Southside Church of Christ

Bulletin

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(903) 572-2148

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The Perks of Preaching in Podunk

By Drew Nelson

“It’s a shame that the youngest and most inexperienced are usually relegated to preaching in small churches without elders.” I have heard laments like this enough that it will soon sound trite. It came from my mouth a few times. There is definitely something to it. Younger preachers in the beginning stages of their vocation often find themselves living in smaller towns preaching in smaller churches. Those smaller churches generally don’t have church secretaries to copy & collate, a deacon for each digit, or elders to shepherd the flock. So the young preacher with no experience and limited wisdom finds himself not only filling the pulpit, but getting bids to fix the leaky baptistery, initiating church discipline, and begging people to teach the middle school class. Combine the extra difficulties of preaching in Podunk with the utter lack of glamour. You will preach to the same 30 people Sunday after Sunday (and teach the same 15 Wednesday after Wednesday). Visitors will not be wowed by your building. You will not hold many gospel meetings.

The travails of preaching in Podunk are well-rehearsed. Yet reflecting on my own limited experience has caused me to appreciate my time in a small unglamorous church. I think it’s high time someone spoke up in favor of preaching in Podunk. To my brothers & sisters in small places, I mean no insult in using “Podunk,” which has been chosen for its alliterative properties. In what follows I hope to encourage young preachers to embrace and enjoy their work in small churches.

Preaching in Podunk gave me ample opportunities to preach & teach. Being the only preacher in a small church meant preaching about 100 sermons/year and teaching 100 Bible class/year. Having the pulpit to myself week after week was exactly what I needed. Preaching in Podunk afforded

me time to read & study. My situation may have been unusual, but being in a small town with its slower pace of life, allowed me to make the most of my office time. Even the lack of internet at the building, while sometimes inconvenient, left the noise of the world outside while I studied.

Preaching in Podunk taught me to love the other. A big community gives us the option to choose companions of similar age, social status, and interests. But in a small community, you are forced to know the other. In a big city, a certain type of person shops at Whole Foods, while another shops at Kroger. But in a small town *everyone* shops at Wal-Mart. And in a small church, you will shake hands with every single member every Sunday, you will learn to empathize with the ailments of the elderly, and you will learn to stop whining about the difficulty of your job in front of the shift worker with calloused hands. G.K. Chesterton observed, “The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world. He knows much more of the fierce varieties and uncompromising divergences of men. The reason is obvious. In a large community we can choose our companions. In a small community our companions are chosen for us.” It was in a small church that I learned to love those with whom I had nothing in common except a Father.

Preaching in Podunk sifted my motives. My decision to preach grew out of a big cluster of reason & motivations. And

for my first couple of years on the job, as I interned at a large metropolitan church, I never sorted through all them—I didn’t have to. For those first years, preaching was a thrilling & heady experience. Everyone around me constantly praised me for my decision to pursue this godliest of vocations. I spoke before large audiences. Family and friends who visited were impressed that I had landed in such a church. But then I moved from a church of 300 plus to a church of 30. The glamour of metropolis was stripped away: small town, old building, men’s business meetings, dingy office, same old faces.

It left me to answer the all important question: is just reading, studying, writing, teaching, preaching, and visiting enough? If I don’t preach a single meeting this year, If I never speak before more than a few dozen, if no one thinks “he’s made it,” is it enough? Am I willing to give my absolute best for this small group week-in, week-out? Is it about the work or something else? And what I discovered in that unglamorous setting was yes, preaching was enough. The work was its own reward. I didn’t need constant affirmation or an impressive setting to press on. It was in Podunk that I learned to seek purpose, fulfillment, and contentment in simply doing God’s work.

A few ending qualifications: having to move to Podunk to learn this may say more about how dense I am than anything else. I am sure that men with purer initial

motives and more introspection could learn these things in any setting. And I have spoken up for small churches, not because I have anything against large ones, but because the blessings of the small have not been well-advertised. Nothing I have written should be taken as slight against any size church.

One friend who proof read a draft of this essay added, “We don’t preach in Podunk hoping to be rescued from it. We are not awaiting the ‘call up’ to the majors. The work is the work wherever we are.” For my brothers preaching in Podunk, especially those who are young: keep at it. God has always evaluated his servants, not by numbers, but by faithfulness. As Paul said, “*my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*” (1 Cor 15:58)

Paul Coffman and His Evangelism Trip to Kenya and Uganda

The elders of Southside have made a commitment to him for funds from the church, and other churches are being given an opportunity to help. Some have already helped.

He is also asking for individual contributions because there are works and expenses that come up in these trips that do not classify as works of the church, but are worthy and necessary things to be

done. Each of us as members of Southside are being given the opportunity to be a part of this. We don’t want anyone to feel forced to give, but if you desire to have a part in this it will be appreciated. And any amount that you are comfortable with will be appreciated. And what any of us gives will together be of much help in Paul’s work of preaching the gospel and establishing congregations.

Paul’s plans are to leave August 3rd and he will be gone through most of September as well. If you have questions, ask Paul. He will be happy to answer.

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(NEWS, continue from back page)

surgery soon. She is to see an Oncologist in Tyler this next week—**Brenda Munn** continues to need prayers. She has been moved from ICU to IMC and the doctors are trying to decide whether she has pneumonia or congestive heart failure—**A.W. Goff**, my cousin, a gospel preacher for many year, whom some of you will remember, passed away Thursday morning in Russellville, AR. He was 91 years old—Remember **Kenny Ferguson, June Johnson, Randy Blackmon, Willie Don Davis, Judy Hinson, Yvonne White, William White, Catherine Moss, Pat Brown, Deborah Brown, Kenneth Amerson, Marion Shurtleff, Rance Hockaday, Enoch Waldrep’s brother, Teresa Tate, Frank White, Laverne McCurdy Tammy Willeford**—Remember our **Shut-ins: James Johnson, Betty Rust, Wanda Sikes,**