



The Life and Times

Florida's Light & Life Park, Inc.
Newsletter

October 1, 2023

Volume 11 Issue 10 Page 1

FLORIDA'S LIGHT & LIFE PARK, INC.

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Lakeland, FL 33810

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Park Administrator: Stan Welton
(Cell: 863 608-3982)

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Website: lightandlifepark.org

Office Manager: Greg Thomas
greg.t@lightandlifepark.org

Office Assistant: Lori Jones
lori@lightandlifepark.org

Resource Specialist
sherry@lightandlifepark.org
(Cell: 863-255-3776)

Office Hours:

November 15-April 14: 8 am- Noon

April 15-November 14: 9 am - Noon

Lots Available for Lease

There are currently no lots available to lease for a RV or Park Model.

The following lots are available for a modular home to be put on them:

5359 Beulah Land

5885 Shiloh Path

Call the Park Office at 863-858-7504 for information.

News from the Park Administrator

Every once in a while, during one's lifetime, a person crosses your path who makes a lasting impression. Mike Lower was that kind of person for me. I first met Mike 3-1/2 years ago when I first visited the Park in January. I met him at his normal start time shortly after 6 a.m. You know, it is quite cold at that time of morning in January. During that tour, he introduced me to the start of his day: test the chemical levels at the pool, the water system, and the wastewater plant. And he did this every day, 7 days a week—for years.

Over the years, I developed a respect for Mike's accumulated knowledge. When something was operationally amiss, he recognized it and took immediate steps to repair the problem. He submitted the regular monthly tests and knew what tests were on the horizon and prepared me for them. As a resident in the Park, you could rely on his ability to provide clean drinking water and operational integrity of the wastewater system.

Mike began working at Light & Life Park in 1988—35 years ago. That is longer than most every resident in the Park has been here! Over those 35 years, he left his mark everywhere. Find a concrete project in the Park, he probably had his hand in it. Do you hear the bleat of the goats? His hand is there, too. Do you remember a broken water line? His mark is there.

Dependable. Knowledgeable. Qualified. Hardworking. Capable.

Mike, you are missed by all of us here.



Office News

Happy fall! October has arrived in Light and Life Park. Temperatures are cooler in the morning and cooler in the evening. We are glad to say goodbye to September.

The Office has been busy in spurts but now we will begin our preparations for all of you to return. Reservations have been confirmed but there have been some cancellations. If you are interested in something, check with Greg Thomas.

If you are considering renting your own residence for any part of the winter season, let Greg know. He has a long list of people who would like to rent a residence in Light and Life for all or part of the winter season.

There have been several times when residents have requested that we send someone to their residence to check on something. Sometimes we discover that we don't have the correct key. If you have purchased a new residence or know that you have changed your locks, please be sure to provide the Office with a key to your place. This is a requirement for all homeowners and helps us, when we need to help you, take care of issues in your home while you are away.

We are still in need of someone to clean Hood Hall daily, and Guest Rooms in between guests. If you are interested in part-time work, let us know. We have hired Junior Sinsmyr to do some of this when he returns from his current trip to Haiti, but someone else would be welcome to help in this area.

Stan had surgery in September, and we hope to see him feeling better during October and the rest of the season. Because of the surgery, you will not find an article from him this month in the Newsletter. We are holding down the fort while he is off, and his projects are being covered.

As you plan to return for the upcoming season, know that we look forward to seeing you and to all the activities that will happen as we move from fall into winter. Be safe as you enjoy your last weeks with family and friends at your other location.

The Office Staff

A Big Thank YOU

September 10th concluded my appointment at Lakeland Light and Life Free Methodist Church. Annie and I have served here for just over five years, and we are now moving into a new stage of life. I have been told by several in Light and Life Park that we will find new activities that will fill any time we imagined that we would have in retirement.

Thank you so much for such a wonderful send-off on our last Sunday. The prayers for Annie and I at the conclusion of the morning service are priceless. Thank you, Sylvia Stevenson and Dick Trice, for helping to conclude a meaningful time of worship of our Lord.

Thank you for the tasty meal at Hood Hall following the morning of worshiping Jesus. Jim Thomas and a crew of helpers BBQ'd chicken. I did not catch the names of all who helped in the kitchen and did so much more to make the celebration meal so special. I apologize for not being able to name you person by person.

Annie enjoyed receiving the gummy bears! We deeply appreciate the \$5,000.00 check given to usher us into the retirement season. You folks are the best! We will start using the funds from that check as we head out after church to Annie's 50-year high school reunion in Hutchinson, Kansas. Again, THANK YOU!

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Chuck and Annie



News from the Board of Directors

I'm sure by now you all know the news of the passing of Mike Lower. The Board of Directors extend our deepest sympathies to Cindy and her family. He will be missed as an important part of our park operations. Please continue to pray for the family.

As the fall season is now upon us, many of us in the northern climates are looking forward to soon return to our "winter homes". Time moves so fast. It seems like just yesterday that one of the main topics around the park was "when are you headed north?" Now, you full time residents will soon be seeing the seasonal residents begin to trickle in over the next few weeks and months.

By this time, we hopefully will have closed on the property at 5580 Deeson Road. Stay tuned for more details on plans for this newest property addition to our Park. There is no significant news of the other property opportunity at the NW corner of the Park.

Since we closed out the regular season of meetings in April, as promised, the Board has been busy this summer. For the second year now, we held Zoom meetings in June and August. In between time, there have been committee meetings of Rules and Regulations, finance, personnel and Building and Grounds. Stan has kept us informed of needs and updates of activities and projects around the Park. The purpose of the summer meetings was for us to keep on top of things so when we meet in person in January we will be "ready to go".

Our next scheduled meeting will be October 2. As we prepare for the upcoming season, we will be continuing existing projects and planning new ones, such as, the Jordan river outfall cleanup and new culverts, water line inventory, pickle and tennis courts and others to be determined. There will be plenty to keep us busy. **Again, a big thanks to our staff and volunteers who help keep Light and Life Park such a great community.**

Larry Putnam Board President

A note from the editor

As most of you have heard or seen we have had a large unwanted visitor this summer. I assume he/she came down the drainage ditch after a large downpour and got stuck here when the water dried up.

We knew at some point we had to have him/her removed before the park filled up for the winter. It has not been aggressive so far but has been sighted as far down as the bridge to Project 14 and out on the golf course.

This week we had professionals come and remove the largest alligator we have had at this park. He gave quite a fight.



Check out the park website!

Copies of the newsletter, the Park calendar, places for sale, and much more can be found there.

www.lightandlifepark.org



Where to Donate your Goods

The donations given at the Park to help others are appreciated. **Please take your donations to the following places:**

Food donations for Briarwood may be left on the designated table in Hood Hall.

We will now be accepting "linens" for Senior Orphans. Please refer to Senior Orphans article in this newsletter.

Jean Whipple takes several items to Talbot House weekly. See that article in this newsletter for details.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Stamps for Missions

All donated stamps are sent to Alliance Stamp Ministry in Fort Myers where they are sold to dealers. The money is sent to a publisher in Buenos Aires, Argentina where they publish Sunday school material in Spanish that are sold to at least eight Latin American Countries as well as Spain and the US. They are used by over 40 Protestant Denominations.

Try to leave at least 1/4 inch or more around each stamp or strip of stamps. They now collect picture post cards both unused and used. If used, please leave the stamps on the cards. Thank you. The container is in **Hood Hall** for your convenience.

"Little is much when God is in it." The small amount of time it takes you to carefully cut stamps from envelopes and packages can greatly benefit others through the sale of these stamps. Additionally, you could pray for lives being touched through this ministry during those brief moments.

Thank you. *Marilyn Stone*

A note about pop/soda cans:

Thank you for saving your aluminum cans which are taken by us to a recycling center in east Lakeland. The money received is being used to help our Park.

I am happy to pick up your pop/soda cans to haul to the Recycling Center, however it will make my job a lot easier if you remember the cans from canned goods **CANNOT** go in with the aluminum pop cans. These are picked up by someone else and need to be kept separate.

There is a bin in the metal recycling collection center near the dumpsters which is marked "POP CANS"--that's the one to use!

Thanks for your help.

Wes Crist

Medical Equipment Available

Maxwell Commons at The Villa has some medical equipment available that can be borrowed by any Park resident. Call someone you know in the Villa to help you. Please sign out the equipment you are borrowing. There are wheelchairs, walkers, rollators, portable pots, and shower seats. Please notify a Villa member when you are returning an item, so we know it has been returned. Please **don't** leave it on the porch. We are **not** presently accepting any equipment donations due to lack of storage space.

Talbot House Ministry

The ongoing deliveries of prescription bottles, unused medicines, good clean clothing that you no longer use, and small household items is an ongoing project. Please continue to save these helpful items for the homeless shelter and the Good Samaritan Clinic. Please deliver them to the Whipple's porch at 5866 Deeson Road any time. Jean will get them delivered.

Jean will take your items to Talbot House on Wednesdays. **Please note this change! Donations will be accepted all day on Tuesdays and until 10:30 AM on Wednesdays. PLEASE leave your items in Jean's screened porch.**

Should you wish to send financial assistance to this work, the address is: 814 North Kentucky Avenue, Lakeland.

Thank you! Jean Whipple

Update on Benches

Ed Hamilton has just made a delivery on benches he had ordered. He is working with the new manager who is making the benches and would like requests to be made to the Park Office until the details are sorted out on his process.

You may continue to collect plastic lids. **Please be sure they are clean.** They may be stored at his place while he is away, but they need to be put inside his storage containers.

We will keep you posted if anything further develops.

SENIOR-ORPHANS

Thank you for your continued support of Senior Orphans through your donations of ***gently used*** bed linens.

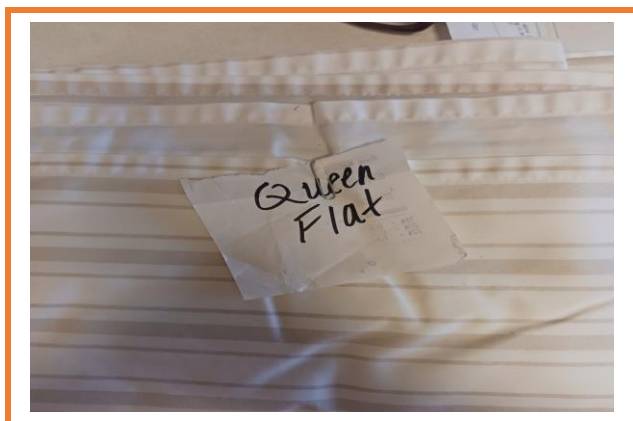
Senior Orphans helps local, indigent seniors living with no family support and meager monthly incomes.

The drop-off location is in the totes in Hood Hall designated for Senior Orphans.

Please label your linens, as this saves our S.O. coordinator valuable time when trying to determine sizes.

Attached is a picture of an example of how to label each item.

Terri Boda Coordinator



Blood Pressure Clinic

Even though the blood pressure clinic has been suspended for this year, I am a full-time resident now, and am willing to take anyone's blood pressure at any time.

I can come to your house, or you can come to mine, 5437 Bethel Dr.

JoAnn Willet RN
989-615-8430



The last Summer Fellowship Dinner

will be held on Monday, October 2 at 5:30. The dinner will be Walking Tacos, chocolate sheet cake and homemade ice cream. Please sign up in Hood Hall by Friday, September 29. The cost is \$6.00. Come out and enjoy dinner with the other summer residents of the Park as we conclude this summer season. **And** thank you to Sherry and her crew for the fellowship and meals we enjoyed over the summer.

Winter Season Fellowship Dinners With Programs

Our first Fellowship dinner of the winter season will be **Monday, November 6 at 5:30** at Hood Hall with the program immediately following at 6:15. Carol Zeller will be coordinating a "What's My Line?" game show you won't want to miss.

You may arrange a menu for eight people at your table ahead of time ... OR ... just bring a large dish to share with others at the table you join. Some prefer planning ahead as accommodations can be made for special diets (diabetes, heart, gluten-free, etc.) whereas some others like the surprise elements of not knowing who or what will be at their table. Remember to bring your own place setting. Coffee is available for purchase; water is provided.

Residents with surnames beginning A-M will do the set-up and clean-up. If you can oversee that responsibility, **PLEASE** contact Carol Zeller. Additionally, greeters are needed at the doors. We really appreciate everyone who volunteers.

Giving everyone a heads-up, especially for snowbirds who may need to pack costumes, props, etc. the Variety Show will be in March. Begin to think about how you can participate or recommend someone else for a skit, instrumental or vocal music, individual or group act, serious or silly, but short, limited to 3-5 minutes.

These events are always very well attended, and we appreciate everyone's help and suggestions; contact me to offer assistance.

Thanks!

Marilyn Stone, chairman jaxstone68@gmail.com

Bucket Listers



The question of the month. When do you head south? The leaves are beautiful, but the nights are chilly up here in the north. Heading south for the winter season sounds delightful!

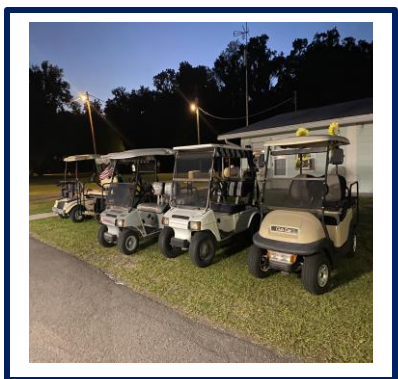
The Bucket Lister projects for this coming winter season include buying televisions for Hood Hall, building a shade structure at the pool, buying new side tables for the pool area, screening in the lanai by the pool and building a pavilion near Hood Hall!



Homemade cinnamon rolls. Remember how good they smelled and tasted?

The Bucket Listers will continue to offer Tuesday Night Movies and Tuesday Night Trivia on alternating Tuesdays nights in Hood Hall during January, February, and March. We will also be baking Cinnamon Rolls and serving Hot Dog Lunches during the craft shows!

Your support of these activities is amazing and appreciated! See you



50th Anniversary Celebration



Celebrating your golden wedding anniversary in 2024?

Then we would like to honor you in our annual reception to be held on February 9th.

Among those celebrating 50 years of marriage are: Fred & Barb Hartson, David & Gayle Hooks, Vernon & Kathy Kauffman, EJ & Brenda Miller, Randy & Faith Reesman, Stan & Gloria Welton, and Dennis & Jill Wood.

Want to be involved? We'll need help with planning, setup, decorating, greeting, serving, and clean up.

Thank you,

Carolyn Lindley
carolyn_lindley@yahoo.com
 50th Anniversary Chair

L & L Aqua Splash Water Aerobics

Come & enjoy fun in the sun with a low-impact workout in the water to enhance health & wellbeing.

Routines are choreographed to music and designed to promote improved muscle strength, endurance, flexibility & core balance without the stress of land exercise.

Splash times are offered **year-round**, twice weekly, **Tuesday and Friday, 10 AM** for the month of **October** and free of charge.

Coordinator: Karen Castle-Williams
allforyum@aol.com
 704-502-0466.



2024 CPC golf tournaments!

Save the dates!

Two-person (men and women) Tournament
(18 holes Scramble)! Bring your partner!
Jan 5, 2024 (Friday) Earlier start time 10:00 AM

Club Championship Tournament (two flights) for
Men's & Women's categories (18 holes) Feb 2, 2024
(Friday)

Note: if Field Day doesn't happen in 2024, the closest
to the pin and longest drive contest will be held as part
of the Club Championship!

Two-person Blind Draw tournament (18 holes) March
8, 2024 (Friday) Shot gun start at 10:00 AM. Men's &
Women's Categories. \$50 to each winning team, plus,
names on a trophy in Hood Hall.

Three club Co-Ed tournament
April 1, 2024, Monday, 18 holes. 10:00 AM

The Player's Club

Ed Stockwell 517 861-0481
edstockwell48@gmail.com

Light and Life Bowling

It is getting closer to bowling season. When you come
south you might want to take advantage of the \$69
four-month pass that lets you bowl 4 games a day, 7
days a week.

The renovations are coming along and should be
almost complete by the time we start our league.

At the end of August, we were privileged to have the
BVL PBA50 tournament at the Orange Bowl Lanes to
honor veterans. It went from Saturday the 26th to
Wednesday the 30th and was televised the last day.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone return for
another season.

Barb Hartson

Gad-About News

Thank you to all the ladies that joined us on the
trips in 2023.

A special "Thank You" to all the ladies who drove
us there and back safely.

Here is a peek into what we have planned for
next season, 2024

Jan 11 - HSN Shopping Outlet

Jan 25 - Secret Staircase Restaurant

Feb 15 - Lunch on Limoges & Giraffe Ranch

Feb 29 - Silver Springs Park & Glass-bottom
Boat Tour

Mar 14 - Back Porch & Stable Home Decor

Mar 28 - Russell Stover Chocolate & The Villages
West Tour

Things are subject to change until we can confirm
all the details in November/December when we
return to the park.

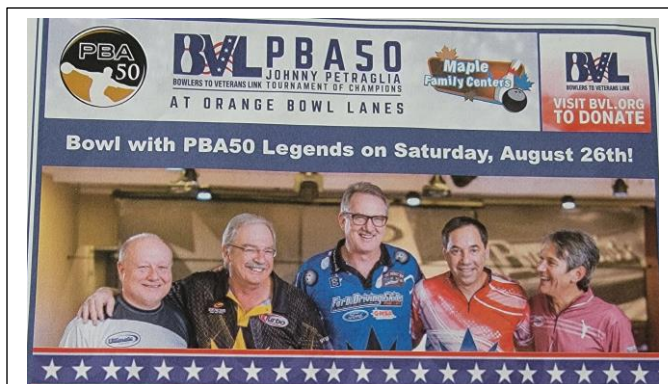
Keep thinking of things for the future and let me or
Peggy know. Our hope is that we can keep the
away trips to 2 hours or less whenever possible.

Flo Grabowski

Cell 931-797-2639 coachfollc@gmail.com

Peggy Dunn

Cell 248-766-5537 pegjim2000@yahoo.com



**You can watch the finals on YouTube.
Just look for PBA 50 at Orange Bowl
Lanes, Lakeland FL.**

Library Information



Library Notes

We now have a way for you to keep track of when your fiction library books are due. There is yellow **"date due"** sheet by the card pocket. Just enter the date that corresponds to one month later than when you sign out the book. There are calendars at the checkout counter for your convenience.

We are currently working on several projects:

- rearranging the DVDs in an easier to use format,
- card cataloging the children's books,
- putting genres on the novels.
- adding new books to our fiction section.

Book Review

Steps to the beach

by Christiane Lemmon

Sanibel Island, Florida is only a three-hour drive from the Park, and one of my favorite places to go explore. So, when I discovered a Christian novel, taking place there, it intrigued my interest.

One of the main characters, an empty nester, goes online and purchases a home on Sanibel Island, sight unseen. Unbeknownst to her it was a dilapidated stilt beach home. Why Sanibel? Her mother had gone there at one time and found peace and refuge. Adele is trying to do the same thing. Adele believes she has made a terrible mistake, but finds a Bible left on her doorstep-her mother's own bible.

This book is a parallel between Adele's and her mother's story. It is an easy read, and the historical novel causes you to feel as if you are right there on the island with them. It also helps one realize that God allows you to go through everyday life teaching us just what we need.

You can find this in the **new book section with a white dot on the spine**. Enjoy!

I am in Here

by Creston Mapes

Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be injured so badly that you had no control over your body, but your mental faculties are as astute as ever? You can't control an inch of your body, cannot speak, but you hear all that is said?

That's what happened to Hale when he was 17. A church bus accident took his brother, Nate, and left him a cripple with no way of communication. Added to the tragedy, his mom died three years earlier and his dad remarried someone completely opposite. The pressure of expenses for taking care of Hale 24/7 led to his father making some very poor choices including getting money from a loan shark.

This novel shows the power of God, faith that sustains, even though the times God was rejected by Hale's father. This is a well-written book, full of rich treasures throughout. It keeps your attention from page one until the last. This book is a great must read.

You will find it with the new books, **a white circle on the spine says that it is new to our library!**

Gloria Welton
Librarian

Cars and Coffee

2nd Saturday of every month **8:00am to 10am,**

October 14th and everyone is welcome to come and view great restored autos and custom hot rods.

Join us in L&L Park at the Church parking lot!

Come, join the fun, and have a cup of coffee and a doughnut!

Larry Thomas 540-447-0458

A Good Read

Mel Starr, our resident author, has copies of his medieval mysteries, including the newest, #15, **SUPPRESSION AND SUSPICION**, which was released in October.

He has a new book being released in October just in time for the next winter season here in the park.

Even though the Starr's have left the park for the summer, you can find all his books at Amazon.com.

"Growing old is like a grammar lesson: we find the present **tense** and the past **perfect**."



Wow!!! Don't you agree???

Pickleball and Tennis

The pickleball/tennis players would like to thank those who attended and supported the two fundraisers/dinners this year.

The courts are always open but are undergoing some construction so play carefully.

See you in the Fall.

Denise Tomasello
517-250-1420



Our HORSESHOE pits are open.

The pits are located between the miniature golf and shuffleboard courts.

For nighttime play the light switch is inside the miniature golf shed on the east wall.

Looking for someone to schedule this for the winter season.

Shuffleboard

The fall schedule will start in October, **Thursdays at 6:30pm and Monday's at 1 pm** depending on the weather.

Dale and his crew have worked tirelessly to get the benches and fence completed.

Come and enjoy the courts.

Dale Schantz

989 975 6710 or 863 816 5422



Great job fellas!!

Game Night

Game Night is held on most **Friday evenings** at 7:00 PM in **Maxwell Commons**.

Bring your favorite game and friends and have an evening of fun and fellowship.

A new outreach ministry

Join us for the Salvation Army Crafting Event at Hood Hall

Bring your projects to work on in a light hearted atmosphere.

Friday October 13, starting at 1:00 pm

Saturday October 14, starting at 8:00 am

Come and go as you please. Cost is \$20.00 for a half of an eight foot table where you can work on your project.

All proceeds go to the Salvation Army Transitional Housing Program.

Please RSVP by October 6th to Cindy Lower at cindylower950@gmail.com

We will be collecting new unwrapped toys at the October event. You can bring toys to HH anytime during those two days even if you don't stay to work.

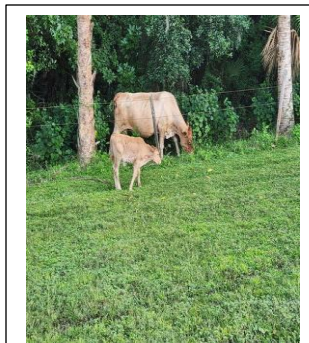
Best Regards

Cindy Lower

Happy Thanksgiving to our Canadian friends and family



Our beautiful Park



Our resident neighbors and a sleeping owl after a long night!!

By Marva Peck

An update on the Pictorial Directory

The pictorial directories have arrived. If your picture is in the Directory, you may pick up your free copy at the Park Office. New members of the Park may also pick up a free directory.

If you want a second copy, a limited number of directories will be available later in the season at a cost of \$3.00 each.

Barb Hartson and Pat Wilkins

Newsletter Deadline

Please be sure that your submissions to **The Life and Times** are delivered to the newsletter editor, Barb Hartson by the **20th** of the month prior to publication.

Please use this email: bfhartson@gmail.com (Barb Hartson). Email is the preferred method.

The November deadline is October 20th unless the activity is in the latter half of the month. Then check with me to see if you can still make it in.

Outreach Ministry

Floor cleaner, Kleenex, shampoo, and deodorant. Government programs don't allow the purchase of these and many more necessary items.

This last month we made up fifteen hygiene kits with deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, band-aids, and razors for local teens. The teens were so excited to get these items of their very own. When was the last time you considered these a wonderful gift?

One of the moms had a birthday and received a free cake and a card. Once again, such joy for something so small for a woman whose priorities are food for the family.

A box of Kleenex or cleaner from a dollar store brings happy smiles. Please consider dropping off a donation to Hood Hall, making a financial contribution or volunteering to help pack or deliver to those in need.

Special thanks to all our summer volunteers picking up from Publix, packing boxes, donating, and praying for this ministry.

Christine Aurich Program Director
Chrisaurich@hotmail.com 616 402 8241

Updates to Briarwood

We meet every week at Hood Hall to help our neighbors. Around 3:00 pm on Mondays. Sometimes we think we are not making a difference with what little we can do.

That's a lie straight from the pit! You have made a difference in the kids' lives just outside the gates.

Our little kids have become teens and are bringing their friends to church to join the youth group. The children's ministry, even with the teens moving on, has grown exponentially.

One of the teens on their ride back to Briarwood told me she was going to be a nurse and has started making sure her grades are really good through her junior year so she can get scholarships.

Another older teen has his own car and has gone from working at BK to working his way up with the City of Lakeland.

These kids tell me they see Light and Life as a big part of why they can make a better future for themselves.

They have come to know the Lord ... and are asking really good questions!

Continued next column.

Continued from previous column.

Here's my question to you directly at Light & Life - Should we do what Jesus did?

Should we continue to pray, help, and give as Jesus did or is it every man for himself?

You know the answer. The early church had it right with everyone sharing what they had.

Now we come to you and ask for your prayers, your help and giving.

If you have felt that tug on your heart to help, that's not us, that's the Lord.

We believe Jesus helped everyone he encountered.

And while we aren't Jesus, we all can do a little, and God can take it from there.

Thank you to all who do pray for the outreach to continue. That's all we really need.

We believe God will continue what he has started as long as it is God's Will.

Pastor Randy Williams

Distribution

We will be in Hood Hall Thursdays at 10:30 with bakery items from both Publix and Panera. The pick-up schedule is changing, so the available items will be a little different starting in October.

IF you would like to help with the Publix morning pick-up (before 8:00 AM) please talk to me about it. Some of you have been surprised to learn that we do the Publix pick-up 7 days a week. The Thursday distribution to those of you in the Park is just one of several ministries that we do.

If you are new to the Park or just coming back for the season, **this is free to all and all are welcome to come find a treat.** While this is free, we will have a basket for any donations for our Outreach Ministries, and these are greatly needed and appreciated.

Please bring your own bags or containers for the items you choose.

Karen Wright Coordinator

Light and Life Free Methodist Church

5730 Deeson Road
Lakeland, FL 33810
Phone: (863) 858-6361
Fax (863) 858-3982
Email: church@llfmc.org

Pastor: Chuck Frankenfeld
Evangelism & Outreach: Jeff Bellinger
Secretary: Pam Hill
Email: church@llfmc.org

Pastoral Discernment Team and the BOA

On behalf of the Southeast Region Conference, the Discernment Team, and the BOA of Light and Life FMC, I am pleased to announce that **Jeffery Bellinger has been appointed to the position of Pastor at Light and Life FMC.** He and Theresa are excited about serving here.

I would like to thank each of you for your prayers and support as we have done our best to follow the leading of the Lord in this decision.

Sylvia Stevenson, Chairperson

Installation Service With Superintendent McAvoy



Dinner to welcome Jeff and Theresa



A note from the Pastor

The Devastation of Prayerlessness
James 4:1-3

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. **You do not have because you do not ask God.** ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Context is everything whenever we are reading the word of God. We often quote the "**you have not because you ask not**" part of this verse without looking at it fully in context.

Pastor James is speaking to the early church that has been scattered by persecution. They are trying to figure out how to live out their faith as the movement of Christ, in places that are foreign and frightening to them. Well, there must have been some relational issues. Imagine that! Relational issues in the church. It's hard to believe. ☹️

But James helps them, and us, to understand that it's our human desires and self-centered motives from within, that causes the fights we have, in our families, with neighbors, in our marriages and even within the body of Christ. We want what we want. Sadly, this position is rooted in self-pride... It's an indication that the flesh is all too alive and not surrendered to the Lordship of Christ. (Remember, the invitation to follow Christ is an invitation to come and die so that we may truly live.)

But Pastor James also gives us a solution in these verses. "**Ask God.**"

Our loving Father in Heaven is eager to give us what we need. Not always what we want but always what we need. His Holy Spirit is always transforming us by His grace, through our relationships and through the situations we find ourselves in every day. That's why earlier in his letter Pastor James says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Whenever we respond in the flesh, we give the enemy a foothold, to tear apart the fabric of our important relationships and the people we're called to love. But when we are surrendered to Him and we stop reacting in the flesh and seeking His will first for what we need in every situation, we open the door for Him to have his way. Rather than reacting with our flesh, we get to respond with what The Lord gives us.

Pastor James tells us, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Now we know that we have no righteousness of our own, but Jesus is our righteousness. He is always interceding for us before the Father. So, if you are in Christ, then your prayers are powerful and effective! Use that incredible gift you've been given! Pray without ceasing!

Every Wednesday at 6:00pm we gather at the church annex to pray. Come and join in. This is the most powerful tool, gift, and privilege that the children of God have been given. Let's use it! Let's pray for each other, our families, and our church. Let's pray to be personally revived and for a fresh move of the Holy Spirit to blow in our lives. Let's pray for the lost sheep that are still missing from the fold. Let's pray for healing and forgiveness of broken relationships.

Remember, if you always do what you've always done you will always get what you've always got.

Let's not allow the devastation of prayerlessness to continue. Let us all decide today to seek the Lord first in every situation. His written Word is His revealed truth. Let us live surrendered to that truth and to the Lordship of Jesus, The King of Kings.

Blessings,
PASTOR JEFF

From the church secretary, Pam Hill:

It is time to FALL into my new hours.

The church office will be open:

Monday – Thursday 9am – 2pm.