hoover
CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 20, 2026

Drawing the Circle Too Tightly

It's easy to get caught up in an us-against-them mentality, even when the "them" aren't actually enemies. Apparently there was at least one believer doing good work in Jesus' name who wasn't part of the Lord's immediate band of followers.

So John and the others did what they thought was right: they tried to put a stop to it. Here's the whole story:

> *John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward" (Mark 9:38-41).*

I wish we had more information about who this man was, and how many others there may have been like him. He certainly appears to have been a genuine follower of Jesus. Later, Luke tells us about some men who tried to use Jesus' name to cast out evil spirits even though they were not his disciples, and their attempt ended disastrously (Acts 19:13-16). Simply invoking Jesus' name wasn't enough.

This man was different. He was doing the Lord's work, but he wasn't part of the traveling band that included the 12 apostles and probably quite a few others. The disciples thought they needed to shut him down.

We don't know exactly why. Maybe they believed that anyone working in Christ's name needed direct approval from them or from the Lord. Maybe they had begun to think that their group was the only group through whom God could work.

Whatever their motivation, Jesus corrected them. And there's an important lesson here for us. Though some use this passage to justify fellowship with groups who deny fundamental truths of Christianity, Jesus' response ought to open our eyes to the very real possibility that we sometimes draw our circles too tightly.

Some Christians seem to think they're defending God's will by opposing other believers who disagree with them on almost any subject, however peripheral.

We should avoid that kind of thinking. There's room for disagreement within the body of Christ. That doesn't mean every difference is unimportant, or that we should stop trying to understand and obey God's will.

But it *does* mean we should pray fervently and study diligently before we presume to turn away a fellow Christian. Shortly before he died, Jesus prayed that all who believe in him might be one, so that the world might believe in him (John 17:20-21). We haven't always done a good job of modeling that unity before an unbelieving world.

Perhaps we can commit ourselves to building more bridges among those who are sincerely committed to following Jesus. And perhaps we can spend less time quarreling with one another and more time sharing the gospel with the millions who still need to hear and obey it. —Chuck

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Schedule of Services

Sunday
9:00 a.m. Bible Class
10:00 a.m. Worship
5:00 p.m. Worship

Wednesday
7:00 p.m. Bible Class

ELDERS

Reggie Arnold	602-4211
Steve Cotney	531-7517
Jimmy Lyles	616-1109
Harold Rhodes	876-9296
Kyle Wadley	792-5922
Chuck Webster	586-5610
Rick Williams	706-5735
Donnie Winningham	222-7635

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YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTER
Marcus Williams
(615) 710-2319
Marcus@hoovercoc.org

Worship Assignments

Elder to Contact in September for Needs: Donnie Winningham

Sunday AM and PM

Greeters:
Connie Morrison (Handicap Entrance)
(Back Entrance)
Mark & Jennifer Lackey

Usher: Clint Richey

Nursery: Tiffany McKeown

AM Singing: Kyle Wadley

Scripture Reading: Avery Davis

AM Opening Prayer: Chad Blackmon

AM Sermon: Chuck Webster

AM Communion: Glenn Till

Announcements: Donnie Winningham

AM Closing Prayer: Brent Reaves

PM Song Leader: Mark Lackey

PM Opening Prayer: Grant Dalton

PM Speaker: Philippines Presentation led by Bill Rayburn and Campbell Vick

PM Closing Prayer: Andrew Blackmon

Audio/Cameras: Marc Handley

Video: Will Spurlin

Security: Steven Gaither (Front Entrance); George Faison (Handicap Entrance)

Contribution Baskets: Carter Williams, Brady Aultman, Campbell Vick, Kai Sugita, Zach Blakemore, Scott Warren, Caleb Winningham, and Sam Williams

Bible Reading Plan for September 20-26

- **Sunday, September 20:** John 11-12; Psalm 108
- **Monday, September 21:** John 13-15; Psalm 109
- **Tuesday, September 22:** John 16-18; Psalm 110
- **Wednesday September 23:** John 19-21; Psalm 111
- **Thursday, September 24:** Luke 1; Psalm 112
- **Friday, September 25:** Luke 2-3; Psalm 113
- **Saturday, September 26:** Luke 4-5; Psalm 114

Today

Visitors, welcome to our worship service this morning! We're glad you're here. Please **scan the QR Code** on the next page of the bulletin. We would love to know more about you and where you're from.

All Adults are welcome on Sunday mornings to enjoy studying in one of the following classes:
Chuck Webster is teaching the Auditorium class, and his topic is **"Bible Texts We'd Rather Skip,"** a study of difficult, troubling, and often misunderstood passages of Scripture.
Drew Spivey and Jason McKeown are teaching in the Library, and their topic is, **"Practicing the Way."**
Donnie Winningham is teaching the Young Professionals on the book of **Romans**.
On Wednesday nights at 7:00, our Hoover Series, "**Questions Asked OF God**," will meet in the Auditorium.

Please join us in the fellowship hall after our morning worship service for our **third Sunday fellowship meal**.

Everyone is invited to the **Hope Party, benefiting Healing Hands International**, at 1:30 p.m. in the youth classroom.

AHEPA 3 devotional is at 3:30 p.m. **Brent Reaves** will present the lesson.

For our 5:00 service this evening, **Bill Rayburn and Campbell Vick** will present an update on our work in the Philippines.

News and Events

We rejoice with **Leah Imbragulio**, who was baptized Wednesday night. Leah has been visiting for several months with Campbell Vick, and she made the decision to profess her allegiance to Jesus publicly by submitting to baptism. We look forward to walking alongside Leah as she continues to grow in the faith.

The Peru mission team will host a fellowship at the home of the McKeowns on Saturday, October 17. This is for anyone who has been part of the team and anyone interested in traveling to Peru to serve in the future.

(News and Events cont.)

Save Sunday, October 4, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. on your calendar for Fall Fest! The community is invited, and we always have a big crowd. Volunteers are needed—please sign up at this link: **2026 Fall Festivalsignupgenius.com**, and you can contact **Daniel or Lauren Warren** with any questions. Also, if you can, please donate individually wrapped candy and boxes of Little Debbie Snack Cakes. And wear your costume!

The men at Hoover are having a **Cornhole Tournament** on Saturday, October 3, at 6:00 p.m. Contact **Brent Reaves** with any questions.

Our Ladies Bible class meets weekly on Mondays from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Their topic is ***The Commandments of the Lord: From Sinai to Sunday.*** **Denia Petruzella and Leah Covington** are teaching this class.

Happy Birthday

Margaret White	September 20
Lainey Guill	September 22
Rayna Johnson	September 22
Tucker Spivey	September 24
Rick Williams	September 24
Abbie Schofield	September 26

Youth

- **TODAY:** Area-wide at the Heritage Place Church of Christ from 4:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday, September 23:** Kindergarten-5th Grade Dinner and Devotional at 6:00 p.m.
- **Friday-Sunday, September 25-27:** Youth Group, RUSH at Freed-Hardeman University.

Carelines

Brenda Rayburn will have back surgery on Wednesday to remove a cyst that has been causing significant pain. Please pray for a successful surgery and that her pain will be alleviated.

Jayvion, the two-year-old child of Moranda Garrett, who is a friend of Jayne Ivy, is having ear surgery at Children's Hospital this Wednesday, September 23. He has also been diagnosed with level 2 autism. **Moranda Garrett** continues to have severe back pain and headaches.

Kellie Covington, Corey Covington's sister, is undergoing chemotherapy and had her 4th treatment last week. Her lab results have been good so far.

Keith Hills, Melinda Richardson's brother-in-law, met with doctors from the Cancer Center of Houston on Friday, September 11, for specialized treatment. As you pray for Keith, please also remember his wife, Janice, and their daughter, Alexus.

Richard Lawson, Alyssa Long's dad, is continuing cancer treatments. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

Jill Evans, Lynn McKeown's daughter and Jason McKeown's sister, has been diagnosed with breast cancer and will begin radiation treatments soon.

Felicia Wright, Heather Spivey's grandmother, has been brought back under hospice care and is not doing well.

Kim Green, Karen Sugita's sister, is still in the hospital with pneumonia but is doing much better. She will be moved to rehab soon and then to long-term care.

Remember our shut-ins: Joyce Baker, Nancy Griner, and Sylvia Huffman.

Remember our church family: Greg Nobles, Mollye Melton, Bob and Joy Brooks, Gail Powell, Sondra Moss, Jean Prince, Sharon McCraw, Linda Graham, Betty Crawford, Celestine Hicks, Diann Tippins, and Tyler Tippins.

Remember our family and friends: Willard Worthington (Virgie Banks' brother), Scarlette Smith (JoAnn McDonald's daughter), Russ Stringer (Nancy Griner's son-in-law), Doug Williams (Landyn Williams' dad), Doug & Cathy Abbott (Joel Abbott's parents), and Betty Shackelford (Chè Abbott's mother).

Physical Fitness or Spiritual Exercise?

As the Apostle Paul instructs Timothy in the work of ministry, he writes, "For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). We all understand that physical exercise, when practiced properly and consistently, will help keep us healthy and active throughout our lives. However, Paul places priority on spiritual activity over bodily movement. In verse 7, he says, "Exercise or train yourself toward godliness" because "godliness" is good and profitable in every way for the believer. Just as our personal trainer at the gym or the physical therapist, the Lord has laid out a spiritual workout plan so we can reap the benefits of a godly lifestyle.

- Lead a quiet, peaceful, and reverent life in all godliness (1 Timothy 2:2).
- Profess godliness by doing good works (1 Timothy 2:10).
- Celebrate the mystery of godliness which is of Christ (1 Timothy 3:16).
- Follow the words of Jesus Christ which promotes godliness (1 Timothy 6:3).
- Avoid fake godliness (1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:5).
- Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Timothy 6:6).
- Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness (1 Timothy 6:11).

Godliness finds its place listed among the "Christian Graces" of Peter's second letter. When exercised faithfully, these attributes give us confidence that we are spiritually fit and healthy.

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8).

—Jay Launius,
Maud Church of Christ, Maud, TX

Attendance and Offering September 13, 2026

Attendance
Bible Study: 172
AM Worship: 279
PM Worship: 21 (Knit Together Groups Met in Homes)
Wednesday: 164

Contribution: $12,966.41
Weekly Budget: $15,380.77
Weekly Average: $15,806.17
Contribution to Date: $584,828.35

Hoover Supported Works

- *Childhaven, Cullman, AL*
- *Churches of Christ Disaster Relief*
- *Clothing Closet*
- *Food Pantry*
- *Tanzania*
- *Philippines*

Mission Trips

- *Tanzania*
- *Philippines*
- *Peru*

Oversight

- *Christ Happy Childhaven, Philippines*
- *Tanzania Missions*

Visitors and members, please scan the QR Code below to log your attendance.

When Compromise Is Easy
(Series: Faithfulness Under Pressure)
(Daniel 1:1-21)

Don't confuse apparent _____ with God's _____.

Recognize what the _____ is trying to do to you.

Decide where the _____ is before you reach it.

Leave the _____ with God.

GriefShare Class

So many people in the world have experienced significant losses in their lives, so we're thankful to be able to offer this **GriefShare Ministry**. It is organized around a thirteen-week small-group program where participants meet together for around two hours each week and watch professionally-designed videos featuring professional grief counselors and also people who are grieving. These presentations are coupled with discussions that are designed to internalize what participants learn in the videos. **The class is now in session and will continue on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.**

We have additional information for GriefShare Sessions offered on other days and times in the Birmingham area. Please see **Harold or Donna Rhodes** if you have any questions regarding GriefShare. You can also find additional information at **https://www.griefshare.org/**.

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Place
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