

# 4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;  
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."  
~ Matthew 16:18



June 7, 2015

## Contact Us:

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Brownwood, TX 76801  
325-646-7102  
www.4thstreetcoc.org  
office@4thstreetcoc.org

## Meeting Times:

### Sunday:

Bible Study .....9:45 AM  
Worship .....10:40 AM  
Care, Inc. Service .... 2:30 PM  
Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday:

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

## Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

## Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Don Smith

James Thomas

## Preacher:

Johnny McCaghren

## Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children  
Gospel Broadcast Network  
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)  
House to House, Heart to Heart  
Mission Printing  
Rohan Jones, Africa  
The Truth in Love  
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study  
the Bible to know more about  
Christ and His Church.

## “Will I Be Fully Accepted At Your Church As A Gay Man?”

The following letter was written by David E. Prince, “pastor of preaching and vision” at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, and professor of Christian preaching at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The letter was written in response to an email inquiry from a man with the following question: *“I believe church should be for all of God’s children. No exceptions. I am a gay man. My question is, would I be fully accepted with no judgment and fully welcome and able to serve at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church?”*

Dear D,

Welcome home to the beautiful Bluegrass. It is great to hear from you and to hear of your previous connection with Ashland. What a ministry this church has had for almost 100 years.

As to your question, it depends on what you mean by *“I am a gay man”* and what you mean by *“accepted completely with no judgment and fully welcome and able to serve at Ashland Avenue?”*

If by *“I am a gay man”* you mean that you struggle with same-sex attraction, recognizing any sexual activity outside of a covenant marriage between a man and a woman is sinful and that you desire Christian discipleship to walk in line with the Gospel as you struggle with this temptation, then we would rejoice at your honesty and openness and receive you gladly at Ashland. We have faithful and accountable members right now in that very situation and attempting to live celibate lives to the glory of Christ.

Of course, this is really no different than a man who struggles with heterosexual sexually immoral desires or any of the myriads of sinful desires we all struggle with as disciples of Christ. Sin is an equal opportunity offender and something that every Christian struggles with in unique ways.

If by *“I am a gay man”* you mean that you embrace a lifestyle of homosexual activity and you refuse recognize it as sin no matter what the Scripture says and you are looking for a church that will affirm homosexual activity and/or same-sex marriage that would be a different matter entirely. But there is no uniqueness to homosexual sin in regard to this approach. The same would be true if a man came to us and said *“I am a ‘name the sin’ man”* and by that he meant he planned to keep on sinning in that way and embracing it as a lifestyle no matter what the Scripture says. There is a world of difference between struggling with a sin and embracing a sin. God saves us where we are, but loves us too much to leave us where we are. He is at work conforming his people into the image of Christ.

As far as whether or not you would *“be accepted completely with no judgment and fully welcome and able to serve at Ashland Avenue”* that would depend on what you mean as well. We welcome all to attend our public worship services. Consider this your invitation to worship with us. We would love to have you in attendance. If you mean that you desire help in an accountable community of faith to struggle against sin then I would say that we are a community of believers whose hope is in the finished work of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our

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*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*

**John 4:24**



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sins—not our goodness. We are all struggling sinners attempting to follow our Lord and Savior and encouraging one another to do so.

On the other hand, if you mean that you want a church where any behavior you participate in will be affirmed and accepted in the membership of the church then the answer would be “no.” I do not think you would want to be a part of a congregation would tolerate any behavior or action among its members.

We are all broken in our sin and are in great need of acceptance by God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. We are all guilty sinners who have rebelled against a holy God and who desperately need to respond to Christ in repentant faith. It is the awareness of our sin that reveals our need for redemption in Christ. Self-acceptance must not replace repentance and the liberating love of Christ that delivers us from bondage to our sins. Faith, sin and repentance are Christ-directed. Self-justification is man-directed and fashions God as a sort of divine therapist who helps us to accept ourselves.

You are right that God’s gospel is about his “*love, acceptance, non-judging, and forgiveness for all*” but such is the fruit of believers who trust God and agree with God about their sin in repentant faith. The comfortable and convenient thing would be to do away with the notion of sin altogether but such an approach would abandon the biblical gospel and would not be a demonstration of Christian love.

The apostle Paul told the church at Corinth, “*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God*” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Paul paints a beautiful picture of love, acceptance, and forgiveness for those who come to Christ in faith and

repentance of sin. If we lose Paul’s grammar, we lose his gospel. If we shift his words to the present tense and say, “And such are some of you,” we are left with no one washed, no one sanctified, and no one justified.

I hope this response provides you respectful and direct answers to your honest questions. I struggle with my own sins so I could easily remove “*homosexuality*” from this letter and put my sins in those spaces and apply this letter to myself. The good news is that I do not have to be defined by my sins and neither do you. We can be forgiven of our sins and have our identity rooted in Christ and his grace.

I am thankful for the dialogue and your interest in my thoughts. I hope to see you soon at Ashland.

Blessings in Christ,

David E. Prince

I do not know Mr. Prince, and I am sure, based upon his affiliation with the Baptist denomination, that I would disagree with him on many doctrinal matters. I am not endorsing him or his “church,” however, I do believe he shows much wisdom and insight into how we look at sin.

It seems so many today are seeking a church that will accept them as they are, rather than a Savior who will make them into what they ought to be. Consider the recent popularity of “Cowboy Church.” Come as you are – you don’t even have to take your hat off! You can say a prayer, sing a song, hear a sermon, rope a calf, drink a beer, cuss a little and spit in the campfire – all without leaving “church.”

What a far cry from passages like, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, will you not despise*” (Ps. 51:17), “*I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite*” (Isa. 57:15), and “*But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word*” (Isa. 66:2). A “*contrite heart*” is “*one in which the natural pride and self-sufficiency have been completely humbled by the consciousness of guilt*” (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia). That is how a sinner comes before a holy God!

Most of us would be appalled if a murderer, a rapist, a child

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### Television

The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson)

Sunday @ 7:00am on KTAB

In Search of the Lord’s Way (Phil Sanders)

Sunday @ 7:30am on KTAB

Life In The Light (Chris McCurley)

Sunday @ 10:30am on KTAB

### Radio

Preaching the Word (Michael Light)

Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3

### Internet

TheGospelRadioNetwork.org

Gospel Broadcasting Network (Gbnv.org)

### God’s Plan for Redeeming Man

**Hear** Learn the saving message of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).

**Believe** Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)

**Confess** Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

**Repent** of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)

Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being **baptized** for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)

**Live faithfully** (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)

### Bible Reading Schedule

|                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>June 7</b>  | <b>Prov. 13-15</b>            |
| <b>June 8</b>  | <b>Prov. 16-18</b>            |
| <b>June 9</b>  | <b>Prov. 19-21</b>            |
| <b>June 10</b> | <b>Prov. 22-24</b>            |
| <b>June 11</b> | <b>1 Kgs. 5-6; 2 Chr. 2-3</b> |
| <b>June 12</b> | <b>1 Kgs. 7; 2 Chr. 4</b>     |
| <b>June 13</b> | <b>1 Kgs. 8; 2 Chr. 5</b>     |
| <b>June 14</b> | <b>2 Chr. 6-7; Psalm 136</b>  |

“*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”  
(2 Timothy 2:15)



*(Continued from page 2)*

molester, or yes, “a gay man,” was welcomed into the church with no intention on their part of repentance of those sins. (Some would struggle with their acceptance even after repentance and baptism – which is a whole different issue.) Yet oftentimes we readily accept the gossip, the one who causes division, the liar, the false teacher, and yes, the “heterosexual sexually immoral” with no intention of repentance. Does the Lord have such a double standard?

What about you and I? Am I looking for a church that stands strong against sins such as homosexuality, but will allow me to keep my favorite “pet” sins? Am I telling the Lord He has to accept me the way I am? “After all, Lord, my sins are not as bad as the other guys!” **Or**, am I willing to lay **all** of my sins on the alter and come to the Lord with a “contrite heart”?

*“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter; I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.”*

Food for thought.

*Johnny*

## Celebrate

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15)*

**June Birthdays:** Mike Bannister (4), Caleb Dennis (6), **Loutrell Dobbins (8), Shannon Dennis (13)**, Tiffany McCaghren (22), Donnie Evetts (24), David Greer (26), Stormy Barnum (27), Ashley Kahlich (29).

**June Anniversaries:** James & Laverne Thomas (5), **Johnny & Cindy McCaghren (8)**, Wayne & Mileen Kahlich (19), David & Lisa Greer (28).



## Records

|              | May 24,<br>2015 | May 31,<br>2015 |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Bible Class  | 39              | 39              |
| AM Worship   | 54              | 58              |
| PM Worship   | 45              | 49              |
| Wednesday PM | 34              | 40              |
| Contribution | \$1,903         | \$2,387         |

|                               |   | Next Week: 6/7/15           | Next Week: 6/14/15                                     |                             |                      |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Sunday AM:</b>             |   | Song Leader: Mike Bannister |  | Song Leader: Mike Bannister |                      |
| <b>Greeters</b>               | John Barnum Family  |                             | Tom & Carol Wilcox                                     |                             |                      |
| <b>Opening Prayer</b>         | John Barnum   |                             | Gene Bannister   |                             |                      |
| <b>Communion</b>              | James Fuller*, Don Smith<br>Allen Griffith, Randy Huckaby |                             | Randy Huckaby*, Allen Bland<br>John Barnum, Tom Wilcox |                             |                      |
| <b>Closing Prayer</b>         | Billy Chism   |                             | Allen Griffith   |                             |                      |
| <b>Attendance Cards</b>       | Chase Churchwell  |                             | Jaceton Evetts   |                             |                      |
| <b>Sunday PM:</b>             |   | Song Leader: Ken Maninger   |  | Song Leader: James Fuller   |                      |
| <b>Opening Prayer</b>         | Gene Bannister  |                             | Mike Bannister   |                             |                      |
| <b>Scripture Reading</b>      | Tom Wilcox  |                             | Don Smith  |                             |                      |
| <b>Communion</b>              | James Fuller  |                             | Randy Huckaby  |                             |                      |
| <b>Closing Prayer</b>         | Joe Dennis  |                             | Hank Wheeler   |                             |                      |
| <b>Wednesday Devotionals:</b> | June 10<br>Allen Griffith                                 |                             | June 17<br>Tom Wilcox                                  |                             | June 24<br>Don Smith |
| July 1<br>Prayer              |   |                             |  |                             |                      |

**June 2015**  
**Make Announcements:**  
 James Fuller  
**Prepare Communion:**  
 Gene & Barbara Bannister  
**Clean Building:**  
 John Barnum Family  
**Keep Grounds:**  
 Tom Wilcox

**July 2015**  
**Make Announcements:**  
 TBA  
**Prepare Communion:**  
 TBA  
**Clean Building:**  
 TBA  
**Keep Grounds:**  
 TBA

## Search the Scriptures

*Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)*

| <b>Studies for the week of June 7, 2015</b>  | Sunday Class ..... Acts 8:1ff   | Wednesday Class ..... Singing or Video |
|--|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>He Restores My Soul – Psalm 23:3</b></u></p> <p><i>"He restores my soul" (2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Isa. 59:1,2; Acts 22:16).</i><br/>                     When we are tired and weary, God offers us help through His word, fellow Christians and answered prayers.<br/>                     We are led by the still waters of comfort and refreshment (Mt. 11:28-30).<br/>                     Jesus cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7; Ps. 142:4; Heb. 13:5).</p> <p><b>I. God Is Our Ever Present Help.</b><br/>                     A. When we are tired and weary, God is our help (Ps. 33:20; 46:1).<br/>                     B. We need to acknowledge the source of our help (Ps. 121:1,2; Acts 26:22).</p> <p><b>II. When We Are Tired and Weary, God Offers to Help Us.</b><br/>                     A. Through His Word (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 1 Thess. 4:18).<br/>                     B. Through fellow Christians.<br/>                     1. When one is caught in sin (Gal. 6:1).<br/>                     2. In sickness (Mt. 25:36,43; Phil. 2:26,27).<br/>                     3. In sorrow (Gal. 6:2).<br/>                     4. In joy (Rom. 12:15).<br/>                     5. In poverty (Acts 2:44,45; Mt. 22:39).<br/>                     C. Through answered prayer (Jn. 15:7; 1 Jn. 5:14; Jas. 4:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:17).</p> <p><b>III. We Have an Individual Renewal by Daily Bible Study.</b><br/>                     A. How should we approach Bible Study?<br/>                     1. With reverence and godly fear (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).<br/>                     2. Meditatively and deliberately (Ps. 1:2).<br/>                     3. As one who needs guidance (Jer. 10:23; Rev. 3:17).<br/>                     4. As a truth-lover (2 Thess. 2:10-12).<br/>                     5. As a truth-seeker (Acts 20:27; Mt. 7:7; John 7:17).<br/>                     6. With the desire to obey (Jas. 1:22).<br/>                     B. Blessings from studying the Bible that brings individual renewal.<br/>                     1. We learn several things from 2 Tim. 3:16,17.<br/>                     2. Our faith is strengthened (Rom. 10:17; Jn. 20:31; Eph. 6:16).<br/>                     3. Godly knowledge protects us from falling (2 Pet. 1:5-10; Mt. 4; Hos. 4:6).<br/>                     4. The Bible illuminates man's pathway (Ps. 119:105; Jn. 3:19; 1:4).<br/>                     5. God's word is soul food (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:14).<br/>                     6. One may be pricked in the heart (Heb. 4:12; Acts 2:37ff).<br/>                     7. Stabilize us doctrinally (Jas. 1:8; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Pet. 2:3; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:15).<br/>                     8. Equips to teach, answer &amp; defend the gospel (Mk. 16:15; 1 Pet. 3:15; Pnl. 1:16L).<br/>                     9. Allows us to see ourselves as God sees us (Jas. 1:23,24).<br/>                     10. God word lifts us up renews us day by day (Acts 20:32).</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>The Message Beside the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:16-47)</b></u></p> <p><b>I. The tirade against Jesus (16-18).</b><br/>                     A. <b>Condemnation #1 – He heals on the Sabbath (16)</b><br/>                     B. <b>Condemnation #2 – He makes Himself equal with God (17,18)</b><br/> <sup>17</sup>My Father is working...I am working<br/> <sup>18</sup>Making himself equal with God – the point of 1-18 is <b>Jesus is God.</b></p> <p><b>II. The relationship of the Father and the Son (19-20, 23).</b><br/>                     A. <b>The Father loves the Son (19,20).</b><br/> <sup>19</sup>The Son can do nothing of his own...only what he sees the Father doing.<br/> <sup>20</sup>The Father loves the Son - <i>philei</i><br/>                     B. <b>The Father honors the Son (23).</b><br/> <sup>23</sup>Honor the Son...as they honor the Father.</p> <p><b>III. The tasks assigned to Jesus (21-22, 24-29).</b><br/>                     A. <b>He gives eternal life (21, 24, 26).</b><br/> <sup>21</sup>Gives life to whom he will. To those who believe – 3:36.<br/> <sup>24</sup>Whoever hears my word...has eternal life<br/>                     Does not come into judgment – <i>krisis</i> – condemnation<br/>                     Has passed from death to life<br/> <sup>26</sup>Life in himself<br/>                     B. <b>He will raise the dead (25, 28-29)</b><br/> <sup>25</sup>Hour is coming, and is now here, when...those who hear will live<br/>                     C. <b>He judges all men (22, 27).</b><br/> <sup>22</sup>Has given all judgment to the Son<br/> <sup>27</sup>He has given him authority to execute judgment</p> <p><b>IV. The witnesses concerning Jesus (30-47)</b><br/>                     A. <b>From John the Baptist (31-35).</b><br/> <sup>31</sup>If I alone bear witness about myself – (Deut. 17:6)<br/> <sup>33</sup>John...he has borne witness to the truth.<br/>                     B. <b>From His own works (36) – His teachings and miracles.</b><br/> <sup>36</sup>The very works that I am doing, bear witness about me<br/>                     C. <b>From the Father (30, 37-38).</b><br/> <sup>37</sup>The Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me<br/>                     D. <b>From the Scriptures (39-47).</b><br/> <sup>39</sup>The Scriptures...it is they that bear witness about me<br/> <sup>43</sup>I have come in my Father's name – by His authority, power<br/> <sup>44</sup>You...do not seek the glory that comes from...God – Jesus<br/> <sup>45</sup>There is one who accuses you: Moses</p> |  |