

“The Struggle with Ambition”

The first time we read about Paul’s life is in Acts 7. Just a couple of years earlier, Jesus was killed and resurrected. The new movement of Jesus followers had exploded in Jerusalem. There were now thousands of people who believed that Jesus was in fact the long-awaited Messiah. They called themselves “the Way.” Some of the followers were actually rabbis from the party of the Pharisees. In Acts 6, one of the leaders of the Way, a man by the name of Stephen, was arrested and placed on trial. At his trial in Jerusalem, the Jewish leaders convicted him of blasphemy and condemned him to death. In Acts 7, Paul is mentioned by his Hebrew name, Saul (Acts 7:58-60; 8:1).

Paul, at a young age, was given the approval for the killing of Stephen. A death by stoning required that the witness who testified against the convicted individual drop the first stones upon him. The fact that they laid their coats at Paul’s feet likely indicates that Paul was given authority to act on behalf of the Jewish leaders to oversee the execution. The Mishnah, the first written version of what was called the Oral Torah, tells us what this process looked like. First, the victim would be thrown down on his back and held there. Standing over him, about ten feet above on a platform, the first witness took a large stone and dropped it on the victim’s chest. If the victim did not die after the first stone, a second one was dropped by the second witness. If after the first two witnesses the victim did not die, those around would take rocks and strike him until he died.

After Stephen’s death, we find Paul going from house to house to arrest the followers of the Way (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2). What motivated Paul? It might have been what caused Paul to write: “I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers” (Galatians 1:14). It seems Paul wanted to impress the Jewish ruling council in Jerusalem and make a name for himself. It was Paul’s personal ambition in combination with his strong religious convictions that led him to persecute this new movement.

Like Paul, many of us struggle with ambition, ego. We want to make a name for ourselves. We want to be remembered. We want to make a difference. That is not all bad. Ambition can be used by God. But our ambition needs to be ordered. We don’t do things to make us look better; we want God to look better.

Ambition can cause people to do horrific and unethical things to get ahead. Paul was convicted that the followers of the Way, no matter how loving they may have been, had to be stopped. God was not the one driving Paul to do the things he did. It was blind ambition and devout religious conviction – a lethal combination.

When we fail to surrender our ambition to God’s purposes and live for our glory instead of God’s, we will fall. But if we succeed in surrendering our ambition to God’s glory, we can help others find God. After his conversion, this is what Paul did in his remaining days.

So is it bad to have religious convictions? No, but what we need to do is hold them with humility and not forget God’s greatest commands: love God and love others. There is sin in our world that makes us angry. The problem is that we can often see the sin in others before we can see the sin in ourselves. Instead of condemning others, our charge is to love and to let God take care of the rest.

Mark

Arlington Church of Christ



Our Mission: Connecting People to Jesus and one Another

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865-523-1764

e-mail: office@acoc.comcastbiz.net
Website: www.arlingtonchurchofchrist.org

 Find us on: **facebook.** Arlington Friends
Arlington Church of Christ Youth Group

Welcome

We pray you will be encouraged and uplifted
as we join together in worship.

Guest Information

- There is a **staffed nursery** available for children under age 2. There is also a **parent/child training room** at the rear of the auditorium.
- An optional **children’s worship** is available for ages 3 to 8 during morning worship. Children will be dismissed before the sermon. Please pick up your child after worship
- If you are visiting, **please complete a visitor card** so we have a record of your attendance.

Weekly Meeting Times

Sundays:
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Bible Study 9:30 a.m.

Wednesdays:
Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

Weekly Statistics

	weekly budget	\$4,062
	<u>attendance</u>	<u>contribution</u>
Aug 5	185	\$6,330

Arlington Family Pages

Seeking to edify, educate and
inform the Family of God
Sunday, August 12, 2018

Elders: Mark Brackney Ph: 622-0376
Leland Price Ph: 925-4424
Danny Rider Ph: 705-9713
Wayne Shannon Ph: 742-0517
Gregg Summers Ph: 223-4515
David Tiller Ph: 607-1945

Deacons: Bud Norris - *Worship Participants*
Charles Owens - *Bldg & Grounds/Security/Treasurer*
Keith Tatum - *Education/Picture Board/Family Camp*
Ronnie Weldon - *Attendance/Communion Prep/Bldg*

Minister: Mark Brackney Ph: 523-1764

Secretaries: Becky Johnson Jennifer Tatum

Missionaries: Tom & Angie Langley - WEI
Tommy Drinnen - Hope Central

Our Sympathy is extended to... Bobbie Cole as she mourns the death of her sister, Libby Presley

In Our Thoughts and Prayers: Rick Johnson recovering from surgery; Rick Case; Marge Percell; Ben Cavin; Danny Davis; Danny Rider; Frances Maples; John Burka; Roger Mink; Terry Trent; Casey Owens; Tom & Anita Drinnen; Susan Collins.

Friends and Loved ones: David Giles' dad, John, is in Parkwest Hospital; Sara Sykes' brother, Ted Fields; Mark's dad, Jerry Brackney; Laura Owens' dad; Gordon Norman; Michael Maddox; Shane Mink; Linda Graybeal; Missy Essary; Deb & Rob Colones; Greg & Lisa Dyer; Faith Tindell; Heather Ream's mom, Linda; Janie Johnson's mom; David Hunter; Amy Smith; Brad Owens; Ben Ream's friend, Alice Bowen; Joyce Sanders' dad struggling with dementia; Cheryl Cassidy having back issues.

Shut-ins: Rosaline Davis; Lynda Elliott; Edna Hullender, at Tennova NHC; Peggy Mehlhorn; Kathryn Norman; Jessie Rutherford; Dan Trent.

Missionaries: Tom & Angie Langley; Tommy Drinnen.

Coming Soon

- Please take a moment to **pick up a card or two** to mail this week from the Card Ministry table.
- **Small groups**, tonight at 6 p.m.
- **Men's group at Shoney's**, this Thurs., August 16, 8:30 a.m.
- **Connection Sunday**, August 19, 5 p.m.
- **Fourth Sunday Fellowship**, August 26. Please bring food to share. Our visitors are invited to join us for lunch.



New
to Our
Family

We rejoice as Bobby and Dana Mullins were baptized into Christ this past Tuesday afternoon. Please welcome them and their two boys, Max and Kaison into our Arlington family.

Update your directory with their information:

3524 Oak Branch Circle
Knoxville, TN 37917

Bobby	<u>Birthday</u>
Dana	June 26
Max	May 27
Kaison	June 1
	September 19

Family News

Sermon Topics Today Sunday Morning:

*Following Christ -Part One
Paul's Background, Conversion,
and Early Ministry*

Sunday Night:
Small Groups 6 p.m.

SERVING THE ASSEMBLY TODAY:

Serve @ Table:

Danny Davis, Bob DeWitt
Bob Campbell, Caleb Brackney
Zach Shannon, Paul Cooke

Opening Prayer: George Sanders
Preside at Table: Gregg Summers
Greeters: R Weldon & C Wallace
Nursery: Cathy & Meredith Norris
Security: T Mallicoat & C Coomer

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

BIRTHDAYS
THIS WEEK

Aug	13	Angie Simon
Aug	13	Doris Reeves
Aug	16	Charlotte Giles
Aug	16	David Price
Aug	17	Larry Yarborough
Aug	17	Conley Summers
Aug	17	Hayden Riggs
Aug	18	Joe Turnbull



Family Matters

New Apartment Number:

Marge Percell
4301 Whittle Springs Rd,
Apt 308
Knoxville, TN 37917



New Addresses:

Zach and Ariana Shannon
4321 Walking Drive
Knoxville, TN 37912
Email: designbyariana@gmail.com

Larry and Diana Yarborough
300 Montview Road
Lenior City, TN 37771

Alan & Rebekah Groves
3000 Legacy Pointe Way, #526
Knoxville, TN 37921



Praise
Him,
All Ye
Little
Children

Optional children's worship...

is available for ages
3 to 8 during
morning worship.
Children will be
dismissed before
the sermon.

Please pick up your child
after worship.