

**HASTINGS CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**"A PLACE TO CALL HOME"**  
**1131 N LAIRD AVE, HASTINGS NE 68901-3566**      **PHONE: 402-462-8469**  
**WEB SITE: WWW.HASTINGSCHURCH.ORG**

<b>Our Record</b>	
Sunday Bible Study	
Morning Assembly	64
Contribution	\$ 2,013
Evening Assembly	—
Wednesday Class	—

***In Search of the Lord's Way*** is shown on Charter Cable Channel 181 at 10:00 AM, Wednesday, and at 6:00 PM Sunday, and on Direct TV Channel 307 at 6:00 AM Sundays.

**Elders:** Russ Dudrey (402) 834-0096; Everett Hinton (402) 462-4745, Robert Grissom (402) 462-0352; Gaylin Prior (402) 462-8249

**Ministry Leaders:** Everett Hinton—Worship Ministry  
Brad Bailey—Missions  
Brett Sales —Youth  
Bryan Jurrens—Buildings/Grounds  
Gaylin Prior—Music/Treasurer  
Dick Witt—Education/Benevolence

**Minister:** Russ Dudrey e-mail: russdudrey@gmail.com  
phone: 402-834-0096 (home)

**Bulletin:** Sharon Hachtel—463-4997  
e-mail: sh95736@windstream.net

Deadline for bulletin announcements is 9:00 PM Friday evening

**THOSE TO SERVE**  
This Sunday, December 18      Next Sunday, December 25

	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Announcements	D Witt	D Witt	G Prior	G Prior
Song Leader	B Sales	D Brennfrdr	R Grissom	M Glassmyer
Opening Prayer	J Morgan	R Munsell	J Fielder	B Bailey
Closing Prayer	S Dinkler	M Glassmyer	G Smith	R Munsell
Usher	D Hachtel		D Wright	
Greeters	Fielders		Brennfoerders	
Preside Lord's Supper	G Smith		D Brennfoerder	
Serve	L Duester		R Riley	
Serve	G Prior		D Hachtel	
Serve	L Peshek		Z Corman	
Coordinator	J Fielder		E Hinton	
Prepare Lord's Supper	F Dudrey		A Riley	
Children's Church	Erica Adams		No Class Today	
Wee Worship	Maggie Sales		No Class Today	
Wed Children's Class	Volunteer Needed		Volunteer Needed	
Change Message Sign	Jim Fielder Family		Jim Fielder Family	
Lawn Care	—		—	

# Family Focus

**Number 51**

**December 18, 2016**

## Upcoming Events

- Christmas Caroling—December 21
- Nebraska Youth Camp Contribution—December 25
- 2017 Teacher's Banquet—February 4

- **Russ's Sermon** today is "On Changing Our World." Tonight he plans to lead a devotional on the New Testament's advice to Christian slaves.
- **Special Plan for Christmas Day:** Because Christmas falls on Sunday this year, we have decided not to have classes, but only to have our regular hour of worship at 10:30 AM.
- **Christmas Meal:** A BIG Family Christmas dinner will be served in the Church of Christ Fellowship Hall following Sunday services on Sunday December 25th. Main dishes provided: Seasoned Pork Tenderloin Roast and Golden Roasted Turkey. Side Dishes provided: Creamy Mashed Potatoes, Tasty Stove Top Dressing, Hot Dinner Rolls with Creamy Butter. Please plan to come and enjoy a BIG Family Christmas Feast! Bring your Mother and Father; Bring the Kids (lots of room to play in the gym); invite someone who has no better offer, or who might be alone or who doesn't want to cook a big dinner. Bring a "White Elephant Gift" aka: re-gifting, re-cycling, up-cycling, re-purposing, down-sizing, re-using or just sharing the love. One per person who would like to participate (everyone!). Wrapped and Labeled: Child, young adult, mature adult. Add something to the menu or dessert table. Your choice--Vegetables, side dishes, relishes or munchies, sweet things. Please RSVP to Paula Witt (402-460-0005) the number of people who might be attending, so we are sure to have enough food for the "empty chair" and for leftovers to take home.
- **Christmas Caroling** this Wednesday evening. Be at the Church by 6:00 PM to fill baskets and leave by 6:30 PM to go caroling. There will be no Wednesday evening class in the fellowship hall.
- **One Word, One Church** — Below are the dates and chapters to read this week:

December 19 - Revelation 14	December 22 - Revelation 17
December 20 - Revelation 15	December 23 - Revelation 18
December 21 - Revelation 16	
- **Renovations:** Much progress was made last week. The electrical rough-in of the restrooms has been completed, and the walls and ceilings have been insulated and are ready for sheetrock. The floors have been tiled. The North hallway and classroom #1 have been carpeted.
- **Work Party:** Volunteers are needed for a sheet-rocking party, still TBA for some evening this week.
- **2017 Teacher's Banquet** is scheduled for Saturday, February 4th, 2017.

## Enrichment Opportunities

Sunday Bible Study	9:30
College Class	9:30
Sunday Assembly	10:30
Sunday Evening	6:00
Wednesday Class	7:00
Ladies Class Thursday	9:30

**REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Our Country, Veterans, Students in school; Elders; Lorinda Bailey's sister, Rachel, health issues; Ken Brown—Looking for a Church home and personal issues; Danelle & Janelle's Cousin's Daughter—health; Evelyn Brown—mother, Marie Riley—broken hip; Lance & Ashlee Duester—new baby; Ashley's Duester's father—blood clot; Lance Duester's father; Walter Davis—health; Daniel Enfield—health; Jim & Monica Fielder & Family—passing of Monica's mother Sharon and Jim's Grandmother, Lois; Jackson Glassmyer—baptism decision; Katrina Glassmyer—sister, memory loss; family decision; Robert & Susan Grissom's Son, Joel Grissom—health & family issues; Susan Grissom's forthcoming procedure; Kucera Family—Passing of Clem & Ken Kucera; Ellie Lockling—pancreatic cancer; Ken Lockling—health; Judy Melvin—health; Louise Nealeigh—health; Jim & Monica Fielder's Friend—Lanny Petit—brain tumor; Allyson Peshek's Father—heart attack; Doris Reichert—health; Angie Riley's brother, Julian—stroke & Angie's Mother; Ann Prior—cancer return; Gaylin Prior's brother's wife, Marcia—hip infection; Sudanese Brethren—persecution; Maggie Sales's brother, Gavin Wallace—health; Bill Wells—health; Gary & Norma Werner—Norma's health; Matt & Hope Witt—teaching in China; Family of Bill Witt—Bill's passing; Jo Wright's son, Joe, congestive heart failure & surgery; Dick & Detta Wright's Grandson, Shawn—foot injury; those travelling.

**PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES:** Russel Bell: mission work in India & Romania.  
Jeff Zanarison: Bible project in Madagascar

<b>Happy December Birthday:</b>	Eloise Lockling	-	2	Elizabeth Montemayor	-	4
	Brooke Bailey	-	5	Benjamin Bohne	-	8
	Brittany Bailey	-	17	Jamie Russo	-	20
	Marina Fielder	-	31	Lorinda Bailey	-	28
<b>Happy December Anniversary:</b>	William & Alice Wells	-	1	Dick & Paula Witt	-	16
	Andy & Erica Adams-	22	Rob & Katrina Glassmyer	-	28	Ken & Eloise Lockling
						- 29

### A Lovely Light

A candle's but a simple thing...  
It starts with just a bit of string,  
Yet dipped with patient hand,  
It gathers wax upon the strand  
Until, complete and snowy white,  
It gives at last a lovely light.

Life seems so like that bit of string...  
Each deed we do a simple thing,  
Yet day by day if on life's strand  
We work with patient heart and hand,  
It gathers joy, makes dark days bright,  
And gives at last a lovely light.

- Selected; via the weekly bulletin of the Harrisburg church of Christ in Harrisburg, IL. You may visit their website at <http://www.harrisburgchurchofchrist.org>

### THE SLAVE GIRL AT PHILIPPI

The slave girl possessed by the spirit of divination at Philippi in Acts 16 is one of the little-noticed tragedies in the New Testament. In this situation even the Apostle Paul can only do so much, and it doesn't seem enough. How do you overthrow slavery in the ancient Roman world?

Paul and Silas come to Philippi, the first city in Europe where they bring the Gospel. As they go to the Jewish place of prayer out by the river, a demon-possessed slave girl meets them. The demon drives her; she cannot control what she says. She follows Paul and Silas for days, shouting out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation!" Right words; wrong source: Paul doesn't want advertising from a demon.

Yet for days Paul endures this demonic harassment before he finally simply loses his temper, turns and exorcises the spirit: "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." There's no elaborate incantation here: simply at the name of Jesus Christ the demon must leave her, immediately.

It does, and the situation explodes. The girl's owners have profited greatly from her fortune-telling, and Paul has destroyed their business. They can no longer exploit her in this way. So they drag Paul and Silas before the city magistrates in the agora, charging them with disturbing the peace of the city by advocating customs illegal for Romans to practice. A near-riot ensues, with the crowd joining in attacking them. The magistrates have them beaten with rods and imprisoned. (Cicero describes Roman judicial beatings with rods: heavy blows with wooden bats; the victim often loses consciousness and sometimes dies.) They have Paul and Silas thrown into the inner prison, with their legs fastened painfully to the stocks. They'll teach these foreigners a heavy lesson.

The episode has puzzled me for years. Why did Paul wait so long—"for many days," says Luke—before exorcising the demon? Why did he only do so in a fit of impatience? Was that a mistake? And what happened to the poor slave girl?

I think I understand now: It's because Paul knew he could only do so much. It's because it was a fallen world, with not just injustice, but true evil, structured into ancient law and society. Slavery and the exploitation of human souls were systemic: Roman law treated slaves as "movable property." Paul wanted to change the world; he wanted to overthrow ancient slavery, exploitation of the weak, trafficking in humans, prostitution and immorality and injustice in all its forms, but how was he to do this?

Likely Paul waited because he didn't know what he could do for the poor slave girl, and casting out the spirit would bring other sufferings upon her. Freeing her from the demon would not free her from her owners. Luke doesn't say what happened to her—I fear she remained the movable property of owners who continued to exploit her in other ways. Now that she was less profitable to them, they may well have abused her without compunctions. Human traffickers do that.

And likely Paul waited also because he knew that in a fallen society confronting Roman slavery head-on could only explode, as the situation in Philippi did, and perhaps cost him the opportunity of getting the Gospel a hearing. Paul could do only so much: He could not overthrow slavery on the societal level, and on the individual level he could not even buy the girl out of slavery. He had one way to change his world: Give it the Gospel. Give it Jesus Christ.

I can't say whether it was an apostolic mistake for Paul, when he'd had enough, to cast out the demon in a moment of impatience. God knows; I don't. I do know that God used Paul's imprisonment to bring about the conversion of the Philippian jailer and to get the Gospel a further hearing in Philippi. And I know and believe that God's Gospel has changed hearts and lives and whole societies more than any other change agent in human history.

I know only one way to change the world: Give it the Gospel; give it Jesus Christ.

— ©Russ Dudrey, 12/18/16