



TRUE LIGHT

I FOLLOW JESUS BUT NOT ORGANIZED RELIGION
(The Cry of the Religiously Self-Absorbed)

September 6, 2026

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Sunday School :
9:30 a.m.
Worship:
10:15 a.m.
5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00PM

MINISTER

Stan Dauck
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ELDERS

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*"This is the day the Lord
has made. Let us rejoice
and be glad in it."*

Psalms 118:24

***We Welcome You
To All Of Our
Services***

When I was younger, the sentiment was more often worded as something like, "I need Jesus but not the church." A previous generation heard "the Man but not the plan."

In our era, the wording of the sentiment is typically longer, but the reasoning is the same. Now, in some form or fashion, people feel like they need to make sure they say they love or follow Jesus, but they don't want anything to do with "organized" religion.

Tragically, what they don't see is that this is the cry of those who want to be religious while, simultaneously, remaining self-absorbed. That may sound harsh, but the words and actions of those who use this type of language give away the game.

You Can't Separate Them

Jesus stated, *I will build My church* (Matthew 16:18). Paul stated

clearly that the church was bought by the precious blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28). Some will push back and say that these verses are talking about the church in some generic fashion, but not "organized religion." To say such, though, is to avoid a simple step of logic. If Jesus built and bought the church and, thus, it belongs to Him, then what He states about the church is what goes. So, when you read the New Testament, what do you find? An organized church.

You find congregations (all you have to do is read the letters to be reminded of that). You find elders overseeing those congregations. You find deacons faithfully serving those congregations. (Take a few moments to read Philippians 1:1 and also Titus 1:5). And you find those congregations seeking to do their best to follow the organized teachings laid down by Jesus's chosen penmen. It is impossible to separate Jesus from organized religion, because He put organization in place for the church of which He is the Head.

It Avoids the "One Anothers"

This year at Central, Noah and I are preaching a few of the "one another" passages of the New Testament. We've chosen 12 and we're preaching one each month, but there are more than the dozen we are speaking on.

The concept of the church being united and the wording of the phrase "one another" necessarily implies an organized religion. After all, if I don't know who is part of "one another," how can I obey the commands connected with that terminology. Certainly, some of them are to be done for all people. We are to love one another, but are also to love even our enemies. We are to be encouragers of all people. And so on.

But just to take one example, to stir up one another to love and good works is couched in a section of Scripture that demands that Christians gather in assembly to worship God (Hebrews 10:24-25). That is a "one another" that requires organization, so that I know the ones with whom I am to assemble. (Which, to go further, then requires following the Jesus-given organized way of following what to do once we have assembled. cf. John 4:24)

It's about "My" faith

Just read or listen to those who talk about not wanting organized religion. While they so often scatter in a few Bible verses and a lot of spiritual-sounding phraseology, just keep letting them talk. Eventually, the underlying truth will be exposed. They will begin to talk about "me and God" (which, remarkably, is nearly always how it is worded ... with "me" first). They will regularly speak of "my" faith or "my" journey.

Submission to elders? Not a chance; at least, not if the elders try to lovingly point out something from Scripture that needs to change in their life. Defending controversial subjects? No way. That's too harsh and unloving and, here it comes, we shouldn't judge. But learning "my" truth? Or doing things in a way that makes "me" comfortable? Oh, of course. "Me and God got this." It is religious self-absorption. I am going to do what I am going to do and then claim that "the church" was holding me back.

Conclusion

I know the context is talking about money, but the principle Jesus laid down in Matthew 6:24 is universally true: *No one can serve two masters.* The mindset behind "I follow Jesus but not organized religion" is simply a spiritual-sounding way to try to void Jesus's words. I'll follow Jesus...until His teachings start dealing with organized religion. Then I'll do what I want.

In other words, I get to play my own god. That's why this sentiment is for those who are religiously self-absorbed.

Follow Jesus. And be grateful He has given you an organized family in which to follow Him. That requires submission and humility, but God has always required such.

Adam Faughn, via A Legacy of Faith blog post

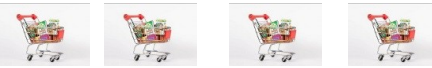
BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

September 7 - Laken Waters
September 9 - Alex Garner
September 10 - Steve Jones



CHILDREN'S HOMES NEEDS

Bottled Orange Juice * Saltine Crackers
* Kool-Aid Mixes * Toilet Paper *
Bathroom Cleaners * Laundry Detergent
Pick up date: November 30



Attendance August 30: 108

Contribution August 30: \$5351

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Cindy Williams continuing with chemo pills and has had shrinkage on some of the spots * **Linda LeCroy** is home following surgery last week * **Sue Jester** home after a brief stay in the hospital for dehydration * **Tim Flowers** as he continues treatments for MDS, a blood cancer. * **David Burleson** as he continues with treatments * **Bill Pruitt** has had some issues with falling * **Janet and Woody Woods** still dealing with health issues. Woody will have hip replacement surgery Friday * **Waynetta Rogers** will be having hip replacement surgery in St Louis Wednesday

Continue praying for these members of our church family: Cody Boyt * Jerry Burleson * David Burleson * David Carson * Pat Cooper * Faye Dockins * Mike and Judy Duley * Karen Forkum * Patsy (Hardy) Gregg * Helen McGowan * Jeff McGowan * Donna McQuin * June Mothersbaugh * Bill and Beverly Pruitt * David and Jane Terrill * Woody and Janet Wood

Those dealing with cancer/other illness (non congregational) :

Melinda Akers * Chastity Beaird * Terry Bean family * Cathy Bennett * Rodney Britt * Scott Burleson * Roxanne Carson * Sherry Chambers * Randy Cravens * Joseph Dauck * Barbara Denson * Bill Fitzpatrick * Audrey Gallo-way * Emily Garner * Patricia Greninger * Stan Goodman * Renee Goodman * Christy Heskett * Nolan Hollowell * LeAnn Jacques * Tommy Jacques * Pam Jeralds * Kristin Meadows * Jerry Mickey * Connie Lemmons * Ponna Mahan * Cindy Miller * Betty Nicholson * Nikki Reif * Joe Richardson * Anthony Tate * Bobby Thornton * Mindy Tomah * Joyce Walker * Christina Whitaker * Alan Woodward

Our Shut Ins: Pat Cooper * Faye Dockins * David Terrill *

LOOKING AHEAD:

- TODAY: First Sunday potluck and early evening service. We will have a potluck after morning worship, followed by an early afternoon service. Everyone is encouraged and invited to stay for both the potluck and afternoon service.
- September 8: Ladies Lunch Out at 11:30 at Malden Country Club. There is a sign up sheet on the table in the foyer if you'd like to attend.
- September 9: Our fellowship meal will be fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and rolls. Desserts will be needed.
- September 20-23: Gospel Meeting at Green Forest in Poplar Bluff with guest speaker Spencer Furby. The theme is "Following Jesus" and times are at 6 p.m. nightly.
- September 26: Children's Homes Homecoming and Fish Fry. There are some Change for Children cans on the table in the foyer.
- September 27: Austin Ketchum will be our guest speaker for both services.
- Be praying for our upcoming Gospel Meeting with Charles Abernathy October 4-7. The theme will be "Still Surprised: Old Truths I See with New Eyes." Flyers are available on the table in the foyer.

BIBLE TRIVIA:

Rahab the harlot hid the two Jewish spies under what? * What are the names of the two women who argued over who would get to sleep with their mutual husband? * Miriam played what kind of musical instrument? * What does the Bible say manna tasted like?

A: Flax (Joshua 2:1-6) * Leah and Rachel (Genesis 30:14-16) * tambourine (NIV), timbrel (KJV) (Exodus 15:20) * wafers with honey (Exodus 16:31); olive oil (NIV) (Numbers 11:*)

WILLING TO SERVE

September 6, 2026

Morning Worship:

Song Leader.....TBA
Opening Prayer.....Jon Neely
Scripture.....Jordan Ross
Prayer.....Jason Karnes
Closing Prayer.....Jess LeCroy

Evening Worship:

Song Leader.....TBA
Prayer.....Ron Garner
Scripture.....Darrin Shipman
Dismissal.....Jerry Burleson

September 9, 2026

Song Leader.....Jacob Clayton
Prayer.....David Burleson
Dismissal.....Mike Duley

September 13, 2026

Morning Worship:

Song Leader.....Chase Burch
Opening Prayer.....Jason Karnes
Scripture.....Darrin Shipman
Prayer.....Zack Tanner
Closing Prayer.....Matt Ward

Evening Worship:

Song Leader.....Rodney Williams
Prayer.....Justin Allen
Scripture.....Sam Garner
Dismissal.....David Burleson

JUNK FILES

My smartphone occasionally reminds me I'm not good at digital housekeeping. "Junk files are taking up space," the message reads. "Delete 675 MB of junk files." Now, I dislike being nagged by my phone. But if I clean out those files, I've got more space for things that really matter. Then, when I'm at my daughter's swim meet, for instance, I'll have enough digital storage to actually shoot a video of her winning a race instead of unexpectedly realizing that those pesky "junk files" have sabotaged my ability to capture the moments.

Junk files on our phones are easy to delete. But what about the "junk files" in our souls? Like our phones, our souls can be clogged with stuff that keeps us from flourishing spiritually. The author of Hebrews understood this reality, encouraging us to pay closer attention to anything that trips us up in our walk with God. *Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles*, he writes, followed by this challenge: *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us* (Hebrews 12:1).

What weighs you down? What trips you up? Hebrews encourages us to fix *our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith* (v2), who alone can help us identify and delete the "junk files" that hinder our abundant life in Him.

Adam R Holz

September - the golden threshold between summer and winter.
Meeta Ahluwalia