

Material provided for general story on reaction to Sept 11

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Services at area houses of worship are being adjusted in light of this week's tragic events. Across the region, congregations report that people have sought counsel, stopped by churches and synagogues to pray and explored answers to their questions. "There's a lot of seeking going on," reported Pastor Bob Coy of Ft. Lauderdale's Calvary Chapel. All worship centers are expecting increased attendance this weekend.

Among those planning special emphasis are:

Coral Baptist Church, Coral Springs—"We will be focusing on the theme, 'Where was God when New York was burning?'" says Minister of Pastoral care Rev. Rod Evans. "We will try to provide hope and assurance and to let people know that God was aware and is available to families and those who are hurting." Evans said that the church held services on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evening of this week. "We filled the church with 450 people Tuesday just through word of mouth," he explained. Evans said that he has no idea how many will attend the churches three services this Saturday and Sunday.

Temple B'Nai Aviv, Weston—Rabbi Samuel Kieffer planned changes for this weekend's services as he traveled over 36 hours by bus to return to South Florida in time for last night's services according to this wife Melinda. Kieffer was stranded by the interruption of flights that occurred over the past week. Mrs. Kieffer said that the congregation would hold a solidarity Shabbat Friday night with readings and ideas appropriate for the occasion. She said that between sixty and seventy normally attend Friday night services but temple officials were expecting up to 150 last night.

All Saints Episcopal Church, Ft. Lauderdale—Sunday's service has been adapted to respond to this week's events said Mary Vargas, church secretary. The Sunday Eucharist will be dedicated to the victims, she explained. The church, which normally runs 250 in attendance each Sunday, is expecting up to 350 worshippers on Sunday.

First Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale—Members of this large downtown church have respond through the past week, attending a 24-hour prayer vigil that began on Tuesday and will end after Sunday morning's service. "We have reordered the church's service for Sunday," said Rev. Mike Jeffries, Associate Pastor. "Our theme will be 'The beginning of the end,' and will focus on the fulfillment of the Lord's prophecies and his promises of fellowship in our midst," he said. "We will be looking at eschatology (the study of end times) and taking an eternal view of the circumstances of this week." He said that the congregation would be sharing in Communion and the choir had prepared special music for this Sunday. Jeffries said that he could not estimate how many might attend tomorrow's service, but he said that attendance at this past Wednesday's service jumped from a normal 350 in attendance to around 700.

St. Bernard Catholic Church—Sunrise—Special masses have been held throughout the past week according to a church secretary. Many people called the parish office on Friday

seeking a mass as part of the national day of prayer called by President Bush. Special prayers and emphasis will be included in Sunday's masses.

Calvary Chapel, Ft. Lauderdale—Increased attendance will be a factor at this church, one of Broward County's largest congregations. "Our auditorium seats 4,000 people and we had 5,000 show up for one service last Wednesday night," reported Pastor Bob Coy. This weekend's four services will be addressing questions such as why did this happen, who is the enemy, the relation of sin to this week's events and a person's need for a relationship with Jesus. Coy said that there will also be special music and prayers.

Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Ft. Lauderdale—"We have totally scrapped our planned service and are starting all over again," reported Dr. D. James Kennedy, pastor of the church. In his sermon, which he had not yet written at press time, Kennedy planed to address how to respond to this week's tragic events, the sovereignty of God, the Christian reaction to such events and the difference between personal and governmental ethics. The church offered several special prayer services during the past week.

Community Christian Church, Plantation—Church leaders plan special patriotic music during Sunday services plus an emphasis on how people can go on after the tragedy, answers to the question where is God?, and what hope people have in the midst of crisis. Pastor Scott Eyon said that he expects at least a 20 percent increase in attendance this Sunday.

Temple Kol Ami, Plantation—In response to the week's events, former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno spoke to this congregation last evening. Her presentation was not part of her political campaign for governor, but reflected on her previous role in the justice department according to Rabbi Sheldon Harr. Rabbi Harr said that during next week's High Holy days, he plans on addressing the relationship of the United States and Israel, reminding his congregation that Israel is not the only place where terrorist violence occurs.

Material provided for general story on reaction to Sept 11, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, Sept 12, 2001