



SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 75 No. 19 May 17, 2022

ELDERS

David Anderson
Brian Kenyon
Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

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Rick Kenyon
Stacey Paulin

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Joshua Cantrell

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

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Florida School of Preaching
since 1969

Huron, SD Mission Work

Casey & Emily Paulin

MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia
Don Iverson.....India
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa
Graham McDonald..Scotland
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE THE AWOL SOLDIER, PART 2

Joshua Cantrell

The Apostle Paul writes, “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3). A Christian becomes AWOL when they leave their post of suffering or service. We must remember the goal at hand as we strive to please God. Peter writes “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

We each have enlisted as a soldier in the Military of our Lord. We each have our assigned post, and we must fulfill our responsibilities to the kingdom of God. The Apostle Paul referred to himself as the “Prisoner of the Lord,” (Eph. 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:8). Paul had determined that he was going to be a servant, not of Rome, but the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul talks about him being a slave of righteousness and encourages us to do the same (Rom. 6:17-19).

Paul writes to the Ephesian brethren concerning the armour we must put on. Paul writes, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:13-17). There is a reason people were being fitted for a uniform. When we are fitted, it is not so that we can look good in the uniform. It is so we can fight. We can fight against the enemies of Christ.

WHAT CAUSES A SOLDIER TO BECOME AWOL

Jesus on one occasion would address the multitudes concerning being His Disciples (Lk. 14:25- 26). John records, “Many therefore of this disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; when can hear it? From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” (Jn. 6:60; 66). When we entangle ourselves with this life, it causes us to not follow after Christ. Paul says “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier,” (2 Tim. 2:4). We cannot have our interest divided with the things of this world (1 Jn. 2:15-17). Mark records, “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful,” (Mk. 4:18-19). We cannot serve God and mammon (Mt. 6:24).

Paul declared that he counted the things of this world as dung (Phil. 3:8) so that he could win Christ. If he continued in the Jewish religion, it would have taken him far in his life. When we fail to put Christ first in our life, it will cause us to go AWOL. Once you enlist, you become the property of the US Government, and your aim is to please them. Since Christ has enlisted us as soldiers, our aim is the please him. We must be careful not to please men (Gal. 1:10). We have to be honest enough with people to tell them the truth concerning what the Bible says. Many soldiers become AWOL because they do not want to tell their family members what the Bible says.

We ought not to be afraid to preach the gospel of Christ, it has the power to save (Rom. 1:16-17). Paul exhorted Timothy to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). He goes on to say, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,” (2 Tim. 4:3). Many would desire vain, and empty teaching. They would rather have those things that mean nothing, than the gospel of Christ.

HOW DO WE GET THEM BACK?

The first thing we have to do is convert them again. James says, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam. 5:19-20). Once a person goes AWOL, they violate the contract they have signed. Drastic measures are put in place to retrieve the person. A person who leaves the truth needs to be reminded why they obeyed the gospel in the first place. The truth is that which saves us from sin (Jn. 8:32). We must reclaim them by referring them to the Captain of their salvation (Heb. 2:10).

When we obey the gospel, we are enlisted under deity. The One who inhabits eternity. Why would we go AWOL from the One who saved us from condemnation? Paul records, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for son, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Earlier in the book, Paul says “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die:

yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-8).

We must present Him as the one we must confess (Mt. 16:13-18). When Saul was converted, he identified that Jesus was the Son of God. When a soldier goes AWOL, they not only leave God but their fellow comrades. Moses records, “And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren’s heart faint as well as his heart,” (Deut. 20:8). A soldier who is AWOL cannot help his fellow man because he is not at his assigned post. We each depend on each other for encouragement and comfort. What happens when I leave my post? I’m no longer in a position to help pick someone up.

The Devil is described as a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” (1 Pet. 5:8). We are invited to join his ranks. Christ came and rescued us, giving us salvation through obedience. May we each stand at our post, diligent in our efforts, and uplifting the name of Christ each opportunity we can.

Relationship Check

Rick Kenyon

Who is the person that you are closest to? (Spouse? Parent? Friend? Etc.) What are the factors that led you to choose that person? (Time? Honesty? Love? Etc.) Do you feel like you know that person? Does that person feel like they know you? In every relationship, there are necessary elements required to have a meaningful and genuine connection with another person. Some of these factors include: investing ample time with each other; honest and true communication; sharing and listening; vulnerability; mutual respect; forgiveness; ultimately, love. Because humans are created in God’s image, we desire and crave healthy, meaningful relationships with those around us. There may be different levels of relationships, but the ones that matter most are cherished, memorable, and remind us that loving and being loved are essential to our well-being. The more our life can be like Jesus, the more meaningful and vibrant our relationships will become. “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5, NASB). This doesn’t mean that every relationship will be the pinnacle of human connection, but the relationships that matter cannot be harmed when our relationship with God is what it should be. Of course, the ultimate question is: How would you describe your relationship with God? (Meaningful and close? Distant? Casual? Intimate?) The same factors that we would use to build, strengthen, and enjoy our earthly relationships are the same factors we can employ with God. Spend time in His Word (Ps. 1). Be open and honest in prayer to Him (Heb. 4:12-13). Give God your heart (Rom. 17) because He already gave us His Son. Love Him and fellow man (Mt. 22:37-40) because His love for us is limitless.

Youth Group

Vince Daugherty

Making Excuses (Luke 14:15-24)

We all know what excuses are. They are reasons or explanations people give when they have messed up or forgot to do something. The most (in)famous excuse being, "my dog ate my homework." When Jesus was on this earth, He invited many to become His disciples. On one occasion, a man was excited about the benefits of being in the kingdom. He said, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (Luke. 14:15). Jesus then told a parable about a great supper in which a certain man invited everyone to come. But when the invitations were sent out, they all began to make excuses. "I have to see a new piece of land I have bought", "I just bought five yoke of oxen", or "I just got married." The man who was throwing the party said to invite others to come instead, "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper" (Luke 14:24). We must make our discipleship to Jesus our top priority. If we do not, other things will distract us from what is the most important. When we fail to put Jesus first, we end up making excuses why we cannot come to worship, we are skipping Bible class, we pass on service projects, and opportunities to serve. If we want all the great benefits of the kingdom, we must put it first, and leave the excuses behind.

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16

Our Members:

Bob Pratt - health
 Jim Turner - health
 Brian Smith - heart health
 Debbie Bush - struggles
 Sharon M. Washington - health
 Antoine & Marcella Swain - health
 Janie Wise - health
 Wayne Shearer - health
 George Davis - eye procedure
 Darlene and Brenda - traveling

PRAYER LIST

Ron & Judy Ford - health
 Bernetta Green - health & strength
 Bobby Simpson - health
 Margaret Coone
 Annett Phillip - health
 Vanessa Palmer - health
 Bill Long - health
 Toney Wilson - health
 Chuck Wyatt - surgery

(Please update the office of any changes)

The **EXTENDED FAMILY AND FRIENDS** prayer requests are emailed every week and posted on the bulletin board

Pray for our Shut-ins

Joyce Burbage Carol Eason



Sundays at 5:45 pm - Prayer time for evangelism efforts

Sundays at 5:45 pm - Pew packers in auditorium

Wednesdays at 10:00 am - Ladies' class

Thursdays at 7:00 pm - Ladies Bible class

Singing Service - Sunday, May 22, evening service

Young Men-led worship service - Sunday, May 29, evening service

Ladies Night Out - Game Night

Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at 6:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

Please see Tiffany Daugherty for more details

Landry Perrin Potvin
 May 14, 2022 at 3:05 a.m.



Mommy and Landry are doing well.
 Daddy and Big Brother Declan are thrilled!
CONGRATULATIONS to the Potvins

5TH SUNDAY COLLECTION

The next 5th Sunday collection for the Building Fund will be
May 29, 2022.

if you would like to give additional funds at other times, please mail or bring them to the office. Be sure to designate the contribution as part of the Building Fund. It will be collected by the elders.

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

May

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Announcements D. Anderson
 Song Leader/prayer Brian Kenyon
 Devo Bobby Sheumaker
 Closing Prayer David Deal

Sunday, May 22, 2022

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Josh Cantrell
"Not a Hoof Left Behind"
 Exodus 10:21-26

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Josh Cantrell
 Singing Service

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both) David Deal
 Greeters N. Williams
 Song/prayer before class Tucker Sweeney
 Announcements Rick Kenyon
 A.M. Song Leader Andre Medley
 Scripture reading/Prayer Josh Estridge
 Lord's Table Lou Van Allen
 Closing Prayer Nigel St. Bernard

6:00 P.M.

P.M. Song Leader Vince Daugherty
 Scripture reading/Prayer Tucker Sweeney
 Lord's Table Lou Van Allen
 Closing Prayer Wayne Shearer
 Greeters Fife

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Announcements David Anderson
 Song Leader/Prayer Rick Kenyon
 Devo Wayne Shearer
 Closing Prayer Vince Daugherty

Upcoming Events

May

20 - Fiesta Friday
 21 - Men's breakfast,
 N. Lakeland
 21 - VBS work day
 24 - Ladies' Night Out, 6p
 27 - Last day of school
 27 - Sing, Orange Street
 29 - Teachers' mtg, 4:30
 29 - Youth-led pm service

June

1 - Quarterly challenge
 5-8 - VBS
 6 - Senior Saints class
 11-18 - Mission trip, SD
 15 - Ladies' class begins
 18 - Men's breakfast,
 Haines City
 26 - CFBC begins

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

May 1 \$6,750.00
 May 8 \$5,700.00
 May 15 \$6,161.00
Contribution Average \$6,420.89
Weekly budget \$7,663.43

After my grandpa died, we inherited a lot of things from him, including his plant collection. One of these plants was just a pot with what looked like a skinny, dead stick. After we brought it home my mom asked me why I was watering the "stick" plant, and why not throw it away since it appeared dead? I told her that I would rather water something for weeks and it be dead than to throw away a plant that needed some water and love. After a few weeks of watering and getting close to giving up, I saw a tiny green leaf growing from the top. This reminded me of 1 Corinthians 3:6-9: My grandpa (Paul) planted it, I (Apollos) watered it, and God gave the increase. Any and every part of the evangelism process (sending cards, taking meals, Bible studies) are equally important for the spreading of the Gospel. We will not know the fruit of our efforts with people unless we keep watering. (Galatians 6:9)



the B-I-B-L-E that's the book for me

SFA VBS 2022

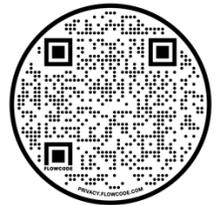
**Nightly classes available for
pre-school to adults**

Sunday - 6:00 - 7:30 pm

**Monday - Wednesday
7:00 - 8:30 pm**



Scan to pre-register
or go to
our website



www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

Email us: SFA.church@gmail.com

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue

Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

Finally, my brethren,
be strong in the Lord
and in the power of
His might.

Ephesians 6:10



If you prefer to receive the bulletin via email, contact us.