



# South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST *MESSENGER*



1807 S. Florida Ave.  
Lakeland, FL 33803

Vol. 78 No. 33, August 13, 2024

### ELDERS

David Anderson  
Brian Kenyon  
Bobby Sheumaker

### DEACONS

Tyler Anderson  
Jason Hendrix  
Stacey Paulin

### MINISTER

Steven Ford

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

OFFICE PHONE  
(863) 682-4702

### EMAIL

[SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

### 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.....6:30 p.m.

### WEB PAGE

[SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)

### Find us on

YouTube & Facebook

### HOME OF

*Florida School of Preaching*  
since 1969

Missionary - Huron, SD  
*Casey & Emily Paulin*

### MISSION FIELDS

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

## A Study of Prayer

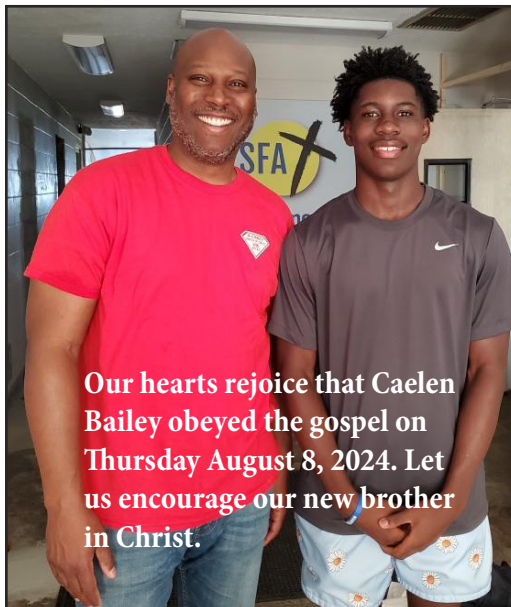
Steven Ford

From a very early age, many parents teach their children to pray. Whether praying first thing in the morning, before eating a meal, or just before bed, many little ones are instructed on when and how to pray. In similar fashion, Jesus taught His chosen followers how to pray. Although they had likely worded prayers before that point in time, it seems that they wanted to learn the best way to do so (Luke 11:1). Looking at the model prayer as recorded in Luke 11:2-4 and Matthew 6:9-13, all men should learn to pray in a way that pleases the Lord. A close look at the words of the Lord will give some practical insights regarding prayer.

## Prayer Should Be Taught

Again, noticing the account recorded by Luke, one of our Lord's disciples wanted to learn to pray. "Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). What a beautiful request. The disciple likely heard the words of Jesus' prayer and desired to talk to the Father in like fashion. The disciple was not afraid to ask and Jesus was not too busy to teach. Going all the way back into the Old Testament, instruction was given for children to be taught about the Lord and to

## TWO BAPTISMS THIS WEEK



Our hearts rejoice that Caelen Bailey obeyed the gospel on Thursday August 8, 2024. Let us encourage our new brother in Christ.



And we continue to rejoice that on Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, Cameron McCarter, the son of Dennis and Jean McCarter was buried in baptism as well!

“remember” Him which would no doubt include prayer (Deuteronomy 6:6-25; Ecclesiastes 12:1). In the New Testament, further guidance is given for teaching children. “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). One can rightly infer that prayer must be a part of that godly nurturing. Parents should pray with their children and teach through direction and demonstration.

## Prayer Is Not for Show

Matthew’s account informs us that one’s prayers should be rendered in humility (6:5-6). Jesus taught that the hypocrites loved to offer their prayers for the purpose of being seen (and likely commended), by men. They would stand out in the open, both in the worship setting and public spaces and pray not knowing that those prayers would have no Heavenly benefit. Their reward was the attention they garnered from men. In contrast, Jesus taught that one should seek to talk to God away from the attentive gaze of onlookers. Not only did Jesus give direction to go into a closet, but also that the door should be shut. That way the all seeing eye of God would observe the “secret” prayer and pour out public blessings. The major point is that God does not need or desire public shows of piety. It is certain that God knows the things of which we are in need (Matthew 6:32). Therefore, an outward and public show void of humility is vain and without value.

## Prayers Do Not Need to Be Long

When we pray to God, it does not have to be lofty or lengthy. It is not essential that one uses either big words or an abundance of words. That is not to say that long prayers are sinful. There are multiple prayers recorded in the Bible that are in fact, quite long. The Children of Israel offered a prayer that contained 1,213 words (Nehemiah 9:5-38). King Solomon prayed a total of 1,079 words (1 Kings 8:23-53). Even our Lord prayed using a total of 636 words (John 17:1-26). Jesus was not condemning long prayers. He was speaking against the idea that God would only hear such prayers. “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Matthew 6:7, emphasis mine SWF). Sincere prayer offered to God can be short and to the point. Jabez’s prayer was brief and concise using only 33 words (1 Chronicles 4:10). Asa offered a pithy 50 word prayer to God in a time of need (2 Chronicles 14:11). Lastly, the humble publican offered a mere 7 words in his prayer (Luke 19:13). While each of the last three prayers were indeed short, the Bible records that each was heard and answered (1 Chronicles 4:10b; 2 Chronicles 14:12; Luke 18:14)! The length of the prayer is not the issue. If one prays with sincerity and in faith, he can be assured that the Lord hears him and will answer according to His good will (1 John 5:14-15).

## The Model Prayer

Jesus not only gave guidance and direction as to the heart of prayer, but He gave a template to follow. Contrary to some religious beliefs, the prayer that Jesus gave as an example was not given to be spoken word for word. Our Lord was teaching HOW to pray and not necessarily WHAT to pray. Notice the instruction, “After this manner, therefore pray ye” (Matthew 6:9). The International English Bible (IEB) translates it this way, “This is the way you should pray.” Again, this is not “The Lord’s Prayer.” It is however our Lord’s model for how one should pray.

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matthew 6:9-13). *(continued on page 4)*

And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:15-16)

## PRAYER LIST

**Current:** Fran Gabaldon is at Moffitt in Tampa but hopes to be home soon, Nancy Jacobs has upcoming medical tests, Brenda Lynn is in a lot of pain following a fall

**Continual:** Jim Turner (cancer) Sharon Mathis Washington (Health & family); Stacey Wilson (health); Debbie Bush (struggles); Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Annett Phillip (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health).

**Shut-ins:** Carol Eason, Kenny & Reba French, Barbara Jones, Charles Paulin, Helen Perrin, Bettye Bolding, Nellie Anderson, Cheryl Barker

Also continue to pray for those on the extended family and friends list!

[Extended family and Friends List is Emailed Weekly.](#)

### GIVE AWAY DAY

We will be having an event for the community on Sat. Sept 7, 2024 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. We will be giving away clothes and household items to those in need. If you would like to donate items or would like to help please contact the office or see Rene'. We need help before, during and after the event. This will be a great opportunity to get to know those in our community and to share the gospel with them and to invite them to worship with us!

**SING** Orange Street church of Christ will have their singing night on Friday, August 30th at 7:00 PM. Join us in singing praises to God!



The "Young" ladies will be meeting at the Joinery on Saturday, August 24 at 12:00 noon to enjoy some fellowship and food together. See Marissa Estridge if you have any questions.

### Cards:

- Darlene Thompson** sent a Thank You Card for all the birthday wishes and also a card to say that she will now be worshipping with the North Lakeland Congregation beginning this week for personal reasons.
- Eve Morelock** sends a card as well thanking all those involved with the Widows/Widowers luncheon last week. These cards are in the foyer if you care to read them.

Fellowship In Service will be August 25 following the evening service. Bring your favorite finger foods and drinks to share as we fellowship together and sign cards to send to those who may need some encouragement. All ages are welcome to join us.

### Scheduled to Serve in August

Designated Elder	Bobby Sheumaker
------------------	-----------------

#### Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Announcements	Tyler Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Andre Medley
Devotional / Invitation	Steven Ford
Closing Prayer	Jeff Stewart

#### Sunday, August 18, 2024

10:30 am Sermon	Steven Ford
The Mercy of God (John 8:1-12)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Andre Medley
"Finding Joy in Our Struggles" (James 1:2-4)	

#### Those to Serve 10:30 am

Greeters	Kenyon's
Song/Pray before class	Kyle Bingle
Announcements (both)	Frank Hamby
Song Leader (both)	Tucker Sweeney
Prayer / Bible reading	Terrance Dindy
Lord's Table (both)	Jeff Stewart
Closing Prayer	Brian Williams
Open/Close Building	Bobby Sheumaker
Attendance Cards	Sawyer Anderson
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix

#### Those to Serve 6:00 pm

Greeters	Fifes
Announcements	Frank Hamby
Song Leader	Tucker Sweeney
Prayer / Bible reading	Allen Grimes
Closing Prayer	Lou Van Allen

#### Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Announcements	Jimmy Sweeney
Song Leader / Prayer	Brian Kenyon
Devotional / Invitation	Steven Ford
Closing Prayer	Matt Willcutt

#### How We Are Giving

July 28	\$4,711.00
Aug. 4	\$10,461.00
Aug. 11	\$8,502.59
Contribution Average	\$6,881.45
<b>Weekly Budget</b>	<b>\$7,410.00</b>

**If you cannot serve as scheduled, please notify Stacey or the office. Even if you arrange your replacement, please notify Stacey or the office. Thanks!**

## Grace in Every Season

As women, we often find ourselves juggling numerous roles—daughter, sister, friend, wife, mother, professional, and more. Each role comes with its own set of expectations and pressures. In the midst of these demands, it's easy to forget that we don't have to be perfect; we simply need to be willing to accept God's grace. Grace is God's unmerited favor.

It's a gift we can't earn but can freely receive.

Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." This means that God's love for us isn't based on our performance but on His endless compassion.

In times of self-doubt and stress, remember that God's grace is sufficient for you. It empowers you to rise above your circumstances, not because of your own strength, but because of His. When you feel overwhelmed, take a moment to breathe and let God's grace wash over you. Lean into His promises and let His grace guide you through every season of life.

Reflect on how His grace has sustained you in the past and trust that it will continue to do so in the future. Embrace the truth that you are loved, cherished, and valued by the Creator of the universe. Let this knowledge bring peace to your heart and strength to your spirit, knowing that His grace is always enough.



## LADIES CLASSES:

**Wednesday Morning Class** -beginning in September there will be a class at 10:00 am on Wednesdays, taught by Marion Beals. They will be studying the book of Genesis.

**Thursday Evening Class** begins August 13 at 7:00 PM. They will be starting a book on Prayer by Lori Boyd. All ladies are invited to attend.

**Monthly FSOP Ladies Class** - meets once a month in the FSOP classroom. The next class will be Tuesday September 10 at 7:00 pm. Susan Stearsman teaches this class. All ladies are invited to this class as well.

*(continued on page 2)*

## Final Thoughts

Being able to pray to God is a blessing beyond measure! A faithful and trusting believer can talk to the holy and sovereign Creator of the Universe! Not only so, but he can have full assurance that God will hear and respond. God's love is so great that He even provided gracious instruction on how we should approach him in prayer. We must teach others and our little ones how to pray. Prayer is not a time to show off in the presence of others. It is a time to have a private talk with our loving Father in Heaven. The length of the prayer does not dictate whether or not God will hear us. We can pour out our hearts with few or many words. The key is to remember that God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7) and we can trust that He always hears (1 John 5:14).

[www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com](http://www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com)

Email us: [SFA.church@gmail.com](mailto:SFA.church@gmail.com)

For sermons and podcasts, find us here.



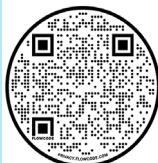
### South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST

1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested

" Lead me in Your truth and teach me,  
For You are the God of my salvation; On  
You I wait all the day."

Psalm 25:5



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