



SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.,
Lakeland, FL 33803

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ELDERS

David Anderson
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Bobby Sheumaker

DEACONS

Tyler Anderson
Jason Hendrix
Rick Kenyon
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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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WHAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD DO AS WE AWAIT JESUS' RETURN

Hiram Kemp

Jesus told the disciples that no one knew exactly when he would return (Matt. 24:36). In the first century, some were saying that the return of Jesus had already taken place, but they were mistaken for the false teachers (2 Tim. 2:16-18). The church at Thessalonica seemed to have a unique interest in Jesus' return. In First and Second Thessalonians, Paul mentions the return of Jesus in each chapter that make up those letters (1 Thess. 1:10, 2:19, 3:13, 4:13-18, 5:2; 2 Thess. 1:7-9, 2:1, 3:5). Paul was not able to give any timeline or specifics about Jesus' return because Jesus was coming back like a thief in the night (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10).

However, what Paul was able to give to the Thessalonians and to us by extension are helpful duties that we need to discharge in the meantime. Instead of losing sleep as we anxiously await the unknown time when our Lord will appear, what should we be doing? How can we spend the time God has loaned to us on this earth? Here are seven things Paul said we can do as we wait and in anticipation of the second coming of Christ.

#1: ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing
(1 Thess. 5:10)

We all need encouragement, and we need it regularly (Heb. 3:13). The world will do everything it can to tear us down, but we need to be building one another up. Edification is one of the primary works of the church of Christ. We must find ways to lift each other up and exhort each other in good works (Heb. 10:24). Paul told the Thessalonians to use their time wisely by spending it focused on helping each other and we should do likewise.

#2: RESPECT LEADERSHIP AND ESTEEM THEM HIGHLY

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. (1 Thess. 5:12-13)

God wants us to respect our elders as they are watching for our souls (Heb. 13:17). They are God's special servants to whom he has delegated authority in the local congregation (1 Pet. 5:1-4). Those who do not want to be ashamed at the return of Jesus should not only respect the elders but esteem them highly. We may not agree with every decision the elders make but if it is scriptural, we need to submit and obey. We should not talk down about them or belittle them. Instead, we need to appreciate that God has assigned elders the work to do and we should try and make their job as easy and enjoyable as possible.

#3: AID THE BRETHREN

Admonish the idle, encourage the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with all. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all (1 Thess. 5:14)

Paul sandwiches a lot into this one verse about how we are to treat one another. To summarize his thoughts, we could say see the needs of the saints and fulfill them to the best of your ability. Whether someone is weak, idle, fainthearted, or immature there is a proper response to administer. Jesus handled people delicately and we should too (Matt. 12:20). It is easy to become irritable and frustrated with others, but we need to remember that Jesus is watching us (James 5:7-8). We also cannot ignore the idle but instead must rebuke them and challenge them to get back into action (cf. Rom. 12:11).

#4: DO GOOD INSTEAD OF EVIL

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone (1 Thess. 5:15). We should not repay any evil for evil, that is God's job (Rom. 12:19-21). We are called to do good to all men as we have the opportunity (Gal. 6:10). Paul says more here than do good he says we are to seek to do good to each other. Find occasions when we can and then act on them. Not only must we do good to fellow Christians, but we must also do good to all people (Matt. 22:37-40). Let Christians be known as those who go about doing good like our Lord (Acts 10:38).

#5: REJOICE ALWAYS

Rejoice always (1 Thess. 5:16)

Rejoicing is more than happiness. Rejoicing is an inward temperament that can know joy because of one's confidence in God. We can rejoice always only if our joy is tied to the Lord (Phil. 4:4). As we are waiting for Jesus to return and usher us into everlasting joy, we need to bask in the joy of the blessings God has already given us. A heart of gratitude for the various spiritual blessings available of Christ is one that will be joyful no matter what comes (Eph. 1:3-14).

#6: PRAY CONTINUOUSLY

Pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17)

We can keep strong communication with deity though God dwells in heaven and we are on earth (Matt. 6:9). We can pray to God through our Lord Jesus Christ and boldly approach the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16). Pray to God about your worries, fears, concerns, and dread. Do not forget to pray to God thanking Him, praising Him, and interceding for others (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). As we await Jesus' second advent into the world, we need to be praying, confessing our sins (James 5:16), and praying for boldness to endure (Eph. 6:18-19).

#7: GIVE THANKS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thess. 5:18)

We should give thanks always for all things to God through Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:20). We must be marked by gratitude in a world of entitlement and selfishness. Paul tells us this is God's will for our lives. Thinking about the death of Jesus and his resurrection should produce thankfulness in the hearts of those who are thinking soberly. Our greatest problem is atoned for and our greatest blessings lie ahead of us. God wants us to recognize those realities and then burst into habitual thanksgiving every time we get the chance.

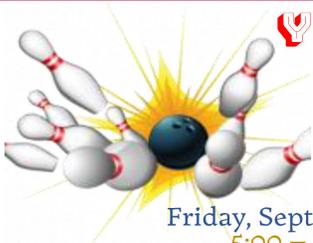
Paul loved the church at Thessalonica. He wanted the congregation to be strong, sound in doctrine, and ready for Jesus' return (1 Thess. 3:8). He wrote to guard the church against false doctrine and errors about the return of Jesus (1 Thess. 5:21-22). Rather than standing idly and watching the clouds for Jesus to reappear, Christians then and now have work to do. The work we have before us is not glamorous, but it is gritty. It is the day in, and day out work of citizens of the heavenly kingdom. Jesus is coming back we just do not know exactly when that will be. We do know what we should be doing in the meantime. Let each of us be preparing ourselves for Jesus' return and helping others to be prepared, too.

For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. (1 Thess. 5:5)

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him (1 Thess. 5:9-10)

Senior Saints by John McShane

I found the following free marriage tip recently, "Don't ask your wife when dinner will be ready while she is mowing the lawn." I know it was written in jest, but with all the domestic abuse that we read about today, it may not be too far from the truth. Wives were not created by God to be abused. 1 Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." It seems that when we took God out of the schools, we started a downward slide in moral and ethical behavior. The world continues to try and remove God from all walks of life, and our nation is reaping the rewards of that action. It is now up to us as Christians to be sure that God's principles are taught in the home and the church. The wife and mother is usually the one selected to educate the young family members in the home. To do that effectively, she must be honored and respected by her husband. 1 Peter 3:7, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." So let us treat our wives with the respect that is due them. Remember, we asked them to marry us and be the other half of our family unit. Proverbs 31:11-12, "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life."



YOUTH GROUP BOWLING NIGHT

Friday, September 3, 2021 Sign-up sheet
5:00 - 7:00 pm is on the board

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." The other day, I had to get on to my son about cleaning up his toys. He only halfway cleaned up because he only put in half of the effort. Because he only put half the effort in, he had to start over and do the chore again. I said, "If you did it right the first time, we would be done by now." (Man, I sound like my dad.) Whether you think about your school work, sports practice, marching band, chores around the house, we ought to do it with everything we got.

- 1) God tells us to
- 2) Makes the experience more enjoyable or meaningful
- 3) We want to honor our parents (or those in authority)
- 4) Feeling accomplished at a job done well
- 5) Freedom to do whatever else we want to do

SFA FAMILY MATTERS

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

Our Members:

Bob Pratt - health
 Jim & Carol Edmonson - health
 Stacey Paulin - health
 Bernetta Green - health
 Fred Strickland - health
 Melody Baxter - health
 Debbie Bush - health
 Margaret Coone
 Sharon M. Washington - health
 Antoine & Marcella Swain - health
 Flo Duffy - eye problems
 Vanessa Palmer - health
 Jimmy & Paul Sweeney - covid

John & Linda McShane
 Ron & Judy Ford - health
 Darlene Thompson - family
 Jim Turner - health, tests
 Bobby Simpson - health
 Brian Smith - heart
 Kathy Nester - health
 Joyce Williams
 Annette Phillip - health
 David Anderson - covid
 Tanner Estridge - health
 Dorothea Lauther - surgery recovery
 Angel Newkirk & family - covid

(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

Faith West Joyce Burbage
 Carol Eason Ellen Shearer

Please call before visiting. Some locations are locked down again.

Responses

Ingrid Stewart asks for forgiveness and for strength to continue confessing Jesus

Updates & Prayer requests

Covid: **David Anderson** **Stacey Paulin** has been suffering with Trigeminal Neuralgia.
Angel Newkirk
Madison Caffee
Jimmy & Paul Sweeney

Rejoicing in hope Romans 12:12

The Lord recently added another soul to His kingdom. Let's welcome our new brother in Christ:

Elliott Beck (8/10/21)

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." 1Cor. 1:6

The Kemps' "New Adventures" Going Away Party

August 21th from 11:00am-1:00pm

5TH SUNDAY COLLECTION

The next 5th Sunday collection for the Building Fund will be **August 29, 2021.** if you would like to give additional funds at other times of the month, 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.



This week's pantry item request: **fruit cups, fruit packs, and canned fruit**

PRAYER LIST

SCHEDULED TO SERVE

August

Designated Elder - David Anderson

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Song Leader/Prayer Johnny Singh
 Devo Hiram Kemp
 Closing Prayer Charles Paulin

Sunday, August 22, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
 "How the Early Church Turned the World Upside Down"
 Acts 17:6

6:00 P.M.

Sermon Hiram Kemp
 "5 Things Jesus Wants to Say to Every Child"
 Matthew 18:1-5

10:30 A.M.

Open/Close bldg (both) David Deal
 Greeter E&C Smith
 Song/prayer before class Matt Webb
 Announcements Bobby Sheumaker
 A.M. Song Leader Rick Kenyon
 Scripture reading/Prayer Alex Parramore
 Lord's Table Tucker Sweeney
 Closing Prayer Jeff Stewart

6:00 P.M.

Greeters Stewart
 P.M. Song Leader Rick Kenyon
 Scripture reading/Prayer Mike Van Allen
 Lord's Table Tucker Sweeney
 Closing Prayer Zach Jones

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Song Leader/prayer Matt Webb
 Devo Elder
 Closing Prayer Allen Grimes

Upcoming Events

August

17 - FSOP ladies' class
 21 - Kemps' party
 22 - Teachers' meeting
 28 - Youth group devo

September

3 - Bowling night
 12 - Joey Treat
 18 - Youth Seminar

October

2 - Door Knocking
 2 - Ladies' Day

October

31 -Trunk or Treat

November

14-17 Fall gospel mtg
 19 - Youth group thankful meal

December

18 - Wreaths Across America
 Christmas caroling & parties (Dates TBD)

~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Aug 1 \$8,272.00
 Aug 8 \$6,871.25
 Aug 15 \$4,352.00
 Contribution Average \$7,011.22

Have you ever been camping? I have loved camping for as long as I can remember. To me, one of the best parts of camping is sitting around the campfire. That fire is actually a chemical reaction that requires three elements to exist: oxygen, heat, and fuel. When my family goes camping, the wood is the fuel for the fire. The Bible says **“Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.”** Proverbs 26:20. Are we fuel for the fire? Are we spreading secrets that we have no business telling? Furthermore, when someone walks up and starts divulging some salacious account, do we just stand there and allow them to breathe life into the flame? Or do we gently say “I’d rather not hear that”. As the verse says, without wood a fire goes out. If I remove the fuel (myself) from the fire, one of the essential elements is missing, and no longer able to survive. That flame will go out!

I don’t want to be firewood. We all know what fire does to the fuel- it consumes it. We cannot let sin consume us. Instead, we need to let love consume us. **“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”** If we continually dwell on these things, we can keep the malice out of our mouths!

A LIVING BODY CHANGES

The church is the spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). Just like a physical body, if it is alive, it will go through changes. All physical bodies eventually deteriorate (Heb. 9:27). The universal body of Christ never will (Mt. 16:18). Note here that the divine side of the church is perfect and we should never seek to change God’s pattern. However, the human side of the church will undergo changes for various reasons. The church here is undergoing a few changes. As Hiram announced in June, he and his family will be moving to Kentucky at the end of August to work with the body of Christ there. Joshua Cantrell will come in October to work with us in preaching and evangelizing. Two other changes on the human side are also taking place. Kenny French announced his resignation from the eldership, effective August 11, 2021. Kenny has faithfully served eldership since the 1970s. He has helped lead, feed, and protect us for around fifty years! He is one of the reasons the church here has been strong and stable all these years. We greatly appreciate him for his work’s sake! He and Reba remain in our prayers. Last Sunday, August 15, Rick Kenyon was added as a deacon based on God’s qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13), and the congregation’s “seeking out” from among themselves men who qualify (cf. Acts 6:3). He will work primarily in the area of evangelism but will also help where needed, as he has already been doing. These changes should not hinder our work in the Lord. Kenny mentioned in his letter that we have good leadership in place. The addition of another deacon faithfully working in an important area can only result in good! We appreciate every member here and look forward to the increase and influence of the body of Christ!

www.SouthFloridaAvenueChurchOfChrist.com

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South Florida Avenue
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Return Service Requested

**"TEST EVERYTHING;
HOLD FAST WHAT IS
GOOD"**

1 Thessalonians 5:21