



# South Florida Avenue CHURCH OF CHRIST MESSENGER



1807 S. Florida Ave.  
Lakeland, FL 33803

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### ELDERS

David Anderson  
Brian Kenyon  
Bobby Sheumaker

### DEACONS

Tyler Anderson  
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Stacey Paulin

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

### WEB PAGE

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

Find us on  
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### 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.

## Abortion & Recreational Use of Marijuana Are Not Political Issues

Brian R. Kenyon

When I first heard the ads against Florida’s Amendment 3 (Marijuana Legalization Initiative, 2024) I was surprised the focus was on how Floridians should not vote for it because it will put government in charge of growing, distributing, and taxing marijuana. What about the most obvious impact of legalizing recreational uses of marijuana? It is another mind-altering substance in addition to alcohol that will plague society, especially our teenagers, contributing to more accidents and immorality (in the sense that people under the influence are more likely to commit sins they otherwise would not if sober). Add to this is Amendment 4 (Right to Abortion Initiative, 2024). It seeks to basically allow abortion for just about any reason in the State of Florida. For years, people, even some Christians, have claimed churches should not talk about abortion because “It is a political issue.” As we shall see, however, abortion and the recreational use of marijuana are moral issues, not political, even though politicians use them. Thus, these issues are worthy of our discussion and decision.

### What About Abortion?

All “abortions” are not the same. Medically speaking, abortion is the “expelling of the fetus from the uterus” (*The New Illustrated Medical Encyclopedia*). Miscarriages are considered spontaneous abortions, where the “fetus” (to use their terminology) is expelled from the uterus due to natural causes such as chemical imbalance or disorders in growth or involuntary external interferences such as a fall or accident. Additionally, some medical procedures may result in abortion, but the procedures may be necessary to save the mother’s and/or the baby’s life (e.g., correcting a “tubal” pregnancy). These procedures are not inherently sinful (falling under, what is called in ethical philosophy, the “law of double effect”). Induced abortion, however, is the deliberate termination of a pregnancy by mechanical or medical means before the “fetus” is capable of independent life. This is the kind of abortion addressed in this article.

This is the major question involving abortion’s morality: Is the “fetus” a human being? Rationality and logic demand that a “fetus” is either human or it is non-human (by the “law of excluded middle”). If non-human, then the proponent must affirm the impossible, irrational position that two human parents can produce something that, at one stage, is non-human but at another stage is human. If a “fetus” is human, then we have no right to kill it (cf. Genesis 9:6; Proverbs 6:16-17). Note what the Bible teaches concerning life that is in a human mother’s womb.

**Psalm 139:13-16** “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb ... I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... When I was made in secret ... Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.” David made reference to when he was in his mother’s womb. The development of a child in the womb was looked upon by the ancients as one of the greatest mysteries. David here declared that God was the one who made him. “Me,” “my,” and “I” are used throughout in reference to David’s prenatal state. Keil and Delitzsch, in the 1860s, translated this, “When an embryo, thine eyes saw me ...” David referred to himself in this passage, and a human cannot refer to himself without referring to a human being (cf. Psalm 51:5).

**Job 3:11-16** “Why did I not die at birth? .... Then I would have been at rest .... like a stillborn child, Like infants who never saw light?” As Job initially contemplated his newfound tragic situation, he cursed the day of his birth. In these verses, Job listed the people with whom he would have been, if he had died at birth. Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary on Job (page 81), referred to those mentioned in verse 16 as “abortions” (i.e., miscarriages) and “the still born.” Job put a miscarriage in the same category as other people who had died and were hidden in Sheol. Job considered a fetus as much a human being as kings, princes, or still-born babies (cf. “like infants who never saw light”). We know such children are with God (2 Samuel 12:18-23).

**Luke 1:41, 44** “And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe [*brephos*, βρεφός] leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit .... For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe [*brephos*] leaped in my womb for joy.” **Luke 2:12, 16** “And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe [*brephos*] wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger .... And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe [*brephos*] lying in a manger.” One of the most definitive proofs that a baby inside the womb is just as much human as a baby outside the womb is a comparison of these verses in the Gospel according to Luke. The word translated “babe” is from the Greek word *brephos* (βρεφός), which in Luke 1:41, 44 is used for a child in the womb (i.e., a “fetus”), yet the same word *brephos* in the same type of context is used in Luke 2:12, 16 for a baby outside the womb. *Brephos* is also used in Luke 18:15, Acts 7:19, Second Timothy 3:15, and First Peter 2:2. A human being is considered in each situation, whether in or out of the mother’s womb. God still considers “hands that shed innocent blood” an abomination (Proverbs 6:16-17; Galatians 5:21). Why would a Christian say yes to the immorality of abortion?

## What About the Recreational Use of Marijuana?

All uses of marijuana are not the same. Like alcohol (Proverbs 31:6-7), marijuana has legitimate medical uses, although smoking it, when objectively evaluated, would make the risks of inhaling carcinogens outweigh the benefits of relieving pain, especially when more effective treatments for chronic pain may be readily available. Some may argue that because the Bible does not explicitly read, “Thou shalt not smoke weed,” smoking marijuana is authorized. However, biblical hermeneutics does not require an explicit “Thou shalt not” for an action to be prohibited. If there is no Bible authority for an action, then it cannot be authorized by God (Colossians 3:17). We can search our Bibles from Genesis to Revelation, and we will not find where the non-medicinal use of any mind-altering substance is authorized by God. In principle, the same passages that forbid “recreational” uses of alcohol would forbid the recreational use of marijuana or any other mind-altering substance (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35; Habakkuk 2:15; Isaiah 5:11, 22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; etc.). Furthermore, Bible passages teaching that people, especially Christians, should be sober minded are also violated by the recreational use of marijuana (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; Titus 2:2; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:8).

An often overlooked passage that addresses this issue head on is found in Peter’s admonition, “Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). Although we live in this world, Christians are not to be of this world (John 17:14-16; Romans 12:2), where “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” dominate (1 John 2:15-17). The flesh is to be controlled by the spiritual mind (Romans 8:5-17; James 1:12-16). Is the recreational use of marijuana a “lust of the flesh”? Indeed it is! Does the recreational use of marijuana “war against the soul”? Indeed it does! It keeps us from being sober minded, and thus falling for Satan’s schemes and potentially every kind of immorality (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9). Since it is a “fleshly lust” that “wars against the soul,” the recreational use of marijuana is immoral. Why would a Christian say yes to the immorality of the recreational use of marijuana or any other mind-altering substance that “wars against the soul”?

## PRAYER LIST

**Current:** Rachel Zapata is still not feeling well  
**Continual:** Jim Turner (cancer) Sharon Mathis Washington (Health & family); Stacey Wilson (health); Debbie Bush (struggles); Carlene Long (health & strength); Ron Ford (health); Janie Wise (health); Margaret Coone (health); Melissa Craft (health); Kathy Nester (health & travels).  
**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.](#)

**?** Steven Ford had invited us to submit Bible questions to be answered during a Sunday evening Q&A sermon. Please send questions to him or place them in the box in front of the auditorium. **?**

## Upcoming Gospel Meetings

**October 13 -16th - Eagle Lake church of Christ**  
 Speaker: Thomas Wise  
 Theme: "Can You Imagine?"

**October 13 -16th - Central church of Christ (Clearwater)**  
 Speaker: Paul Pryor  
 Theme: "Biblical Types and Shadows"

**October 25-27th - Laura Street church of Christ**  
 Speaker: Steven Ford

**November 17 -20th - SFA church of Christ**  
 Speaker: Steve Atnip  
 Theme: "Holy Spirit"



### P.I.E.

Ladies join us on Sunday  
 October 20, 2024 at 4:00 PM  
 for a "PIE" Party!  
 Sign up to bring your favorite pie and join us for fun and fellowship together with the ladies of SFA.

**SAVE THE DATE  
 TRUNK OR  
 TREAT:  
 SATURDAY  
 OCTOBER 26**



## Scheduled to Serve in Sept.

Designated Elder	Brian Kenyon
<b>Wednesday, September 25, 2024</b>	
Announcements	David Anderson
Song Leader / Prayer	Stacey Paulin
Devotional / Invitation	Steven Ford
Closing Prayer	Peyton Willcut
<b>Sunday, September 29, 2024</b>	
10:30 am Sermon	Steven Ford
"Judgement Day" (Matthew 25)	
6:00 pm Sermon	Peyton Willcut
Youth Led Service	
<b>Those to Serve 10:30 am</b>	
Greeters	Brunson's
Song/Pray before class	Kyle Bingle
Announcements (both)	Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader (both)	Kyle Faneuf
Prayer / Bible reading	Andre Medley
Lord's Table (both)	George Beals
Closing Prayer	Jeff Bingle
Open/Close Building	David Deal
Attendance Cards	-
Sound Booth (both)	Jason Hendrix
<b>Those to Serve 6:00 pm</b>	
Greeters	S&M Paulin
Announcements	Bobby Sheumaker
Song Leader	Kyle Faneuf
Prayer / Bible reading	Josh Potvin
Closing Prayer	Terrance Dindy
<b>Wednesday, October 2, 2024</b>	
Announcements	Stacey Paulin
Song Leader / Prayer	Frank Hamby
Devotional / Invitation	Steven Ford
Closing Prayer	Brian Kenyon
<b>How We Are Giving</b>	
Sept. 8	\$5,680.00
Sept. 15	\$7,200.00
Sept. 22	\$5,613.16
Contribution Average	\$6,868.03
<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!**

## Don't Judge Me

Our society today is quick to say “Don’t judge me”, when they are confronted with something that may be unscriptural in their life, when in reality God has already judged them, and we are just concerned for their souls. Just because someone doesn’t approve of what you are doing or doesn’t agree on everything exactly like you do, does not mean that they hate you or are judging you. As Christians we are concerned about souls and consequences of sin, and it is our responsibility to teach those who are lost or who may be heading for trouble. We have some perfect examples in scripture where God’s people tried to correct those around about them who were living in sin, and they refused to listen. Scripture even tells us in Proverbs 3:12 “For the Lord disciplines (corrects, chastens, punishes, scourges) those He loves, just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights”. I’m sure those in Noah’s day thought he was judging them until they felt the first rain drop (Genesis 6)! I’m sure the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah thought Lot was judgmental, until they saw the first flame (Genesis 19). I know I would hope that my Christian family would approach me or my children if they are concerned with something we are taking part in rather than turn a blind eye. James 5:19-20 tells us “My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this; Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” We certainly need to show love and wisdom when confronting those who are in sin, but it still needs to be done. The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2:24-25 “ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” A quote I’ve heard from Morgan Freeman says “Just because I disagree with you, does not mean that I hate you, We need to relearn that In our society”, not only in our society but in the church as well. Let us all be open to correction and instruction when needed and let us offer correction and instruction in love when needed as well.

**Youth Group  
L2L Meeting**  
Sunday, October 6  
After morning worship  
Please sign up for the lunch!  
LADS TO LEADERS & LEADERETTES

YOUNG ADULT GATHERING  
**October 6, 2024**  
**7:15pm**  
hosted by the Bingle family  
after evening worship  
DINNER & FELLOWSHIP FUN!

**SING NIGHT** at Orange Street church of Christ in Auburndale is this Friday, Sept 27 beginning at 7:00. Stay tuned to hear if this event will be postponed due to the possible storm this weekend.

**Fellowship In Service**  
**Sunday, September 29**  
following evening service.

Bring food and drinks to share as we write cards to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ!

[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

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering:"

Colossians 3:12



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