



FIRST CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

WELCOME to First Christian Assembly, an independent church whose mission is articulated by Jesus in Mark 16:15 when he said "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Following this great commission, First Christian Assembly preaches and teaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. In so doing, we trust that God, working through His Holy Spirit will draw souls to salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A thief in the night

In [Matthew 24](#), Jesus speaks of His second coming at the end of the tribulation. Paul calls it "the [day of the Lord](#)" in [1 Thess 5](#). This is a day of divine retribution featuring astronomical upheaval and the visible "sign of the Son of Man" in the heavens ([Matt 24:29-30](#)). Jesus says it will happen "after the tribulation of those days, a description that distinguishes this event from the [rapture](#), which happens before the tribulation.

How is the [second coming](#) going to be like a thief in the night? The key element of Jesus' comparison is that no one will know when He will return. Just as a thief catches a household by surprise, Jesus will catch the unbelieving world by surprise when He returns in judgment. People will be "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (vs 38), just as if they have all the time in the world. But then, before they know it, Judgment Day will be upon them (vs 40-41). Paul puts it this way: "While people are saying, 'Peace and safety,' destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape" ([1 Thess 5:3](#)).

The believer does not fear this swift and sudden judgment; the "thief in the night" will not catch us by surprise. Christians are in a separate category: "But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief" ([1 Thess 5:4](#)). It is only those in darkness who will be taken unawares, and we "are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness" (vs 5). Praise the Lord, "God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 9).

The unsaved should heed Jesus' warning: "Be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" ([Matt 24:44](#)). How can you be ready? God has provided the way for you to escape the judgment. That way is Jesus Christ ([John 14:6](#)). By accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are granted forgiveness of sins, mercy, and salvation with the promise of everlasting life ([John 3:16](#); [Eph 2:8-9](#)). The "thief" is coming, but you can be a child of the day. Don't put it off; *now is the accepted time*. (2 Cor 6:2)

Missionary Highlights

Neal and Lois PNG

During a recent outreach visit to the prison here in town, my heart was touched when I saw a little boy, maybe 3 or 4, kneeling on a little shelf space on the cage of his father's cell so he could hug his father through the bars. It was a reminder to me how having a family member incarcerated deeply affects the family outside the prison. The Brazilian missionary couple are back for a few months. The wife (Lidi) had this last time accompanied us to the prison along with another pastor they knew. Lidi came away shocked by the conditions in the prison. She said they treat them like dogs. I am so glad we have permission to go in to carry the hope found in the love of Jesus.

I was greatly encouraged this past week to meet another American missionary who has also been visiting the prisoners in the same prison and also doing outreach in the local hospital. How merciful is our God to send us both to these ones who are dear to Him. He told me that one time while he was preaching the police were beating a prisoner mercilessly at the same time and then they threw him into a cell with others. Eric was not sure what happened to this man. How alarming this police brutality. Praying.

I had a lot of fun yesterday afternoon working in the garden with the two little boys of our night guard, Kia, and with him of course. You should see the one little boy swing the bush knife (machete) to cut down some branches. Children here learn early on to handle bush knives and other knives, something that scares us Westerners. They loved pushing the wheelbarrow around and picking up the rubbish. Our garden has a mulberry tree, Hagen berries, cherry tomatoes, green onions, and pineapples. Let's not forget the mosquitoes that thrive in our garden.

Kia recently told me he had previously thought that all white people could read and write, but then he met one that could not do either, so he had concluded that white people have to learn to do both. It is amazing the misconceptions people here have about those of us who come from other countries. In my lifetime, I have been asked many times why I am not Black as I was born in Africa. Hmmm. One man here said when he was growing up they used to say, Lord send me anywhere, but Africa. People here know so little about the rest of the world, so during the morning devotional time with the guards, I try to teach them about other places and we pray for Christians suffering for their faith. PNG has such freedom, it is an amazing blessing. Neal was informed that his volunteer work permit was approved for 5 years. We now await our visas to be posted on our passports. Five years! Mercy. Only God knows. Blessings, Lois

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The Philadelphia Access Center is a ministry of First Christian Assembly. Our mission is *revealing Christ through compassionate service*. Services available at PAC include social services information and referrals, biblical counseling, support groups, volunteer training, and community outreach. All services are free of charge and available to anyone. To learn more, visit us in person (across the street from FCA) or online at www.philaccess.org or www.facebook.com/philaccess.

WEEKLY SERVICES /MEETINGS

	Meets at FCA	Meets at PAC
Sunday	9:45 AM <i>Bible Study – Phila -location</i> 10:00 AM <i>South Jersey Worship Service</i> 11:00 AM <i>Phila Location Worship Service & Children’s Sunday School</i>	
Monday		7:00 PM <i>Stepping Stones</i>
Tuesday	6:30 PM <i>Prayer (Sanctuary)</i> 7:00 PM <i>Worship (Fellowship area)</i>	
Wednesday		1:00 PM <i>Women at the Well</i> 1:00 PM <i>Coram Deo</i>
Thursday		6:00 PM <i>Prayer Service</i> 7:00 PM <i>Bible Study</i>
Friday		7:00 PM <i>Right Path (on a hiatus)</i>

- *Coram Deo*: A men’s Bible study and Christian fellowship.
- *Right Path*: A Christ centered support and recovery group for people whose lives have been affected by drug and alcohol addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support and fellowship; in genuine confidential sharing, coupled with a Biblical twelve step model of recovery.
- *Stepping Stones*: A Christ centered support group for men and women impacted by a loved one’s addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support, fellowship, confidential sharing, and intercessory prayer.
- *Women at the Well*: This group is Biblically based and promotes hope, healing, and fellowship for women impacted and struggling with brokenness.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Ministries at First Christian (Phila.& NJ) and the Philadelphia Access Center
- Christians around the world being persecuted for their faith
- Our supported missionaries – Binu John’s second daughter
- For our Pastor and his family
- Paula Grazulis

Any other gospel is another gospel and is not the true gospel. Without the creation, the gospel has no foundation; without the promised consummation, it offers no hope; without the cross and the empty tomb, it has no saving power. –Dr. [Henry Morris](#), *Some Call It Science*, 50)