



# 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.*

## Denial

Peter's denial was based partially on weakness, the weakness born of human frailty. After the Last Supper, Jesus took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to await His arrest. He told them to stay awake and pray while He went off to pray alone. When He returned to them, He found them sleeping. He warned Peter to stay awake and pray because, although his spirit might be willing, his flesh was weak. But he fell asleep again, and, by the time the soldiers had come to arrest Jesus, it was too late to pray for the strength to endure the ordeal to come. No doubt his failure to appropriate the only means to shore up his own weakness—prayer—occurred to him as he was weeping bitterly after his denials. But Peter learned his lesson about being watchful, and he exhorts us in [1 Peter 5:8](#), "*Be on the alert, because your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*" Peter's weakness had caused him to be "devoured" momentarily as he denied his Lord because he hadn't been prepared through prayer and he underestimated his own weakness.

A second reason for Peter's failure was fear. To his credit, although all the others had fled ([Mark 14:50](#)), Peter still followed Jesus after His arrest, but he kept his distance so as not to be identified with Him ([Mark 14:54](#)). There's no question that fear gripped him. Peter was afraid Jesus would die, and he was fearful for his own life as well. The world hated Jesus, and Peter found that he was not prepared to face the ridicule and persecution that Jesus was suffering. Earlier, Jesus had warned His disciples as well as us today, "*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first*" ([John 16:18](#)). Peter quickly found he wasn't nearly as bold and courageous as he had proclaimed, and in fear he denied the One who had loved him.

We might well wonder why Jesus allowed Peter to fail so miserably and deny his Lord three times that night. Jesus revealed to Peter that Satan had asked for permission to sift Peter like wheat ([Luke 22:31](#)). Jesus could have easily protected Peter and not allowed Satan to sift him, but Jesus had a higher goal. He was equipping Peter to strengthen his brothers ([Luke 22:32](#)). Not only did Peter strengthen the other disciples, but he became the pillar of the early church in Jerusalem, exhorting and training others to follow the Lord Jesus ([Acts 2](#)). And he continues to this day to strengthen us through his epistles. As with all our failures, God used Peter's many failures, including his three denials of Christ, to turn him from Simon, a common man with a common name, into Peter, the Rock.

## Missionary Update Afghanistan

Omid is home, still needs oxygen but is like a new little boy. He is able to be off oxygen 3-4 hours a day. Because of people's generosity we are able to provide the family with oxygen for at least another 4 months. Keep him in prayer. We are believing for complete healing. His father is now listening to the NT.

I called the government and they said we have to move Najumdin (16 year old) to a juvenile center. They made room for him and he is supposed to go Wednesday. But he told our counselor he will go home on. He knows in his head we had to respect the government law but feels rejected and hurt. He has quite a past with gangs so please pray that he changes his heart and goes. We are permitted to visit and I said that someone would come weekly but he is adamant that he is leaving.

I was informed that our house owner's brothers want to sell the house that NL is currently in. They will honor our contract, which goes to Feb 1 next year but that still means we need a new place. The guys are a bit sad as we have really invested in this house to make it beautiful and a home.

A son of one of our residents came yesterday after his mother had beaten him for not getting her drugs. She is addicted and the husband in our center started her on drugs. Pray we can find a place for the mother. They have a 21 year old son who will have to become responsible for the other two children at home.

I was informed the other day that there is a problem with my work permit. The man in charge does not want to grant me a new work permit because my degree is a bachelor of arts and says nothing about helping drug addicts. He does not care about my 35 years of experience he told our office worker. I think it work out as God has given me favor with the Dept of Drug Reduction officials. They will contact him. Keep this in prayer.

Praise our God, the guy I have often asked to pray would leave his employment and work for us has decided to do that. They asked him why he is leaving and he said I am opening a treasure chest and finding treasures that are more fulfilling than this current line of work!

Jaweed is to come this week and I hope stay with me. Apparently the US is about to grant him his visa so he can go for his Master's degree. Please pray that works out and that he makes a final decision to follow Jesus.

**I cannot tell you how much I covet your prayers! John**

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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](http://www.philaccess.org) or [www.facebook.com/philaccess](http://www.facebook.com/philaccess).

### **WEEKLY SERVICES /MEETINGS**

	<b>Meets at FCA</b>	<b>Meets at PAC</b>
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 &amp; 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>Discipleship class (Fellowship hall)</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>Free Indeed</i>

- *Coram Deo*: A men’s Bible study and Christian fellowship.
- *Free Indeed*; Is a Spirit led Men’s Fellowship that emphasizes godly counsel, leading to spiritual growth, healing and deliverance.
- *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
- For our Pastor and his family
- Paula Grazulis

**If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 2 Timothy 2:12**