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## Inside News

Love = The only thing  
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Dr. Dan Coffin  
Pastor, River of Life Church

I am sure you have even if you may not have recognized it. God speaks in so many ways. The Bible tells us that all of creation reveals the glory of God and declares His greatness. The mountains sing and the trees clap their hands and the oceans roar with praises unto him. Even the invisible things of God are clearly seen in the visible creation that declares His eternal power (Romans 1:20).

Recorded in the scriptures are the many ways God speaks to us. Dreams, visions, angels, animals, a loud thunderous voice, and sometimes a small voice as soft as a whisper. The heavens, the heights, angels, sun, moon, stars of light, mighty creatures, oceans depths, fire, hail, snow, clouds, stormy wind, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, cedars, beasts, cattle, creeping things, and flying fowl, kings of the earth, princes, judges, young men, maidens, old men, and children all are voices praising God and speaking of His greatness (Psalms 148). Jesus said, "he that has ears to hear let him hear what the

## Have You Heard The Voice Of God Lately?

Spirit says..." (Mark 4:9)

Jesus is called the Word of God. He is the voice of God. Jesus said, "The words I speak are not my own but what I hear the Father say..." (John 14:10). The Book of Hebrews tells us that God spoke to people by the prophets, but now He is speaking to us by His Son and describes him as the "brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Are you paying attention to His voice? God said the children of Israel got into trouble when they stopped listening to God's voice but made their own voices loud. Jesus is "the Word made flesh." (John 1:14) In other words, the life of Jesus spoke not only with words but everything Jesus did revealed who God is and His love for all humanity.

Why don't people hear what God is saying? Jesus said they have closed their eyes and ears and "Their minds are dull and slow to perceive, their ears are plugged and are hard of hearing, and they have deliberately shut their eyes to the truth. Otherwise, they would open their eyes to see, and open their ears to hear, and open their minds to understand. Then they would turn to me, and I would

instantly heal them." (Matthew 13:15 TPT)

Man's inability to hear God's voice is often because of the many other voices that demand his attention or even the purposeful "loudness" self-imposed through the radio or stereo to drown out any silence that would give him the opportunity to hear God. It is amazing to think that man's opinion of God is so intimidating that man would purposefully attempt to not hear the very voice of love and forgiveness we see so plainly in the life and words of Jesus.

Do you have ears to hear? Who are you listening to? Why not seek a place of silence where you can open your ears and your heart to hear the "good news" God has for you?

Dr. Dan Coffin and his wife Dianne co-pastor River of Life Church at 410 E. Chapman Rd. in Lutz, FL. 33549, (813) 949-9931, [www.roltampa.org](http://www.roltampa.org) We would love to invite you to visit River of Life Church.

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- Heart/Small Intestine - Lack of enthusiasm, depression, mental restlessness, insomnia, and despair
- Kidney/Urinary Bladder - Fear, weak willpower, insecure, isolated

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**Don't Forget About Loving Yourself  
Too. Happy Valentine's Day!**

*Samantha Taylor, Samantha Taylor Fitness*

That may seem like an odd statement. However, I think that is the art that so many people have lost, especially women. Women usually take care of everyone else but themselves: their kids, spouse, parents, or career—then, if they have any energy left, they may take care of their health or body. But the problem with this way of living is that if you are not really taking care of you, you won't have the energy to fully enjoy all the other things you are doing.

Since my personal training studios have helped over 7,700 women lose weight or get fit, I tend to hear the same things over and over again: "I am so tired that I don't even have the energy to play with my kids at night, let alone spend time with my husband," or "I am so sick of always thinking about my weight or what I am going to wear," or "I want to feel good again because I just hate feeling this way!"

The challenge is that so many women don't know how to take some time for themselves. Yes, all your other responsibilities are important, but if you don't also take care of you, you will regret it. You can wake up one day and find yourself 50 pounds overweight or in a size 18 or sitting at the doctor being told you have diabetes or heart disease. And the scary thing about heart disease is, many times the first symptom that someone has it is sudden death! Did you know heart disease is the #1 killer of women in this country!? 1 in every 5 female deaths is from heart disease.

I find it interesting that Jesus' reply to being asked, "What is the most important commandment in the Bible?" was that He answered, "To love God with all your heart, soul and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>8</sup> Interesting. How can you love your neighbor as yourself if you don't even love you?

It is not a selfish thing to take care of your health and mental well being. It's responsibility for your body and it's actually good for your family, too. The body you have right now is the only body you get until the day you die, so why not start loving it and taking care of it now? If you don't, the body will quickly start to fall apart and we wonder, "How did this happen to my body?"

I encourage you to break through any excuses of why you aren't doing something and just do it. Give yourself a gift for Valentine's Day. Do something nice for yourself like get a massage, take a hot bath, or get a facial. And I encourage you with this new year to really start to take care of the body God has given you and hire a personal trainer to help you (and husbands, many women enjoy having the gift of a personal trainer, probably not for Valentine's Day but another day).

Learning how to eat in a way you enjoy is key if you want to be able to keep it off. Not a program that is going to put you on drugs or starvation diets so you can't maintain it once you go off them but a place that helps you to learn how to eat, get physically fit, and be around women like yourself. We serve many clients in their 50's to 70's in our personal training program.

If a place like mine sounds good to you, visit my website so you can set up a time to check out our studios. I want you to see how easy it really can be to get results when you make that decision that it is time to start taking care of you.

[www.SamanthaTaylorFitness.com](http://www.SamanthaTaylorFitness.com) (813) 377-3739 \*Matthew 22:36-40

# Preventing and Treating COVID-19 in Children and Teens

*By Karen McBride*

We are well aware that adults can contract COVID-19, but, unfortunately, children and teens are also susceptible. However, there are certain precautions we can take to reduce the chance of becoming ill with COVID-19 or the flu.

Wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, limit exposure to people outside the home, and wear masks.

Hand washing should last for 20 seconds. Try to make it fun with your child by singing his or her favorite song while hand washing.

Encourage your child or teen to practice social distancing. Limit the people they are exposed to whenever possible. If you can leave them at home with a family member while you go to the store, then do so. If they must go out in public, they should wear a cloth mask and use hand sanitizer often.

Clean and disinfect your home, especially toys, doorknobs, tables, light switches, television remote controls, and, of course, bathrooms.

As in flu prevention, eating a healthy, well-balanced meal, getting enough sleep as well as plenty of outdoor exercise in the fresh air and sunshine, can help to build your immune system to fight off the illnesses.

If you suspect your child has been exposed to COVID-19, the symptoms can include fever, cough, nasal congestion or runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, poor appetite, new loss of taste or smell, or belly pain.

If your child is exhibiting any of these symptoms, call to schedule an appointment with Dr. Michele Johnson-Towson of Pediatric Place of Tampa, a board-certified pediatrician with over 30 years of experience in caring for children ages newborn to 21 years old.

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## A Little Boy's Explanation of God



It was written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, CA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment to explain God.

EXPLANATION OF GOD:

"One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on Earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies, I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church. Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him.

But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said okay.

His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time. You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God! Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon, anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids. But you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back any time he pleases. And that's why I believe in God."

## Kidz Corner: Wreaths Across America

Hi! My name is Harley, and in this article, we will learn about a non-profit organization called Wreaths Across America. It is an organization that honors military soldiers who fought for our freedom. Every year, thousands of people get wreaths to place on the graves of our military heroes. The story of WAA goes a bit like this:

The owner of a wreath company remembered a trip that he had taken to Arlington National Cemetery and wanted to honor the people buried there. He started placing wreaths on graves privately until a picture of the wreaths circulated around the internet. Now, thousands of people place wreaths to honor the people who fought for our country.

How I found out about Wreaths Across America was:

I do a thing called American Heritage Girls. It is kind of a Christian Girl Scouts, where girls become women of integrity. One of our service projects was doing Wreaths Across America! The problem was, usually about 6,000 people come to the cemetery we were going to, but 30,000 people went! We waited in a line of cars for about two hours, but once we were inside the cemetery, there were no more wreaths left! But, we still got to honor and remember the people buried there. The important thing - all the graves had wreaths on them.

These heroes fought and died for our freedom. Jesus also died for our freedom from sin. Shouldn't He also be honored and loved? Bye!

Harley Isabel Smith is a 4th grader who has been featured on TV as a philanthropist, has a heart for evangelism, and writes monthly for the Gazette's Kid's Corner.

Visit <https://harleyisabelsmith.com> where she is constantly adding written and video content to entertain and educate children.

**Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."**



I heard about this 85 year old man. He was out fishing one morning and he heard a voice saying, "Pick me up." He looked all around and didn't see anybody. He thought he was dreaming, then he heard it again. "Pick me up." He looked down and saw a frog. He said in amazement, "Are you talking to me?" The frog said, "Yes. Pick me up and kiss me, and I'll turn into a beautiful bride." The man quickly picked him up and put him in his front pocket. The frog said, "Wait a minute, I said kiss me and I'll turn into a beautiful bride."

The man said, "No thanks, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

*Say it like you mean it. Joel Osteen*

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# Giving Human Trafficking Victims Hope Through Bridging Freedom

By Karen McBride

While completing her master’s degree, Laura Hamilton joined a U.S. Department of Justice funded task force for Tampa Bay on human trafficking. It was then that God placed on her heart to start Bridging Freedom for victims of human trafficking to give young girls recovered from child-sex trafficking a place to live and to help them along the path to healing.

There are currently two homes on over 100 acres in an undisclosed location. The two homes can provide shelter for 12 girls, ages 13-17. In an effort to provide a home for more girls, Bridging Freedom is partnering with Rotary Clubs and other donors to build a third house.

The girls may be runaways, fleeing from a dysfunctional home and end up as victims. The experienced staff will help the girls to understand what situations define human trafficking. Some are not even aware that they are a victim of it. Girls may remain in this safe haven for a year or more where they focus on healing from the physical, mental, and emotional trauma, and are filled with hope for a better life.


“It’s a beautiful thing when you see that hope come to them,” said Laura.

With a high staff to child ratio, they are able to meet the needs of the girls. It can take 3 to 4 months just to stabilize a victim of human trafficking to begin their long road of recovery. The professional team includes therapists, nurse, educator, case manager, and residential caretakers that help her to begin to process all that she has been through.

In addition to health care, girls receive educational training, therapeutic interventions, such as equine, music, art, gardening therapies, survivor mentorship, life skills including balancing a budget and taking care of a car, career development, and transitional mentorship for the time when the girls are ready to leave the facility and start on their own.

The organization’s tagline is “restoring stolen childhoods” and the staff accomplish this through counseling and helping the girls to feel special and loved with birthday parties, Christmas celebrations, and many recreational outings.

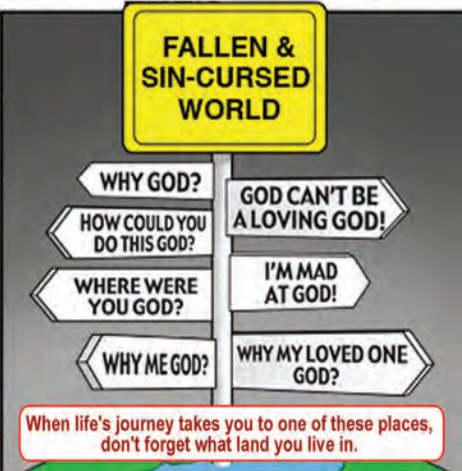



In addition to helping the victims, Bridging Freedom works with the community, focusing on awareness and prevention. The organization participates in events throughout the year, including Light Up the Night, where funds are raised for agencies that fight human trafficking, and support survivors.

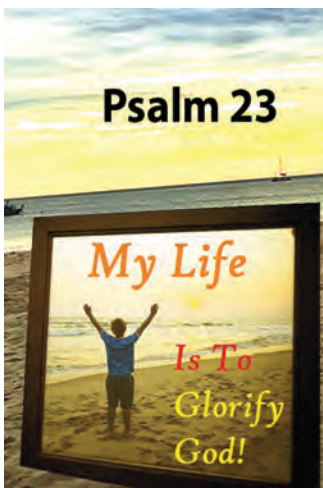


If you would like to support Bridging Freedom, gift card donations are needed to enable the girls to go on various adventures, fun outings and shopping. Grocery store cards are welcome too. Health and nutrition are an important part of the recovery process on the road to living independent, healthy lives. The girls are taught nutrition and how to prepare well-balanced meals. For more information about this organization, go to <https://www.bridgingfreedom.org>.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.” — 1 Corinthians 13:4-6


## Adam & Eve After Celebrating in the Garden of Eden...





The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## An Act of Kindness: The Good Samaritan

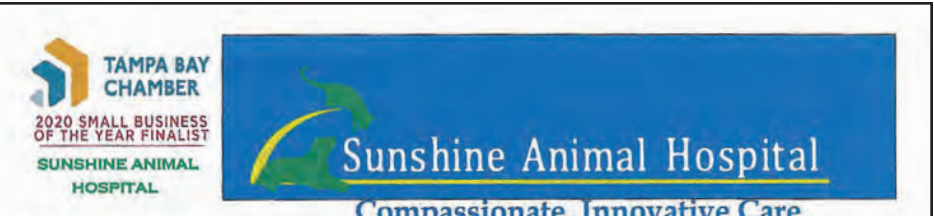


Jesus answered, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance a certain priest was going down that way. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he travelled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion, came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, ‘Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.’ Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?”

He said, “He who showed mercy on him.”


Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

— Luke 10:30–37, World English Bible






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## GFWC Clubwoman of the Year



Photo: (L-R) Member Honoree Elaine Pittman and Annette Bellinger

club. For more information and/or membership opportunities, please visit [gfwlutlandolakes-womansclub.org](http://gfwlutlandolakes-womansclub.org) or its Facebook page.

GFWC Lutz-Land O'lakes Woman's Club members have selected longtime member Elaine Pittman as their Clubwoman of the Year for her outstanding service within the club and community for many years. Elaine is well-known locally as "The Plant Lady" who is always present in her plant booth at club flea markets and other events. She propagates her plants and sells them to raise funds for her favorite charity, Christian Social Services in Land O'Lakes. Over the years, Ms. Pittman has donated thousands of dollars raised through her plant sales to help support the underserved homeless community through CSS. Past President Annette Bellinger presented Ms. Pittman with a commemorative plaque on behalf of the

## GFWC Valentine Packets

GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club members gathered to assemble hundreds of Valentine's Day cards and treats to be distributed by Meals on Wheels for the housebound seniors to enjoy with their meal deliveries. Each packet contained a sweet Valentine with a handwritten message together with a really sweet chocolate heart confection to raise the seniors' spirits and bring cheer. For more information on this community service organization or membership opportunities, please visit [gfwlutlandolakeswomansclub.org](http://gfwlutlandolakeswomansclub.org) or its Facebook page.



Members (L-R) Helen Fornino, Dorrien Zilavetz, Lois Cohen, Judie McHenry, Aniko Solomonson and Sandi Giddens

## Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano Sponsors the Humane Society of Pasco County During the Month of February



During the month of February, the Humane Society of Pasco County will be the featured charitable giving organization at the Pasco County Tax Collector's Office. The Humane Society of Pasco County is a 100% no-kill shelter which is run solely by volunteers and community donations.

"Our shelter is a safe place for the lost, abandoned & abused animals of Pasco County," comments Shelter Director Suellen Szesyski. "The animals stay with us until their forever family finds them, no list or time limits. Each animal receives attention daily and if they require vet care they receive it with no limits."

"The Humane Society of Pasco County provides a needed service to countless animals who are left homeless, hurt and without care," states Tax Collector Mike Fasano. "Our office features a wide variety of charities each month and it is our honor to help shine the spotlight on the Humane Society of Pasco County. Each dollar raised will have an enormous impact on the health and well-being of the animals that are under the protection of this fine organization. Please consider stopping by one of our five offices and donating during the month of February."

For more information about the charitable giving programs and other services at the Pasco Tax Collector's Office, please visit [www.pascotaxes.com](http://www.pascotaxes.com) or call Greg Giordano, Assistant Tax Collector/ Communications & Special Projects at 727-847-8179.

For more information regarding The Humane Society of Pasco County please visit [www.humanesocietyofpasco.org](http://www.humanesocietyofpasco.org) or contact Shelter Director Suellen Szesyski at 727-856-6762.



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## Pasco Tax Collector Offices Raised \$3,800 for AmSkills as its November Charity of the Month



Staff and management from the Pasco County Tax Collector's Office and AmSkills, including Tax Collector Mike Fasano and County Commissioner Kathryn Starkey

During the month of November, the five Pasco County Tax Collector's Offices raised \$3,800 in donations on behalf of AmSkills, a non-profit program created to prepare qualified individuals interested in learning skills to work in the manufacturing field. Based in Pasco County,

AmSkills offers programs from entry-level training to job placement assistance throughout the Tampa Bay area.

"AmSkills is bringing hands-on skills training to youth and adults in low-to-mid

income neighborhoods through the use of our Mobile Workshop and introducing them to great careers in the manufacturing industry," states Tom Mudano, President & CEO of AmSkills. "Thank you so much for the generous gift from the community, your incredible support and belief in the AmSkills' vision to "Transform Lives Through Workforce Training & Apprenticeships." We are grateful!"

"I have long been a proponent of technical education as an alternative to college, especially for those with talents and abilities that are best suited to manufacturing and technology," remarks Tax Collector Mike Fasano. "We were proud to support AmSkills during the month of November as our Charity of the Month. I am very grateful to our hardworking staff and a very generous community for helping us raise these funds. Thank you to all who made this fundraising effort possible."

For more details regarding the charitable giving program at the Pasco County Tax Collector's Office, please contact Greg Giordano, Assistant Tax Collector at 727-847-8179 or visit [www.pascotaxes.com](http://www.pascotaxes.com). For more information about AmSkills please visit [www.amskills.org](http://www.amskills.org) or contact Sergio De Oliveira, General Manager at 727.301.1282 ext. 125.

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."  
— Ephesians 5: 1-2

## Missing People

One of Pasco Sheriff's Office's most common calls for service is to find missing people. From runaway individuals, to those experiencing a medical condition or thoughts of self harm, our goal is the same; bring those who are missing home safe.

Pasco Sheriff's Office recently updated our policies for posting missing people on our social media and news website. We now post runaway individuals to our social media accounts and the Pasco Sheriff's Office News website at <https://news.pascosheriff.com>. Our online presence and social media audience often help us find those who are missing and generates tips quickly.

PSO has forefront resources available to assist with bringing missing individuals home safely. Pasco Sheriff's Office Aviation unit assists with missing person search and recovery missions, deploying drones and helicopters that can cover a wider range and travel at a faster pace from the air. Our K9s are vital to these searches, often working faster than deputies searching alone and bringing home those that are missing. PSO also has the Missing and Abducted Child Team (MAC), who responds to calls in Pasco County where children are critically missing due to health issues, age or other reasons, as well as child abductions.

Wandering is the most life-threatening behavior that leads to missing people. SafetyNet was developed to help public safety agencies bring loved ones with cognitive conditions home when they go missing. Once an individual is reported missing, SafetyNet is notified and activates their device. Once activated, the device emits a continuous radio frequency signal for rescue teams to track. If you have a loved one who is prone to wandering you can learn more by visiting <http://safetynettracking.com> or calling 727-844-7781.

If you suspect someone may attempt running away, encourage them to work through their problems through other means. Pasco Sheriff's Office has compiled community-based resources on our website to help serve our citizens. Resources are available for various challenges citizens may encounter, including mental health concerns, houselessness, suicidal thoughts and more. This resource list was developed to give those seeking assistance a place to start when they may not know how. To see these resources, visit [PascoSheriff.com/MentalHealth.html](http://PascoSheriff.com/MentalHealth.html)

Rapid reporting increases the chance of a safe return. You do not need to wait 24 hours for someone to be considered missing. Gathering information such as the individual's last known location, date and time seen can help law enforcement begin their search. Preparing a physical description of the individual, including their approximate height, weight, date of birth, hair and eye color, a description of the clothes they were last seen wearing and any distinct physical markings they may have helps as well. We try to use recent photos, which are often provided by family or a guardian.

To be clear, there is not an increase in runaway or missing persons cases in our community. We strive to find missing people quickly and safely. We publicly provide information the help the community identify someone to bring them home safe. Our goal remains the same: bring these individuals home, safe and sound. With the community's help, and in line with our motto of "We Fight as One," we're able to do just that.

Pasco Sheriff's Office  
727-844-7705

"A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble."  
— Charles Spurgeon

# The Great Florida Outdoors: The Green Swamp West Tract

Dr. Robert Norman, Clinical Professor, Dermatology, Nova Southeastern University



The 560,000-acre Green Swamp spans four counties and gives rise to four major river systems and provides much of central Florida’s drinking water supply. A large part of the preserve is up-land hardwoods, pine flatwoods, open prairie land, and low ridges bounded by prominent sandy ridgelines. Cypress and floodplain swamps are an important part of this vast mosaic of natural communities.

The Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve is managed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and covers 110,000 acres of east Pasco and west Sumpter County. The Green Swamp West Tract is a 37,350 acre portion of the Preserve located entirely in Pasco County. The Withlacoochee River, whose headwaters originate in the Green Swamp, flows for 36 miles through the Preserve on its 110 mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico and is protected as an Outstanding Florida Water within the Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve.

Three other rivers originate from this area—the Ocklawaha River, the Hillsborough River, and the Peace River. In addition to the West Tract, there are four other management units: Colt Creek State Park — 5,067 acres; East Tract — 51,149 acres; Hampton Tract — 11,052 acres, and Little Withlacoochee Tract — 4,446 acres.

The Green Swamp region is a plateau above surrounding areas and is an important physiographic feature of Florida. Rainwater helps create its four major rivers and also percolates down through the soil to replenish the Floridian aquifer system, the primary source of drinking water for most Floridians. Because of its elevation above outlying areas, the underground aquifer rises very close to the land surface and the region functions as the pressure head for the aquifer. The protection of the Green Swamp is vital to protecting the quality and quantity of Florida’s water supply. In 1974, the state of Florida designated 322,000 acres of the Green Swamp region as an Area of Critical State Concern.

More than 65 miles of roads and multi-use trails fan out from the entrance. Approximately 31 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail run through Green Swamp East and West tracts.

To cover the expansive territory, Ed and I took our electric bikes (ebikes). We were both fairly new to ebikes but we knew they should work great in the diverse terrain and allow us to explore more of what the area offered. We biked for a couple miles and parked to explore nature. Over the course of the day we found several species of lichens (one of our new passions) including Speckled Blister Lichen tryptethelium tropicum. We also found cinnamon fern, royal fern, resurrection fern, giant swordfern, Virginia chainfern, upright sedge, mermaidweed, wax myrtles, southern bayberry, bog white violet, orange milkwort, water oak trees, black gum trees, black cherry, frostweed, and inkberry. A few times we found the dirt trails to be covered by water from the previous day’s rains, but we managed to maneuver our way past any impediments and enjoy an invigorating trip with several nature-filled stops before reaching our cars.

We found a very unique cypress tree with trees growing out from its extended trunk and limbs. In many locations we spotted longleaf pines stretched skyward, their tops swaying in the wind. Many other species, including Florida black bear, raccoon, and deer live on the property, along with numerous bird, butterfly, and dragonfly species.

If you have the time and energy, a 1.5-mile connector trail leads to Withlacoochee River Park. A small boat ramp is located on River Road and there are numerous camping options to extend your visit including equestrian and primitive sites. Seasonal hunting for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and wild hogs takes place in the area so check on these dates.

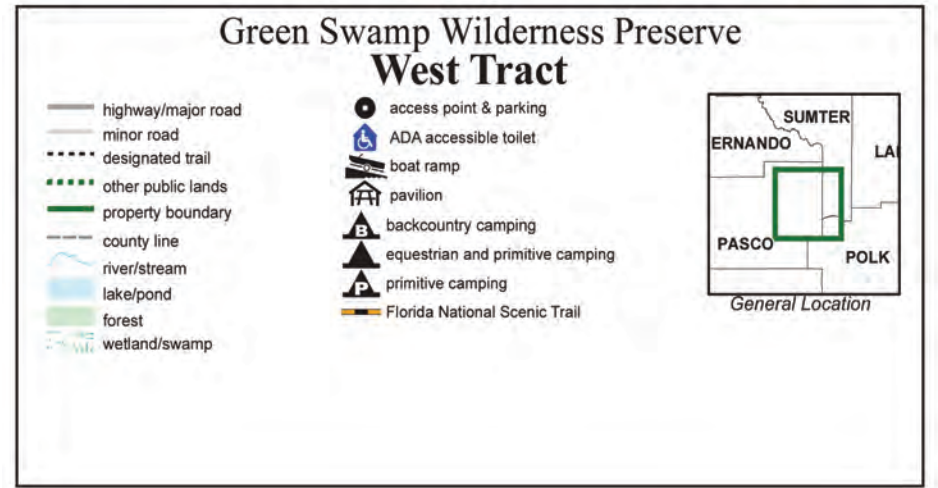
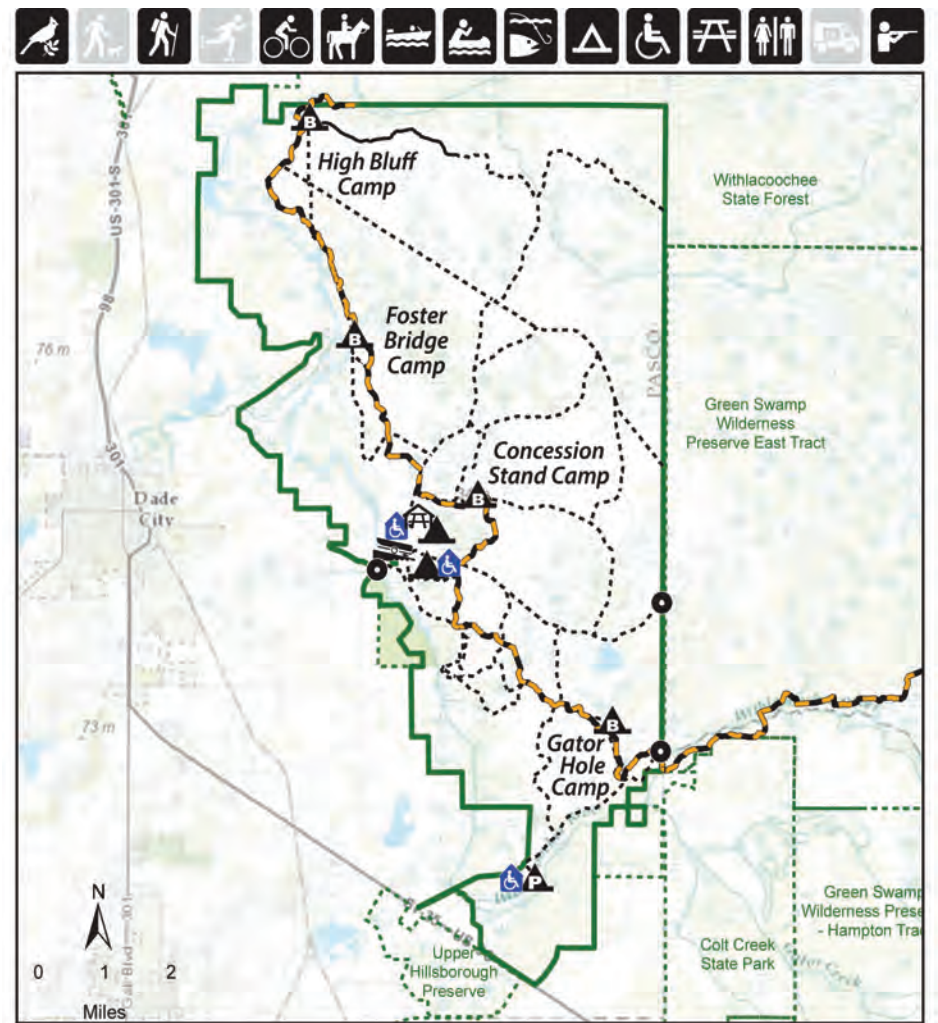
Where can you find this great place in nature?



## Get out and enjoy the Great Florida Outdoors!

The Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve’s West Tract  
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Dr. Norman is an advanced master naturalist graduate of the FMNP program from UF and a board-certified dermatologist based in Tampa and Riverview. He can be reached at 813-880-7546.



“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.”  
— 1 John 4:7-9

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## The First Valentine

You may not be aware that Valentine’s Day was originally a religious holiday. Pope Gelasius 1 established the holiday in 500 AD to commemorate the death of one or more early Christian martyrs named Valentine.

The first recorded association of Valentine’s Day with romantic love was by Chaucer in 1382. Not until the mid-19th century were valentine cards mass-produced and sent to commemorate the love we feel for people who are special in our lives.

But none of these mark the first valentine offered. John 3:16 notes God so loved the world that he gave his Son to it and for it. The first valentine came in the form of the life of Jesus Christ.

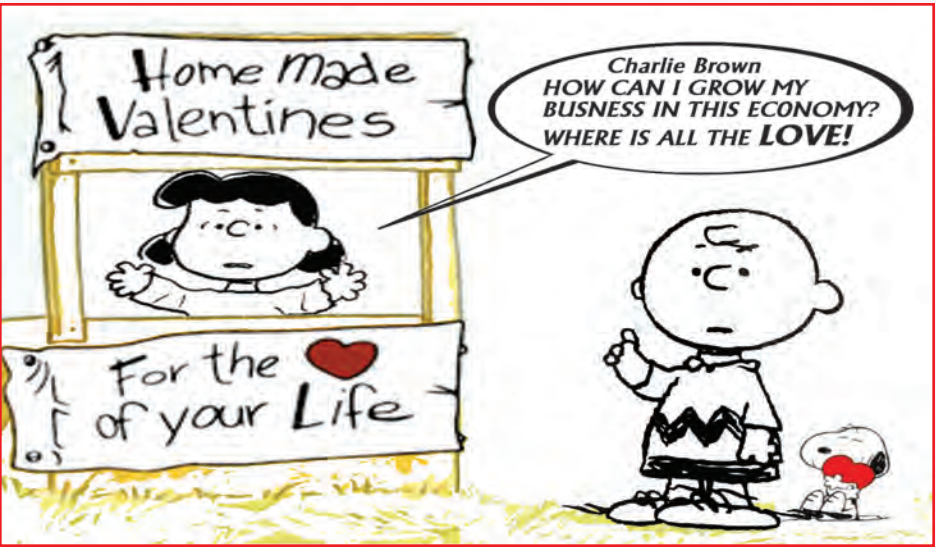
Most of us can recognize the cross, with Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection as God’s gift of love to us. It is the most powerful symbol we have to remind us how much he cares for us and desires to be in relationship with us.

We also need to realize that the life Jesus lived is also part of God’s valentine to us. Jesus said he had no place to lay his head. So he can identify with and love the homeless. He often went without food and other necessities. So he can identify with and love the poor. He worked as a carpenter for most of his life. So he can identify with and love the working class.

He spent his time with those who were looked down upon by others. So he can identify and love those outside of the “in crowd.” He was tempted by wrong, so he can identify with and love those struggling to get their lives “right.”

He suffered the ordinary trials and tribulations of life, so he can identify with and love those going through them today. He suffered abuse, so he can identify with and love those abused by loved ones, strangers and even our culture.

His life is the greatest valentine you will ever receive. His suffering and death are the greatest symbols of love that exist. I pray you will take the time to meditate upon this wonderful act of love and experience His love afresh in your heart. Happy Valentines!



## Valentine’s Day: One of America’s Most Popular Days



There’s no doubt that Valentine’s Day is one of America’s most popular days. More than 62% of Americans celebrate by sending greeting cards, flowers, candy, jewelry, or by enjoying a romantic dinner. But the origin of Valentine’s Day is surprising.

For example, the roots behind Valentine’s Day go all the way back to an ancient Roman fraternity fest held in mid-February called Lupercalia. Later, the Christian church chose mid-February for Saint Valentine’s Day in order to Christianize the celebration, but who was St. Valentine?

Not much was known about the holiday’s namesake. First of all, there was more than one such Christian priest. One thought it was unjust and defied the Emperor and continued to marry young lovers in secret. Emperor Claudius II banned marriage for young Roman men, thinking single men made better soldiers.

Eventually, the Emperor caught on to the priest’s actions, and he was arrested and sentenced to death. Pope Gelasius declared February 14th as the date honoring Valentine’s Day near the end of the 5th century. It wasn’t until the 1300’s that the holiday became associated with love and romance.

Back then, people believed that February 14th also was the beginning of the birds’ mating season. The first written Valentine greeting appeared in the 15th century, and by the 17th century people in Great Britain had begun a tradition of exchanging Valentine cards or letters.

Valentine’s Day soon caught on in the U.S. as well. The first mass-produced holiday cards emerged in 1840, and Valentine’s Day soon exploded into a major consumer holiday. Today, an estimated 1 billion Valentine cards are sent each year, more than any other holiday except for Christmas. More than 35 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolate are sold, and 220 million roses produced for the holiday in a year.

Altogether, Americans spend around \$20 billion on Valentine’s Day, an average of \$130 dollars per person per year. While the most popular gifts were candy and flowers, nearly 20% of Americans splurge on jewelry, shelling out \$4 billion annually. Those who prefer the ultimate romantic gesture are definitely not alone. A recent survey reveals at least six million couples are likely to get engaged on February 14th.

<http://www.history.com/videos/history-of-valentines-day#bet-you-didnt-know-valentines-day>

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## One More Valentine

I grew up reading Charlie Brown in the Sunday comics. Valentine’s Day was not Charlie Brown’s favorite holiday. Each year, he would eagerly look in his mailbox, but he never received a valentine card. One year he did, but Lucy convinced him it was a mistake.

Each year, we give family, friends and loved ones little treats and special valentine cards. We also remember those who are kind or have done something special.

Then, there are those people we purposely chose not to remember, and there are those who don’t even come to mind. In each of our lives, there are “Charlie Browns” who will not receive any token of love or attention.

Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was. He answered, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” But he didn’t stop there. He continued, “A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Did you catch the “equally important” part? It is important that our love for God flows over into our love for others. Notice that he said we are to love others “as” ourselves, not “for” ourselves. When we love those who love us, are kind to us, or have done something special for us, we love them “for” ourselves.

Jesus said to the Pharisees, “If you only love those who love you, why should you get credit for that?”

It was a rhetorical question. He knew the answer was “You don’t.” He continued, “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High.”

This year, perhaps you can find it in your heart to buy one more valentine. Ask God to bring someone to your mind who probably will not receive one or who might need to receive one from you. Who knows, your card might just be the one they’ve been looking for.

After all, we once received a valentine from God. It was in the shape of a cross. On it, He declared His love for you and me.

He did this even though we weren’t thinking of Him. Maybe it’s time to love someone else the way we were loved. Unconditionally.

*Previously submitted by a follower of Jesus*

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*"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth." — Psalm 96:11-13*

*My sister in Christ, Connie in Colorado*

## Gulfside Hospice Volunteers Needed In Pasco County

The Gulfside Hospice volunteer team is looking for a few extra hands and hearts to help make a difference in the lives of hospice patients and families.


The organization is in need of volunteers to help with a variety of tasks, both patient-facing and administrative. For anyone interested in learning more about volunteering with Gulfside, a virtual webinar is planned for Friday, Feb. 11 at noon. To sign up, visit [www.gulfside.org/volunteer-with-gulfside.html](http://www.gulfside.org/volunteer-with-gulfside.html) or call Gena Voigt, Volunteer Outreach Specialist, at 727-845-5707.

Roles of a patient care volunteer can include visiting with patients, running errands for patients and caregivers, assisting in the Gulfside Centers for Hospice Care, playing music for patients, making cards for patients during quarterly DIY Zoom sessions, and more. Other non-patient-facing roles are also available, including administrative support, providing Patient and Caregiver Telephone Support (PACT), filing paperwork, helping with special events, and volunteering at the Gulfside Hospice Thrift Shoppes.


Volunteers must be at least 15 years of age. All volunteer applicants age 18 and older must complete a background check after their application is submitted. All new Gulfside Hospice volunteers receive specialized training and their schedule is created around their availability. For more information about volunteering, visit [www.gulfside.org/volunteer-with-gulfside.html](http://www.gulfside.org/volunteer-with-gulfside.html) or call Voigt at 727-845-5707.

### About Gulfside Healthcare Services:

Gulfside Healthcare Services is a non-profit organization serving the community for more than 32 years. Its three lines of business include Gulfside Hospice, offering care for patients at end of life, Gulfside Palliative Care, providing treatment options for those with chronic illness, and Gulfside Home Health, helping patients stay independent through skilled nursing and rehab at home. For more information about Gulfside Healthcare Services, visit [www.Gulfside.org](http://www.Gulfside.org) or call 800-561-4883.



## Get your Smile on!

Think about this: 

- \* Many folks want to serve God, but only as an adviser.
- \* Do you think "stop, drop, and roll" will work in Hell?
- \* Some minds are like concrete: thoroughly mixed up and have permanently set.
- \* God loves everyone but probably prefers "fruits of the Spirit" over nuts!
- \* The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes came close.
- \* Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on the front door forever.
- \* Quit griping about your church! If it was perfect, you couldn't belong.
- \* If your church needs a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has.
- \* The best mathematical equation is 1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given.
- \* God Himself doesn't propose to judge a man until he's dead. So why should you?
- \* Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.
- \* We don't change the message, the message changes us.
- \* Why advertise your business to keep God's word in print media? He will give you something to sing about and something you can dance to.

## AVAILABLE NOW!



# Happy Valentine's Day

from Dunndean Publications

## Obtaining a Medical Cannabis Card

By Karen McBride

The negative side effects of pharmaceuticals have caused patients to search for more natural forms of treatment. According to the National Center for Complimentary and Integrative Health, people have used cannabis, also called marijuana, for a variety of health conditions for at least 3,000 years.

Clinical studies on the use of medical cannabis or medical marijuana began over 20 years ago. More recently, medical marijuana has gained national attention as a growing number of states and territories have enacted laws to legalize it.

Medical marijuana has been effective in reducing the symptoms of such diseases as fibromyalgia, neuropathic pain, Alzheimer's disease, and even helps protect against spontaneous seizures for patients suffering from epilepsy. Other conditions that benefit from the use of medical marijuana include:

- Cancer - medical marijuana is proven to be effective at treating cancer-related symptoms and treatment-related side effects, including nausea, appetite, sleep, and pain issues.
- Arthritis - arthritis sufferers have found relief from inflammation, pain, and stiffness when using medical marijuana.
- Glaucoma – glaucoma increases pressure in the eyeball, damaging the optic nerve and causing loss of vision. Marijuana decreases the pressure inside the eye.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder ("PTSD") - One of the qualifying conditions in Florida is PTSD, which is an anxiety disorder. Our bodies contain an endocannabinoid system, which brings balance to the other systems in our body. The natural alternative to pharmaceuticals is successful in treating such a variety of conditions because it is also contains cannabinoids similar to those all mammals produce, and, therefore, similar to a supplement.

The supplement comes in many forms. In addition to being inhaled, it is available in a topical cream, patch, drops, nasal mist, and more to fit the patient's needs and comfort level.


The first step in purchasing medical marijuana is to become certified by a licensed and certified medical marijuana doctor. You do not need to see your primary care physician first. Once you have been approved by the doctor, the request is processed by the state. When completed, you will receive an email and then be able to purchase medical marijuana from several locations throughout the Tampa Bay area. The supplement can be delivered directly to your house.

Medical marijuana is not covered by health insurance, but it is affordable. Since it is still against federal law, insurance companies cannot cover it. To schedule your appointment, call 813-756-0091 or 844-420-7277 or visit <http://certifiedmarijuanadoc-tors.com> or <http://cmmdr.com>.

What our patients are saying...

*"With a wide range of health problems, I came in as a skeptical wreck, and these people were so patient and understanding, and helpful. I cannot thank them enough. I am having unbelievable results. My husband said I am a different person. Things that I didn't expect to benefit, it has helped. From reducing my blood sugar, to pain, sleep, everything has been beneficial. With NO side effects. Being a very religious person, I was taught this was not good, and all I can say now, is God put it here, and it works. I tell everyone who will listen. This has dramatically changed my life for the better.*

— Carmen D.



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— 1 John 3:16-18

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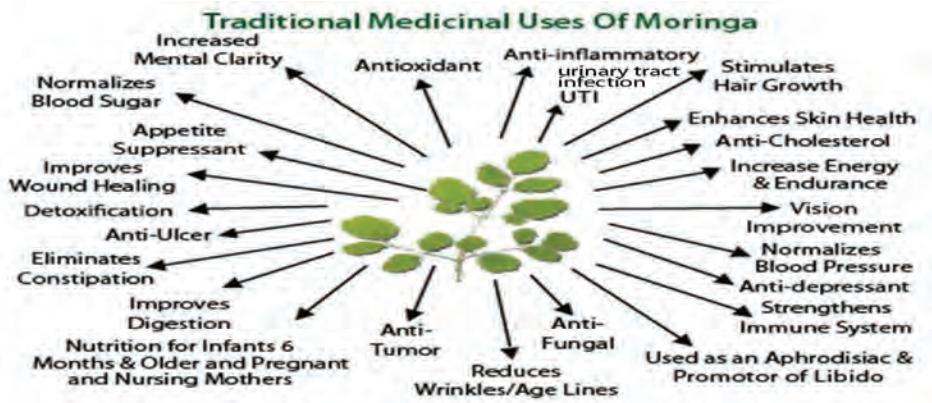
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## Architectural Signage and Printing Banners, Promotional Items and More!

By Karen McBride



Architectural Signage and Printing (“ASAP”) has been serving the Lutz-Land O’ Lakes community for over 30 years providing a variety of printing needs. Large format printing for banners and posterboards, promotional items, business cards, embroidered hats, and other wearables are just a few things that the local business offers.

If you see a neighbor with a “Happy Birthday” or “Congratulations to the Graduate” sign, there’s a good chance that ASAP was behind the colorful display. Custom designs and colors are used for specialty gift items. Keep this in mind for that special someone in your life this Valentine’s Day!

Other services include:

- Mesh, vinyl, fabric, and pole banners for any special occasion
- Sports trophies, medallions, academic awards, and framed certificates
- Digital Displays for directories and informational signage
- Engraved personalized gifts can include cutting boards, coasters, picture frames, drinkware, leatherette portfolios, journals and even serene scripture verses on bible covers
- Photopolymer line of ADA signs with raised letters and Braille
- T-shirts, sweatshirts, duffle bags and more can be embroidered with names or emblems.

ASAP is conveniently located 5 miles north of 54 at 6812 Land O’ Lakes Boulevard, Land O’ Lakes (next to Dollar General). For more information, call 813-996-6777 or visit their website at <https://signsbyasap.com>.

## Tampa Bay Dance Club

February 2022 Schedule

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2/11 DJ Mike Unwin

2/18 DJ & Singer John Ricky

2/25 TBD

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Facebook: Tampa Bay Dance Club, Tampa Bay Dancing

Email: [bdanceclub@aol.com](mailto:bdanceclub@aol.com)



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"I can fulfill God's vision by choosing to live with expectant hope. I will watch the Lord do the impossible in my life and use it to help reach people who need to know him." —Ephesians 1:18

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Is to effectively connect consumers with Christian product and service providers who strive to operate their business organization according to Biblical principles.

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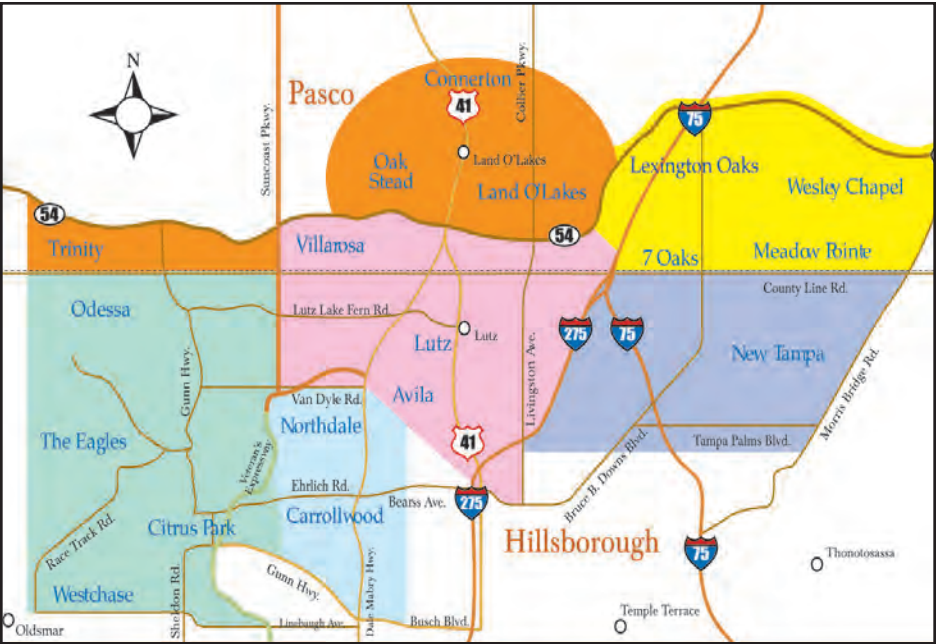
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FAITH

GOD'S PROMISE

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Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

- MATTHEW 7:7 NIV

GOOD NEWS, JUST 40 LAPS AROUND THE WILDERNESS FOR DISOBEYING GOD ... BAD NEWS, EACH LAP TAKES A YEAR

J E S U S

L O V E S

Y O U

Under God's Control By David Wilkerson



In these last days, the Lord's eye is not fixed on world powers but on the church of Jesus Christ. God is not focused on the economy, on the rise of world religions, on the roaring of the heathen. According to Isaiah, the nations are to God "as a drop of a bucket" (Isaiah 40:15). They are all under His sovereign rule and reign.

God knows all about terrorist threats, wars and rumors of wars. His Word warns that the heathen will rage, secular powers will try to outlaw Christianity, and fast-growing, anti-Christ movements will boast they'll rule the world and destroy Jesus' followers. The Bible says this about it all:

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:2-3). In short, "Let's cast away all moral hindrances, all moral landmarks of the past."

Here is God's reaction to these earthly powers and demon-influenced men: "He that sitteth in the heav-

ens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." (2:4) No matter how desperate things look, everything remains under God's full control.

I'm thankful for this word from the Psalms. More and more, we hear reports of secularism wiping out the evangelical church in Europe; of Islam being the fastest growing religion in the world; of homosexuals hijacking entire denominations; of Christ's church growing so weak it no longer has any impact on society. Yet God's Word declares, "On Christ the Rock God will build His church." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Nothing from the bowels of hell can hope to destroy Christ's church. His eye is always on His people, and through everything He warns Satan and his hordes, "Do not touch the apple of My eye."

"Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake." (Isaiah 54:15) Do you see what God is saying here? "The devil is going to come at you. Enemies out of hell will gather together against you. But Satan will not succeed."

## JESUS is not our Religion, He is our Savior...

*Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hebrews 11:1*

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. "The Big Bang" Genesis 1:3 "Let there be light..."*

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