



# North Fort Myers Church of the Nazarene Messenger

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## The Beauty of Determination

There most likely isn't a person living who has never heard of Ludwig van Beethoven. Yet anyone who may not know his name, would probably recognize many of his works if they heard them. His "Moonlight" Sonata or Fifth Symphony are classics that have been celebrated in music halls for hundreds of years. Beethoven is legitimately recognized by the world as a musical genius. However, few people realize the adversity he had to overcome to achieve the acclaim he gained. In his twenties, Beethoven began to lose his hearing. His hearing problems plagued him into the middle years of his life, but he kept his trouble a closely guarded secret. By the time he reached his fifties, however, Beethoven was completely deaf.

Many wonder at the incredible music that could come from a composer who could not hear. However, a telling story about him points us to how the music still flowed from what would appear to be a crippling handicap. The story is told that Beethoven was once overheard shouting at the top of his voice, "*I will take life by the throat!*" Many of his biographers believe the only reason Beethoven remained productive for so long was the sheer determination this story reveals about his character.

As we turn the page on 2019, and enter into a New Year, we would do well to draw on the lesson we learn from Beethoven's life of determination. As believers in Jesus, we are aware of our need to fill our days with the purposeful pursuit of the commission of Christ. We do not have the luxury of living our days without regard for whether we are impacting this world for the cause of Jesus.

As we age, however, and as time takes its toll on our senses, we can begin to use the "handicap" of time to excuse the lessening of our determination. We lose contact with friends. We don't entertain anymore. We set aside visiting. We send the check instead of putting in the time. There are so many ways we substitute our time and energy for ways that require less and less of us.

Much of the excuses seem legitimate to us. We most definitely have less energy as we age. Our bodies do begin to let us down. Our faculties do seem to weaken and refuse

to cooperate when needs arise and we are called upon to step up and "be Jesus" to the world.

What if we determined to become more determined, though? Certainly, we cannot will our bodies to be more than they are. And eyesight and hearing that once enabled us to do more, can seldom be restored. However, what if we decided at the beginning of each New Year to purposefully focus our attention on one or two meaningful pursuits for the year? For instance, there is hardly any of us who could not sit down and write a letter once a week or once a month. Imagine that at the end of the year, that friend or family member who usually receives a phone call once in a while, found themselves with 12 handwritten letters from you? Letters that express in words what can actually be held in a hand – the importance the person holds for you.

What if you decided that you would make a habit of keeping up with one or even a handful of people at church? Determine you will seek them out each week for the specific purpose of bringing a word of encouragement or a warm hug and a friendly smile. When they are not in service, you decide you will call them. Keep up with their birthdays or anniversaries, and purposefully remember those days.

What if you simply decided to pray for the people in your neighborhood? Maybe even just one or two neighbors. If you are mobile enough, what about buying a specialty cake once a year and taking it to the fire or police department? How about determining to be kinder or more tolerant of the people in your own home?

In the same vein as the old adage, "everyone complains about the weather, but no one ever does anything about it," everyone longs for a better world, but how determined are we to bring more kindness and sweetness, or more gentleness and positivity into it?

Beethoven's masterpieces of music were often created in the midst of great difficulty. But his masterpieces make our lives more beautiful. Determine today that 2020 will be more beautiful for someone else because you decided to make it so. Pastor Becky

## Calendar

- 5 – The Kragen’s in Concert
- 8 – Food Distribution
- 9 – Church Board Meeting
- 18 – All Church Picnic at Delnor Wiggins
- 19 – Burchfield Brothers in Concert
- Franklin Graham Decision America Tour



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 – Devon Kiser
- 2 – Wanda VandeLinde
- 3 – Carl Baxter
- 7 – Betty Predko
- 19 – Grace Bolling
- 20 – Laurel & Dorothy Chapman
- Susi Friedman
- 23 – Dan & Diane Bowker
- 26 – Dave Peck
- 27 – Jerry Pickett



## Prayer Needs:

- |                        |                      |                      |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Phoebe Barr            | Tom Blakeman         | Betty Coolie         | Ben Bergman                |
| Ida Chaplow            | Patrick Lindsey      | Janice O’Lynn        | Hilda Chaplow              |
| Laurel Chapman         | Judi Predko’s family | Eileen Massett       | Mark & Lisa Koch           |
| Lori Fillmore          | Ernie Rybold         | Paul Jones           | Betty Predko               |
| Sheryl Colie & Family  | Orion Predko         | Dorothy Chapman      | Paul & Grace Boling        |
| Ardyth Eldridge        | Marlene Ryan         | Joseph Groves        | Lorraine Jungles           |
| Mark & Kim Barr        | Louis Perez          | Cody Church          | Dave Peck                  |
| Kenny & Gail Goodman   | Phyllis Obney        | Regina Williams      | Allice Daugherty           |
| Children & Teen Depts. | Eileen Jennings      | Kitty Baxter         | Family of Lorraine Skinner |
| A Youth Pastor         | Unsaved Loved Ones   | Franklin Graham Tour |                            |
| Our missionaries       | The Nation of Israel | Our Church Leaders   |                            |

We need volunteers to help with the distribution of food on Wednesday, January 8, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM, to help with a variety of tasks. Please spread the word to anyone you think could benefit from this special outreach and join us as we partner to help those in need. And once again, thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in North Fort Myers.



## ALL-CHURCH PICNIC

at Delnor Wiggins State Park

January 18 – 10 A.M.

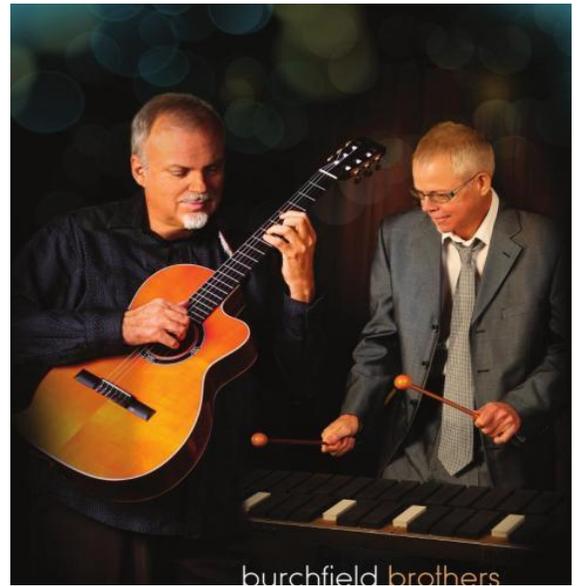
(Carpoolers leaving the church at 9 A.M.)

Cost is \$6

Sign up beginning January 5



January 5  
The Kragen's in Concert



January 19  
The Burchfield Brothers in Concert



January 19  
4 p.m.  
Hertz Arena  
(There will be no PM service at our church that night.)

Do you want to see our community transformed as our friends and neighbors find true hope in Jesus Christ? Our church is partnering with the Billy Graham organization and hundreds of Florida churches in sponsoring Franklin Graham's Decision America Sunshine State Tour.

From January 11–19, Franklin Graham will embark on a six-city Florida tour. One-night prayer and evangelism events are scheduled to take place in Jacksonville Beach, Plant City, Panama City Beach, Key West, Boca Raton and Fort Myers.

Franklin Graham will share the Good News of Jesus Christ at each stop, calling the lost into a life-changing relationship with Christ—and encouraging Christians to boldly live out their faith. He will be joined throughout the tour by singer/songwriter Jeremy Camp.

If you're interested in serving with us, there are multiple ways you can take part, however “The most critical thing you can do is pray, pray, pray. The intercession of God's people is crucial if we are to see a return to the Biblical faith of our fathers, the faith that has guided and sustained our country for so long.”  
—Franklin Graham

We will be sharing more in the coming days for how you can get involved. In the meantime, pray, pray, pray!

## Welcome to 2020!

Celebrating the arrival of a new year dates back at least 4,000 years to ancient Babylon, who marked the occasion with massive religious festivals. Throughout the centuries, the celebration of the first day of the new year has evolved to become what we know today.

Something strange happens every four years, though. Because each year consists of not 365 days, but 365 ¼ days, we earth creatures have spent vast amounts of time trying to figure out how to maintain an accurate calendar. But no matter how we keep the calendar, the turning over of a new year – even one where we make up the extra one-quarter thing by adding an extra day, requires some extra thought.

And, of course, there is the New Year's resolution: Pete, at a New Year's party, turns to his friend, Ken, and asks for a cigarette. "I thought you made a New Year's resolution to quit smoking," Ken responds. "I'm in the process of quitting," replies Pete with a grin. "Right now, I am in the middle of phase one." "Phase one?" "Yeah," laughs Pete, "I've quit buying."

What we are truly struggling to do is find a way to wisely mark and use time. We have the parties and celebrations to help remember from year to year. There are birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and holidays to help us march through the year. And time marches on.

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NASB) Paul tells us...

*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

As you go into this New Year, let me give you some markers for 2020.

### **Be careful-Be thoughtful-Be thankful**

#### **Be careful**

*Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time.*

In our hurried world today, we think we are the masters of the multitask and we have to get it all done and we end up worried and stressed out. Hurry, worry, multitasking, stress — you might call them the four horsemen of the accident-prone. Stress is such a huge factor when it comes to accidents, in fact, it was recently linked to an increase in post-9/11 traffic fatalities by researchers at the University of Minnesota.



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Colossians 3:1, tells us, *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.* God is in control! Let Him be.

#### **Be thoughtful**

From an unknown source comes an article titled, "[How To Be Miserable](#)." It says, "Think about yourself. Talk about yourself. Use "I" as often as possible. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others. Listen greedily to what people say about you. Expect to be appreciated. Be suspicious. Be jealous and envious. Be sensitive to slights. Never forgive a criticism. Trust nobody but yourself. Insist on consideration and respect. Demand agreement with your own views on everything. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown them. Never forget a service you have rendered. Shirk your duties if you can. Do as little as possible for others."

We read an article like this and our first thought is to pick the characteristics in the list that we are sure we don't have and think, "*See I'm not so bad after all.*" The problem comes in the selfish attitudes we glaze over. Look at the list again and see if there is anything you need to work on this year.

#### **Be thankful**

Be thankful in Christ. Living a grateful life will keep you on the straight and narrow. People who are not aware of their blessings are not thankful. Instead, they are always looking for more.

A five-year-old said grace at family dinner one night. "Dear God, thank you for these pancakes..." When he concluded, his parents asked him why he thanked God for pancakes when they were having chicken. He smiled and said, "I thought I'd see if He was paying attention tonight." God pays very good attention to us when we pray.

*Psalms 103:1-3 "Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. "Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases..."*

For the next 366 days (it is leap year) let your year be marked by those three activities:

**Be careful, be thoughtful, be thankful.**

Blessings for a wonderful New Year! Pastor Van

