

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Church of God Big Sandy

ChurchofGodBigSandy.com

Nov. 9, 2024 • 1:00 p.m. • Sunset 5:22

### Bible studies

Interactive study—1:00 p.m. . . . . Daniel Hammons

Presentation study—2:00 . . . . . Dave Havir  
(also transmitted live)

### Order of service—3:00 p.m.

Song leader . . . . . Neil McIver

Pianist . . . . . Dixon Cartwright

Scripture reading . . . . . James 3:1–12

Sermon . . . . . Reg Killingley

### Quick takes

1. Wednesday-night Bible study—Nov. 13 at 7:00.
2. Community Thanksgiving Gathering—On Nov. 24 (at 5:00), there will be the annual Community Thanksgiving Gathering at the Civic Center.
3. Edifying the Body—This week's article is "America First or America Only?" by Dennis Prager. (This article was previously posted on our website on Dec. 9, 2023.)
4. Among Friends—This week's article is "Recognize People Trying to Help You" by Dave Havir.
5. Eye on the World—55 headlines and three articles.

### Prayer updates

Early Sunday morning, **Timberly Dunnam** went to an ER where she had emergency appendix surgery. Although she had a bad reaction to the tape, gloves and anesthesia, she was able to return home the same day.

Here are two items to pray about for **Gary Wilson**. Pray that his insurance will approve for intensive inpatient therapy to help him strengthen his right side. And pray that his blood pressure stops being so high.

**Kemmer Pfund** returned home from the hospital this week and is expecting to be at the church service today.

In our Aug. 17 bulletin, we mentioned that **Jessica Voyce Lewis** (daughter of **Mickey Voyce**) was running to be a Republican justice for Texas' Fifth District Court of Appeals, Place 2 (in the DFW area). Since she won this week, Mrs. Voyce makes this request to the congregation: "Please ask that God will grant her discernment and wisdom in fulfilling her responsibilities."

## New prayer requests

In April of 2023, **Angela Dunnam** was diagnosed with a lump on her breast and was treated for cancer over the course of several months. Mrs. Dunnam now reports that she was diagnosed with a lump on her other breast. She said: "We are seeking God's guidance in how to proceed. My body has not recovered fully from the treatment last year."

## "America First or America Only?"

This article is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God's website ([churchofgodbig sandy.com](http://churchofgodbig sandy.com)). It was posted for the weekend of Nov. 9, 2024. (It was previously posted on our website for the weekend of Dec. 9, 2023.)

### By Dennis Prager

**L**OS ANGELES, Calif.—I am a strong advocate of America First. Indeed, I believe the citizens of every country should put their country first.

The case for doing so is not difficult to make. Just as people should put their family's well-being first, they should put their country's well-being first. Just as we would regard parents who put the well-being of others' families before—or even on par with—the well-being of their own family as defective parents, we should regard people who place other countries' well-being before that of their own country as defective citizens.

Similarly, with rare exceptions (such as in a time of war or when saving another person's life in an extreme situation), people should first take care of themselves.

In this regard, I am guided by two Jewish teachings.

■ One is the basic and well-known principle, stated 2,000 years ago by Hillel, one of the most important thinkers in Jewish history: "If I am not for me, who will be for me?" To paraphrase Hillel: "If Americans are not for America, who will be?"

■ The other Jewish teaching is the Talmudic principle that, when deciding to which poor people one should first give charity, "the poor of your own city come first."

The idea of America First accords with both reason and religious morality.

However, some prominent conservatives, whom I know and respect, seem to equate "America First" with "America Only."

And that is neither logical, nor moral, nor American.

### It is illogical

It is not logical because the word *first* implies a "second" and more.

In baseball, "first base" implies a "sec-

ond base,” etc. If first base were the only base, it would not be known as “first base.”

If you said that your first choice among airlines was, let us say, Delta Air Lines, no one would assume that Delta was your only choice. By definition, therefore, “America First” does not mean “America Only.”

So, those who believe that Americans should be concerned only with America are being disingenuous when they say, “America First.” They should say what they mean: “America Only.”

But “America Only” violates one of the most basic principles of morality—that we should not only take care of ourselves, our family and our country.

Indeed, the second part of Hillel’s famous aphorism makes this clear. His rule begins, “If I am not for myself, who will be?” But that is not his entire rule. His first question is immediately followed by this one: “But if I am only for myself, what am I?”

On the important conservative website American Greatness (my own column appears there), an America First advocate wrote a column last week titled, “The America First Response to the Israel-Hamas War.”

He opens his column with these words: “Not my circus, not my monkeys. The America First position on the Israel-Hamas mess is clear: Stay far, far away.”

He then writes: “Before anyone in any position of power begins to think about even commenting on foreign conflicts, they should solve the crises roiling our civic life at home.”

### **It is amoral**

This is another example of the amorality inherent to “America Only.”

To take the subject of his article, the current Hamas-Israel war, if the writer really means what he says—that no American in a position of power should “even comment” on that war, that is as pure an example of an amoral position as one can imagine.

Israel was attacked by a terrorist movement that has announced for years that it seeks not to merely defeat Israel but to annihilate the country. Its members tortured, burned and otherwise murdered entire families, raped women, kidnapped grandmothers and babies to hold them hostage, and

murdered more Jews than on any one day since the Holocaust—yet no American official should “even comment” on this?

He then writes: “The answer to who Americans should support in the war between Hamas and the Israelis is simple: America.”

Presumably this author would have written in 1940-41: “The answer to who Americans should support in the war between Nazi Germany and Great Britain is simple: America.”

If this is what he and other spokesmen for America First believe, these people should tell the truth and rename their movement “America Only.”

### **It is un-American**

Which brings me to the third problem with this version of America First. It is not only illogical and amoral; it is un-American.

America has never been just a country. Nor is America an ethnic group or race. America is an idea: the greatest nation-making idea in world history. America was set up to be a “bright shining light,” and has always seen itself—correctly, I believe—as exceptional. The America Firsters who believe in America Only do not see America as a moral force for good in the world. It should not “even comment” on good and evil outside of its borders.

As for the argument—offered by every America Only advocate—that America must first deal with its own problems before helping any other people on earth, this simply means that America will never help any other people on earth. There never was and never will be a time when America is free of domestic problems.

The argument that we should concern ourselves with our borders, not those of Israel (or, presumably, Taiwan) is a non sequitur. That we have made America into a country with open borders has nothing to do with Israel or any other country. It has to do with the left’s desire to undo America (and Western civilization in general). And it is not an America First argument; it is an America Only argument.

If conservatism succeeds in changing “America First” into “America Only,” you can say good-bye to American exceptionalism, and to freedom on this planet.

## “Recognize People Trying to Help You”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website ([churchofgodbigandy.com](http://churchofgodbigandy.com)). It was posted for the weekend of Nov., 9, 2024.

### By Dave Havir

**B**IG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled “Recognize People Trying to Help You.” This presentation was a follow-up to a presentation that I gave on the previous Wednesday night titled “Recognize People Trying to Hurt You.”

Let’s begin with a short reminder about last week’s article—about recognizing people trying to hurt you.

### Son of God recognized danger

■ Matthew 16:21—The Son of God told His disciples that he was about to suffer many things from the elders, chief priest and scribes—before the would kill Him.

■ John 8:59—When the people took up stones to throw at the Son of God, He hid.

■ John 10:39-40—When the people sought to seize the Son of God, He escaped to the area beyond the Jordan River.

■ John 11:53-54—When the religious leaders plotted to kill Him, He would no longer walk openly among the Jews.

■ John 12:36—The Son of God departed and hid from the crowd.

Now, let’s spend the rest of the time recognizing people who are trying to help us.

### Son of God appreciated help

■ John 19:25—Four women stood by the cross of the Son of God—His mother, His aunt and two people named Mary.

■ John 19:26-27—His disciple named John was also there.

■ John 19:28-29—Someone at the cross gave Him something to quench His thirst.

### Appreciating actions of service

Let’s notice some other examples of appreciating help.

■ Acts 9:36-39—The widows greatly appreciated the good works that Tabitha (translated Dorcas) did for them.

■ Acts 11:28-29—When there was a famine throughout the world, the brethren in Antioch sent relief to the brethren in Judea.

■ Acts 16:40—After Paul and Silas experienced a major episode, they met the brethren in the household of Lydia (a wealthy businesswoman—mentioned in verses 14-15).

### Appreciating seven gifts

Have you ever considered how much a congregation would appreciate the seven gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8?

■ Gift of prophecy

■ Gift of ministry (meaning service)

■ Gift of teaching

■ Gift of exhortation

■ Gift of giving

■ Gift of leading

■ Gift of showing mercy

### More examples in Paul’s life

■ Romans 16:1-2—Paul appreciated the serving attitude of Phoebe.

■ Romans 16:3-4—Paul appreciated the serving attitude of Priscilla and Aquila.

■ Romans 16:5-15—Paul mentioned many other people whom he appreciated.

■ 2 Corinthians 1:3-4—Disciples appreciate friends who offer meaningful comfort.

■ 2 Corinthians 9:7—Disciples appreciate cheerful givers.

■ 2 Corinthians 10:1-2—Disciples appreciate those who offer meekness and gentleness instead of boldness.

■ Galatians 6:1—Disciples appreciate people who try to help with a spirit of gentleness.

■ Galatians 6:9-10—Disciples appreciate people who seek to do good toward others.

■ Philippians 2:19-23—Paul appreciated the serving attitude of Timothy.

■ Philippians 2:25-30—Paul appreciated the serving attitude of Epaphroditus.

■ 2 Timothy 1:16-18—Paul appreciated the serving attitude of Onesiphorus.