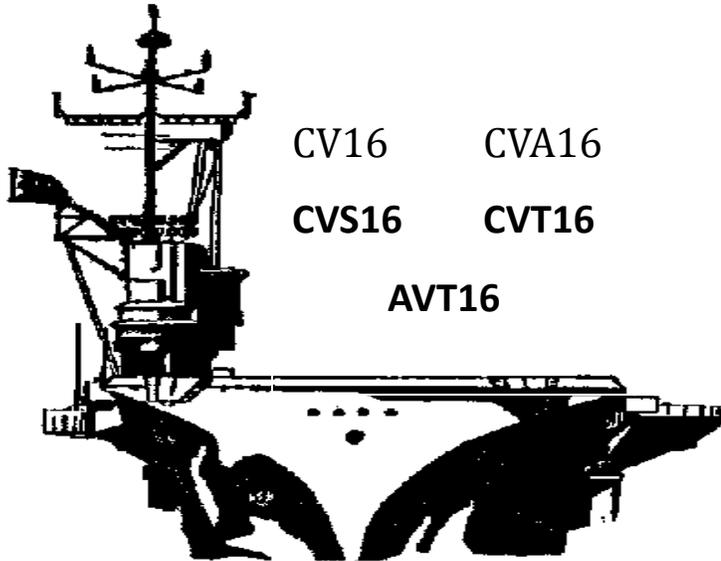


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USS Lexington CV 16 Association

23428 College Ave

Robertsdale, AL 36567



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USS LEXINGTON

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SP 25-01

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# The Sunrise Press

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**USS LEXINGTON CV16**

**49 YEARS OF SERVICE**

**NOW THE USS LEXINGTON MUSEUM ON THE BAY IN CORPUS CHRISTI,**

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**MARCH 2025**

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## **Coming this September!!!**

By Greg Plante: Editor, Sunrise Press

Get ready to enjoy some fun and fellowship! That's right, it time already to plan for the upcoming reunion this fall in MEMPHIS, TN. Home of the Blues, and more music history than you can shake a stick at (as they say).

Our accommodations will be at the downtown Springhill Suites (by Marriott), beginning September 6th and culminating in our always anticipated Banquet the evening of September 8th.

In between, there will be plenty of time in the hospitality suite where we can enjoy beverages and snacks and swap untold sea stories (and those often told as well) and even a few "you aren't gonna believe this, but" stories that we sailors are quite familiar with telling folks.

There's a Mojo Tour with a wonderful tour guide who, along with telling you about the sites you're seeing, has plenty of songs to share with you as the tour goes on. It is a well enjoyed tour by any who have been on it. While on the tour, there will be a stop for lunch at an All You Can Eat BBQ Buffet. Followed by a stop at the Rock and Soul Museum, as well as a memorial service for those of our members that have gone to their final muster.

We look forward to seeing you there, so check out the details inside this issue of the Sunrise Press, and plan to attend. You'll be glad you did. It is always a great time when we get together!



**Sunrise Press - Triannual Publication  
USS LEXINGTON ASSOCIATION**

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- Pg 5: The Presidents Message
- Pg 6: Memphis Reunion Venue
- Pg 7: 2025 Reunion Itinerary
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**USS LEXINGTON CV 16 ASSOCIATION**

**Executive Officers:**

President: Christopher Hagger  
Vice President: Del Florian  
Treasurer: Eric Friedli  
Secretary: Greg Plante

**Appointed Positions**

Chaplain: Christopher Hagger  
Sunrise Press Editor, Webmaster, and  
Data Base Tech: Greg Plante  
Historian: (Charles Alchimowicz)

**WEBSITE: [www.usslexingtoncv16.org](http://www.usslexingtoncv16.org)**



**Office of the Treasurer**

**Treasurer: Eric Friedli**

Membership Dues: \$25/year  
Due by Dec. 31st.

Make checks payable to:  
USS Lexington Association

**Send Dues to Eric or Pay Online**

**MAIL to:** Eric Friedli

12734 19th Ave NE Seattle, WA98125

**PAY ONLINE:** website: [usslexingtoncv16.org](http://usslexingtoncv16.org)

CLICK: "Dues and Donation"



**A Note from the Editor:**

Have you read an interesting article or story recently? Or maybe have some memorabilia from your time on the LEX? Share it with your shipmates! Just send them to me and I'll put them in the Sunrise Press, space permitting, including a byline to credit you with the submission.

My postal address is:

23428 College Ave. Robertsedale, AL 36567

For electronic submissions, email me at:

[editor@usslexingtoncv16.org](mailto:editor@usslexingtoncv16.org)

Greg Plante, Editor of the Sunrise Press

**Sunrise Press - EMAIL Version:**

The email version is better than the printed, with color graphics & pictures, e-links and more.

For those receiving the email version of the Sunrise Press: You will receive an email stating that the Press is available for viewing on the website, and a link. Follow the link to the Association website where you can view or download the current issue of the Sunrise Press.

[www.usslexingtoncv16.org](http://www.usslexingtoncv16.org)

**2025 Reunion  
USS Lexington Association**

**Memphis, TN**

**Noland A Brook**

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/noland-brook-obituary?id=32055333#obituary>

**Clinton Keel**

<https://www.springhillfh.com/obituaries/Clinton-Keel/Obituary>

**Patrick Minogue**

<https://www.courier-journal.com/obituaries/lcj259805>

**Billy Tomlin**

**Help us keep our "TAPS" records up to date...**

We need your help. Our only way of knowing our members have passed, is if someone tells us. We ask that you please notify us of any members who are no longer with us so we can update our records and honor our deceased shipmates in the Sunrise Press.

Email notifications to: [editor@usslexingtoncv16.org](mailto:editor@usslexingtoncv16.org)

Snail Mail to: Greg Plante, 23428 College Ave, Robertsdale, AL 36567



**WELCOME ABOARD: NEW MEMBERS**

**Danny Thomas**

Chania, Greece

**Greg Newman**

Nazareth, PA

**Fred Bisaro**

Donna, TX

**Sandra Bailey**

Tuscumbia, AL

**Douglas Weeks**

Elberta, AL

**Elbert Best**

Ashford, AL

**Tracy Rice**

Windsor, VA

**Terry McCune**

Safety Harbor, FL

**USS Lexington CV16 Association: MEMBERSHIP**

The Association welcomes all shipmates, navy, marines, Ships Company, air group personnel who served at some time on a USS Lexington CV 16 (all her designations) or on the USS Lexington CV 2.

Dues are \$25/year, and due at the end of each year. Dues can be paid online at: [www.usslexingtoncv16.org](http://www.usslexingtoncv16.org)

Dues paid by mail: **Make checks payable to :USS Lexington Association**

**Send your dues to: Eric Friedli, 12734 19th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 981125**



Greeting my brothers and sisters of the USS Lexington

As we make plans to be a part of our next reunion. First and foremost I cannot wait to see each one of you again, in this fleeing atmosphere called life I do miss each of you dearly. Second, we are getting everything lined up from the first day of our reunion until we say good-bye for another year. I am asking each of you to have patience with myself and the team. We want to ensure that when each of you do arrive you will be not only satisfied with the digs but proud to be apart of such. Many of us have not fully retired and still work along with the tug of families and other things in this big ball of life.

While I have your attention, if there is anyone out there that can help Greg, the editor. Help meaning take the helm for him and Theresa, they have been involved with spearheading the paper for many years (17). If there is someone within the association that would like to put their hands on the plow please step up and help. Many of us has been knowing each other since our first duty station together, and I would like to remind you that we are still that group of young men and women who ate together, marched together, worshipped together. I am asking even while we wear this aged body that we can still help our shipmate. Please think about it my brother, think about it my sister.

Now, concerning the reunion, our brother Greg is compiling all the information he has gotten (psst. I hope I have not forgotten to send him some additional information). We will have everything in the next paper that is being processed as I speak. Be careful, let us get ready to see each other again and look back in retrospect together.

Fraternally yours

Rev. Christopher Hagger Th.M.  
4745 N. Sierra Ave.  
Odessa, Tx 79764  
832-312-0892 Cell

*If you take care of God's House, He will take care of your house*

**DUES NOTICE!! At the 2023 reunion in Corpus Christi, The members voted in an increase in dues to \$25/year.**

# UPCOMING REUNION, MEMPHIS, TN

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Springhill Suites By Marriott  
85 West Court Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38103

Members are responsible for making their reservations. NO LATER THAN September 6th, 2025  
For reservations, call: **901-522-2200**

Website: <https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/memmp-springhill-suites-memphis-downtown/overview/>



Rates: **\$149.00/night** Let them know you are with the USS Lexington Association  
Dates are September 6th thru 8th, 2025

Due to the tight location downtown, parking is handled by an independent contractor, and costs **\$29 + tax (currently 9.75%) per night**



# USS LEXINGTON CV16 ANNUAL REUNION, Memphis, TN

## ITINERARY

### October 6th – MONDAY: Hotel Check-in ....Welcome!

**1200** Hospitality Room opens, Registration Begins -

**1800** Opening Reception in Hospitality Room with beverages and snacks. Greetings and opening remarks from the Association President.

### October 7th– TUESDAY: Tour, Lunch, Museum

**0830** Meet in Hotel Lobby for tour

**0900** Bus departs for Tour, Lunch, Rock and Soul Museum

**1130** Luncheon will be an All You Can Eat BBQ Buffet @ Central BBQ

**1330** Rock and Soul Museum.

**1430** Return to Hotel, Hospitality Room opens

### October 8th– WEDNESDAY: Business Meeting and Banquet

**1000** Business Meeting / Memorial Service

**1130** Hospitality Room opens

**1800** Cocktail Hour

**1845** Group picture

**1900** Banquet, (Invocation and Presentation of Colors, Music, Karaoke, and Dancing)

### October 9th – THURSDAY: Check-out

Have a safe trip home! - See you in Odessa, TX in 2026

*For your information:*

*The Hospitality Room is open during specific times throughout each day (see Itinerary for times) , This is a great place to gather with your fellow shipmates, reminisce with old friends, meet new friends, and just enjoy some time to relax.*

*Snacks and Drinks are provided*



## An item of interest

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From the Editor: Greg Plante

Most of you all know me after all of these years I've been in the Association, and enjoy reading the Sunrise Press every 4 months. Well, a full time job of 60 or so hours a week mixed with various health concerns I'm working through, make trying to keep up with the Press and giving you, my shipmates, a product worthy of USS Lexington standards is to the point of being almost impossible.

I'm putting before you, a request that anyone with moderate computer skills and a little creativity consider taking this task over. (You will need MS Office 365 to run Publisher, to match my current format... at least to start. Mailouts are easy... The Mail Chimp app we use does 90% of it for you, and I may even be able to do that part for you.

If it's so easy, why am I not wanting to stay on to do it? Well, in short, about 60hrs a week as an Over-The-Road truck driver, doesn't leave a lot of extra time. But add to that my few days off are often taken up with various doctor visits, a few hospital stays, etc and you can see how that makes things difficult.

So..... If you've always (or at least often) thought you might want to be a bigger part of the Association and participate in it's future, I would ask you to contemplate this. You have a shipmate in serious need of some help. The Newsletter is published 3 times/yr; the one that takes up the most time is March... That is the one that requires the most time. I have to gather the reunion info from various sources and put it in a format that is

easy to follow and understand, as well as look nice. Going on a tour of a certain place? Go online and find some pics of it, and things like that. July... that's mostly a repeat of the March issue with just a few changes of "filler" articles to take up vacant spaces. It goes quickly. November, not so bad either. It's just a recap of the last reunion. Business meeting minutes, pics of folks enjoying the heck out of themselves at the reunion, things like that. There are plenty of folks that can supply the photos you need.

So... There you have it. It's a great opportunity to leave your mark on the association. I've brought it a long way from the 8-10 zeroxed pages stapled in the top corner to what it is now. But there is plenty of room for a fresh look thru different eyes. Please consider this opportunity to serve your shipmates. Drop me a line with questions, and I'll get in touch with you.



My postal address is:  
23428 College Ave.  
Robertsdale, AL 36567

For electronic submissions, email me at:  
[editor@usslexingtoncv16.org](mailto:editor@usslexingtoncv16.org)  
Phone 251-979-5107

Greg Plante, Editor of the  
Sunrise Press

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## In My E-mail.....

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From: John Reistra  
Subj: Plank Owner Story

Greetings! I am 87 years old. In 1955, at 17 (70 years ago), I went to boot camp in San Diego, CA I was assigned to the USS Lexington and rode the USS Boxer to Bremerton, WA in 1955 to help put the Lexington in commission. I was in the 2nd Division. I was one of the many other sailors who were assigned to put the ship in commission. We did so in 1955, and got assigned to San Diego. We made our first cruise to the Pacific in 1956. I spent 4 years on board and within that time I switched divisions from 2nd to S3. I spent my last two years on board in S3 division. Our first cruise, we had some-

one that didn't want to go to Japan. He sabotaged one of our variants to another prop. We ended up at Yokosuka, Japan at the US Naval Shipyard. Another incident was when the Captain had to announce to all of us that we were in the eye of a hurricane. That was very suspenseful Ocean water completely flooded over our flight deck. After the Lexington I shipped over to the USS Midway, and I put in 6 years on her. I am hoping that I can get a piece of the planks of the Lexington. I would also love to get a hat with CVA 16 on it. I was either the first or second person who got to be at the helm of Lexington on it's first trip for the hour watch. That was so exciting!



## Trump to launch new White House office focused on shipbuild-

By: Leo Shane III

As part of his sweeping national address on Tuesday night, President Donald Trump promised to establish a new office of shipbuilding within the White House to revitalize the industry and bolster American naval strength.

The vow — which came during the national security section of Trump's nearly two-hour speech — was included among broader plans to "boost our defense industrial base" for America.

"We are also going to resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding and military shipbuilding," Trump said, eliciting applause from Republican lawmakers in the House chamber for the address.

"We used to make so many ships. We don't make them anymore very much, but we're going to make them very fast, very soon. It will have a huge impact to further enhance our national security."

Trump also promised "special tax incentives to bring this industry home" but did not offer any more specifics. The White House did not immediately provide any other details of what the new office will oversee or who will lead the effort.

Last month, during the confirmation hearing for John Phelan, Trump's pick to serve as Navy Secretary, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Roger Wicker, R-Miss., lamented that "just about every major U.S. shipbuilding program is behind schedule, over budget or irreparably off track."

He called for a complete overhaul of Navy shipbuilding goals and processes.

"We must stabilize shipbuilding programs, adopt commercial best practices and incentivize the shipyards to address workforce and productivity issues in a collaborative rather than combative manner," Wicker said. "And we can

quickly inject innovation into naval procurement, particularly on unmanned ships."

Phelan voiced support for that approach, but he did not mention any specifics related to the new White House office.

Earlier this year, officials from the Congressional Budget Office said the Navy would need to spend more than \$40 billion annually for 30 years for the U.S. Navy to fulfill its proposed plans to expand its battle force fleet.

There are currently 295 battle force ships in the fleet, with that number expected to drop to 283 ships by 2027 because of planned retirements. The service has stated it hopes to grow the fleet to 381 ships by 2054.

The new shipbuilding office would be a direct counter to the Chinese shipbuilding industry, the largest in the world. Industry officials estimate that Chinese firms have built nearly half of the world's merchant vessels, and the country has publicly invested heavily in their own naval build-up.

In Tuesday's speech, Trump also promised to build a new missile defense shield to protect America and continue other military reforms to strengthen the armed forces.

In a statement after the speech, officials from the Shipbuilders Council of America praised the announcement.

"Since the founding days of our nation, the U.S. shipyard industry and industrial base has played a central role in national and domestic security, and remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining our nation's security vessels while building the fleet of the future," said Matthew Paxton, president of the group. "By fully utilizing the existing domestic shipyard capacity, the shipyard industrial base can meet the growing demands of national defense, restore American competitiveness, and create thousands of skilled jobs in communities across the nation."



## How a 'Dauntless' dive bomber became a WWII ace at Coral Sea

By Jon Guttman

When one thinks of U.S. Navy aircraft carrier operations in the months leading up to the Battle of Midway, one name that readily comes to mind is Lt. Edward "Butch" O'Hare, the F4F-3 Wildcat pilot whose five aerial victories in defense of the carrier Lexington on Feb. 20, 1942, made him both the Navy's first World War II fighter ace and its first WWII aviator to receive the Medal of Honor.

Meanwhile, hard on O'Hare's heels in Lexington lore was a Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless team whose activities seemed just as much devoted to fighters as to dive bombers.

John Arthur Leppla was born in Lima, Ohio, on May 7, 1916. After graduating from Purdue University, he enlisted in the Navy in September 1940, and went on to qualify as an aviator with an ensign's commission. In 1941, he joined scout squadron VS-2, flying SBDs from the Lexington.

Leppla's usual "back-seater," Aviation Radioman 3rd Class John Liska, was born in Coalville, Pennsylvania, on Aug. 28, 1922.

The first indication that the two were a natural team occurred on March 10, 1942, two days after a Japanese naval force occupied Lae and Salamaua harbors in northern New Guinea, when the Lexington and Yorktown struck back in the first raid of the war by two U.S. carriers.

The surprise attack caught Japanese forces without air support except for eight reconnaissance seaplanes, two of which tried to engage the U.S. bombers until they were brought down by Wildcat fighters.

The U.S. bombers sank a number of Japanese ships, in addition to damaging multiple other vessels. Of the 104 carrier planes involved in the raid, only one SBD from Leppla's scout squadron VS-2 and its crew were lost to anti-aircraft fire.

For their part in the raid, Leppla and Liska were awarded the Navy Cross.

### Battle of the Coral Sea

Two months later, in May 1942, the Japanese launched Operation MO, an offensive to seize Port Moresby, New Guinea.

The invasion force was escorted by the heavy cruisers Aoba, Furutaka, Kinugasa and Kako, and the light carrier Shoho. Fleet carriers Shokaku and Zuikaku offered mobile support.

On May 7, 1942, Shokaku's and Zuikaku's D3A1 dive bombers sank the U.S. destroyer Sims and so badly damaged the fleet tanker Neosho that it was scuttled a few days later. Elsewhere, however, the Lexington and Yorktown set out to intercept enemy threats. The carriers located Shoho and dispatched 53 SBDs, 22 TBD-1 Devastator torpedo bombers and 18 F4F-3s to eliminate it.

The Japanese light carrier's hangar sheltered eight A6M2 Zeros, four A5M4 fighters and six B5N2 torpedo bombers, but it had only one Zero and two A5M4s in the air on combat air patrol when the Americans attacked off Misima Island. The first Americans on the scene were SBDs of Leppla's scout squadron VS-2, led by Lt. Cmdr. Robert Dixon. As they positioned themselves to dive from 12,500 feet, the first echelon came under attack. Dixon extended his dive brakes, causing en-

emy forces to overshoot. Two Zeros then went after an SBD crewed by Leppla and Liska, but Liska drove them off with his .30-caliber machine gun.

As a third Zero attacked the SBD in front of him, Leppla briefly rolled, fired and saw the Japanese disengage. He then resumed his dive, registering a near miss with his 1,000-pound bomb.

Their squadron mates, Lt. j.g. William Edward Hall and Seaman 1st Class John Moore, were more successful in bombing the Japanese carrier Shoho.

Although Shoho launched three more fighters, it could not stop U.S. aircraft from landing as many as 13 bombs and seven torpedo hits in less than one hour when it went down — the first Japanese carrier sunk in the war.

As the U.S. planes returned to their carriers, Dixon reported to the Lexington: "Scratch one flat top! Signed Bob."

Three SBDs of VS-2 and one from Yorktown's VS-5 were shot down, while their crews claimed a total of five Zeros and one A5M4, though the Japanese denied any air-to-air losses among their fighters.

Leppla was credited with shooting down two Japanese aircraft in 30 seconds, with two more credited to his radioman, Liska. About halfway along the 180-mile flight back to their carrier, the two encountered a Japanese reconnaissance plane, which Leppla shot down.

The next day, on May 8, 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea reached its crescendo.

Shortly before 11 a.m., the Lexington's radar detected Japanese forces from 64 miles out. With most of their Wildcats escorting the strike on the Japanese carriers, only 17 remained to defend the American carriers, so their numbers were supplemented with 18 available SBDs from the scouting squadrons, including Leppla and Liska's squadron mates, Hall and Moore.

Japanese torpedo bombers had an escort of their own, and three picked out Hall's plane. A 20mm round entered his cockpit, wounding Hall in both ankles and nearly severing his right foot.

Still, Hall stayed in the fight, firing at any opponent that passed before his sights.

Noticing Hall's plight, Leppla and Liska intervened, with the two claiming four Zeros in the process.

In reality, Japanese forces lost one fighter whose pilot ditched. The SBDs, however, were credited with downing a Japanese D3A dive bomber and five B5N torpedo bombers. Although the Battle of the Coral Sea ended in a tactical victory for Japan, the U.S. had turned back a major Japanese invasion attempt. Moreover, while Shokaku underwent repairs and Zuikaku replaced its airplane and aircrew losses, Yorktown's damage was repaired in time to join in the decisive U.S. victory at Midway on June 4, 1942.

After sorting out the air-to-air claims at Coral Sea, Hall was credited with one enemy plane, while Leppla was credited with a Zero and a floatplane destroyed and two Zeros damaged on May 7, followed by two Zeros downed and one damaged on the 8th. Liska was credited with three Zeros.

Their outstanding performance resulted in a gold star in lieu of a second Navy Cross for Leppla and Liska. On Nov. 21, 1942, Hall was awarded the Medal of Honor.

## The Cold Within

Six humans trapped by happenstance  
In black and bitter cold  
Each possessed a stick of wood,  
Or so the story's told

Their dying fire in need of logs,  
The first woman held hers back  
For on the faces around the fire  
She noticed one was black.

The next man looking cross the way  
Saw one not of his church  
And couldn't bring himself to give  
The fire his stick of birch

The third one sat in tattered clothes  
He gave his coat a hitch

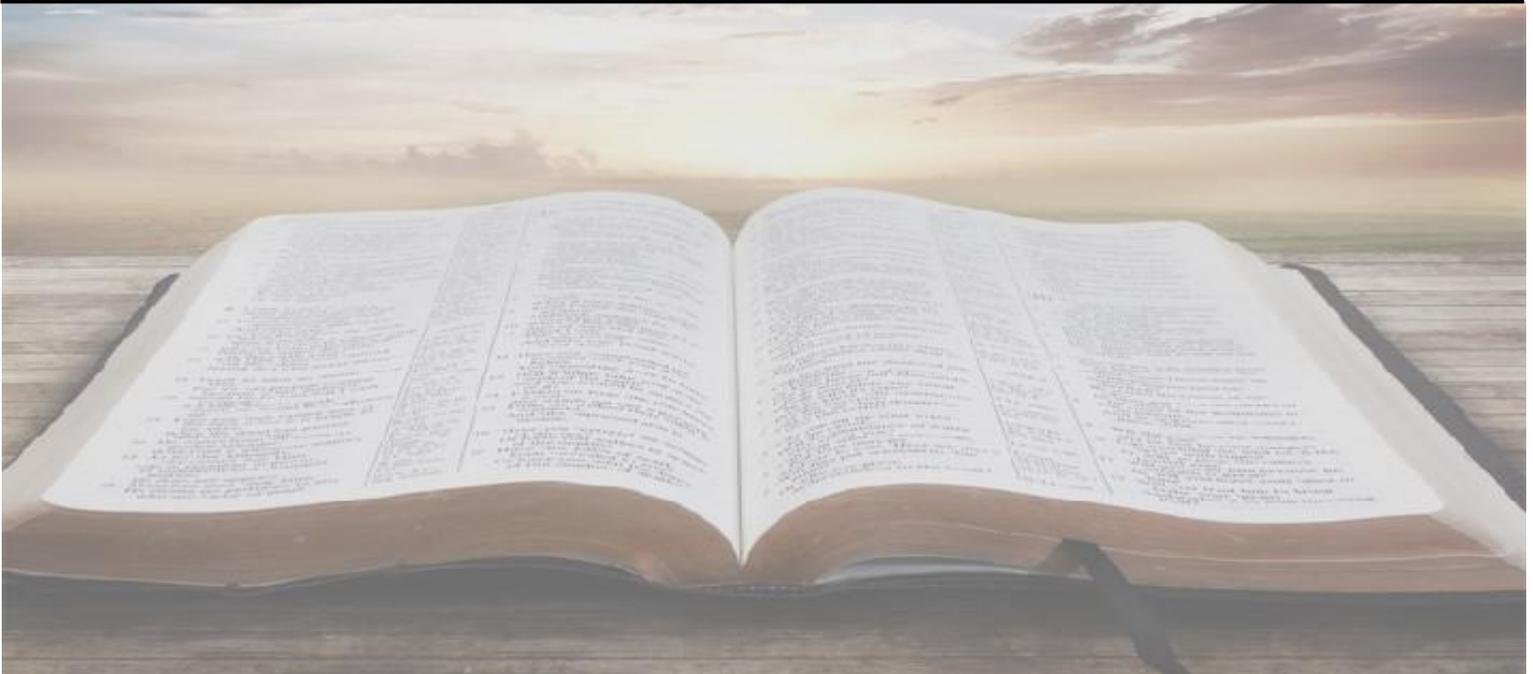
Why should his log be put to use  
To warm the idle rich?  
The rich man just sat back and thought  
Of the wealth he had in store,  
And how to keep what he had earned  
From the lazy, shiftless poor.

The black man's face bespoke revenge  
As the fire passed from his sight,  
For all he saw in his stick wood  
Was a chance to spite the white.

And the last man of this forlorn group  
Did naught except for gain,  
Giving only to those who gave  
Was how he played the game.

I didn't write this poem It was written by James Patrick Kinney in the Mid 1970's. It was read the other day on the Senate floor, and as I read it now my heart is heavy with sadness and grief. America is so polarized, I am afraid for my country. We are not on the same side anymore, we have different views of what we think our country should be. Oh, how I pray **that we would learn to pray again. Please Lord bless American. We just need to Love again.**

**II Chronicles 7:14 reads as such**



Chaplain Hagger pastors Olive Baptist Church in Odessa, Texas .

He also oversees the operation at All People Hospice and Healthcare.

Contact: Address: 4745 N. Sierra Ave, Odessa, TX 79764 — Phone: 432-258-7751 / FAX: 432-381-5272 / Cell: 832-312-0892

*Chaplain Hagger can be reached anytime.....no matter what the time.*