

[View this email in your browser](#)



# HEARTLAND INTERGROUPER

4204 S. Florida Ave, Suite H.  
Lakeland, FL 33813  
863-688-0211 or 863-687-9275

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

MONDAY- 9AM-5PM  
TUESDAY-9AM-5PM  
WEDNESDAY-9AM- 5PM  
THURSDAY- 9AM- 5PM  
FRIDAY- 9AM- 5PM

WE TOO LIVE LIFE ON LIFE'S TERMS! IT MAY BE BEST TO CALL BEFORE YOU COME!

**HEARTLAND INTERGROUP OFFICE WILL  
BE CLOSED JANUARY 15th, 2024, IN  
OBSERVANCE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING D  
AY.**

**ANY MEETING CHANGES PLEASE SUBMIT CHANGES TO  
WEBSITE:**

[Submit Meeting Changes](#) | [Heartland AA \(heartlandintergroup.org\)](#)

Hello, welcome to ✈️ Flight #2024. We are prepared to take off into the New Year. Please make sure your Attitude and Blessings are secured and locked 🔒 in an upright position. All self-destructive devices should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt and discouragement should be put away. Should we lose Altitude under pressure, during the flight, reach up and pull down a Prayer. Prayers 🙏 will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated you can assist other passengers. There will be NO BAGGAGE 🧳 allowed on this flight. The Captain (GOD) has cleared us for takeoff. Destination GREATNESS. Please join me on this Adventure 2024 God bless each and every one!





## ABOUT FAITHFUL FIVERS

Faithful Fivers are A.A. Members who pledge to contribute at least \$5.00 a month to support our local Intergroup office in its efforts to carry the A.A. message of hope and recovery to alcoholics in Polk, Highlands, and Hardee counties.

## HOW TO BECOME A FAITHFUL FIVER

- Call the office manager at (863) 688-0211
- Visit our website at [Heartlandintergroup.org](http://Heartlandintergroup.org). Go to the *donate* tab at the top right of the screen.

## What does our Intergroup do?

- Provides a 24-hour A.A. Hotline
- Has available space for AA meetings
- Sells A.A. literature and merchandise
- Publishes a monthly Newsletter called the Intergrouper, free to sign up for.
- Offers an informative up-to-date website with current meeting lists, and events.
- Has an online bookstore for convenience to those that may not be able to visit in person.
- Has an extensive Lending Library of speaker CD's and tapes.
- Provides a 12-Step room for sponsor/sponsee to meet.

(863) 688-0211

4204 S. FLORIDA AVE STE. H  
LAKELAND, FL 33813

Heartland Intergroup is in  
need of a front desk  
volunteer every other  
Friday morning from  
9:00am-1:00pm. One year

of continuous sobriety is  
required. Please email  
officemanager@heartlandinte  
rgroup.org



**Rigorous Honesty and Step One of AA**





November 12, 2020

By Andy F

## Step one

***“We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable” \****

I arrived at my first AA meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1984. This was after a twenty-year addiction to alcohol and drugs. My drinking and using began at the age of thirteen. As a young teenager, I was already a disturbed young man. Growing up in the cold environment of foster care left me with low self-esteem, as well as a huge chip on my shoulder.

I took to drinking and drugs like a duck to water. By the time I was nineteen, I was already hopelessly addicted. I left my foster family and went back to live with my biological mother. My behavior at home was so volatile that my mother had no alternative but to kick me out.

I embarked on a career as a homeless person, using anything I could to dispatch myself from my feelings of abandonment and rejection. I became what the fellowship in America calls a “garbage head.” I used any and all substances to medicate my feelings. By the time I was in my late teens, I didn’t care if I lived or died.

## Step one and rigorous honesty. What’s the connection?

The first part of step one declares that, as alcoholics, we are unable to stop drinking under our own power. The second half of this step suggests that, drunk or sober, our lives remain unmanageable. I remember going to an AA meeting once. There was a girl there

who jokingly shared that she was powerless over alcohol and that her life was not only unmanageable but **“unbearable.”** I remember laughing nervously. That’s exactly what my life was like, with or without alcohol.

In sobriety, I continued to be the same person as I was while drinking. I rejected the twelve steps, thinking they were some quasi-religious nonsense. In recovery, I continued running on self-will. I went to any lengths to avoid facing myself honestly. I had no concept of surrender, especially to any guidance in AA. Fear, defiance, and dishonesty propelled me from one relapse to the next.

**“Powerlessness”** and **“unmanageability”** were two words that meant nothing to me. The irony was that both of these ideas were the only reality I ever knew. Drinking and drugging were as natural to me as breathing.

## Staying sober on fellowship alone

After my arrival at AA, I went to meetings every day, Sometimes two or three times a day. I didn’t know what people were talking about when they spoke about step one. I told myself that powerlessness and unmanageability were just gimmicks created by the founders of AA. In my sick mind, Bill W and Dr. Bob came up with these ideas to disempower people. They were designed to make alcoholics dependent on the fellowship. Secretly, I believed that AA was a cult.

The truth was that I was barely able to function without alcohol. In early recovery, I suffered from dramatic mood swings and depression. Panic attacks plagued me frequently. My mental state was very unstable without alcohol. Life was so unmanageable that I couldn’t hold down a job. My attempts at relationships with women were a disaster. I was angry, volatile, and unpredictable. My wife had enough of my erratic behavior. She left after I had been in the program for two years. Sadly, relapse became a regular pattern. The irony was that I could not admit that I was powerless over alcohol. Moreover, I was unable to see that my life as a dry alcoholic was unmanageable in every area of my life.

## The fruits of self-will

I had nowhere else to go, so I attended meetings every day. I was too vulnerable and unstable to cross the bridge to normal living. The harder I fought to stay sober and make a success of my life, the more often I relapsed. It was a merry-go-round that I couldn’t get off. My very best attempts to achieve a normal life failed. Whenever I picked up the first drink, I was so angry at myself for being brought to my knees once again. These benders were becoming more and more life-threatening.

The sheer misery of an unmanageable life was too much. The chaos and madness of untreated alcoholism propelled me closer and closer to the **“gates of insanity or death.”**

\* I managed that pain in the only way I knew how: more alcohol!

## The principle of step one: – Honesty

I fought valiantly for more than a decade to get sober. That said, it was always on my own terms. One Sunday evening, I went to a step-one meeting. I was counting days again. I remember the reading from step one in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. ***“Who cares to admit complete defeat?”***

That day, I received an act of grace. My alcoholic ego collapsed. Although painful then, it was the best thing that could have happened. For the first time ever, I knew I was beaten. My very best ideas had failed to keep me sober! I was unable to apply my intelligence to help myself. It was humiliating to admit that I was all out of creative solutions.

The truth of step one was too shocking to face. I kept dismissing the evidence continuously placed in front of me. The God that I worshipped was the illusion of my self-sufficiency. It brought me close to self-destruction.

## Written assignments on step one

Today, I am grateful that my sponsor gave me a written step-one assignment. With regard to dismantling my denial, I had to see my dishonesty on paper. The written information in step one didn't lie. I was amazed at how long it took to accept the reality of my powerlessness over alcohol. Moreover, once on paper, the chaos and unmanageability of my life were plain to see.

## Dishonesty = Fear

### FEAR = False Evidence Appearing Real.

Denial condemned me to believe in the illusion that I had the power to recreate my life without the twelve steps. I gradually came to see that my perception of reality was very distorted. It had been built on layer upon layer of excuses, lies, and blame.

Following my honest admission of step one, the next honest thing was to surrender and place myself under new management. I asked David B. to sponsor me and handed my will and life over to the suggested program.

## Dishonesty and Ego

Today, I can see that my dishonesty was created by my maladapted alcoholic ego. Honesty and truth are within my true self. Through fear, the ego had become committed to the false. ***“They cannot, after a time, differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one”.*** (BB ***“The doctor's opinion”*** p. XXV111)

The journey from denial to the truth is ongoing and hasn't always been easy. The elevator to a quick and easy recovery was out of order. I had to use the steps. What a truly

amazing and worthwhile journey it is! Through the twelve steps, I discovered the truth about myself. This truth is setting me free.

In fellowship

Andy F

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO CALL HOME?



**WE WELCOME YOUR GROUP!**

*What does that include?*

**1ST MONTH'S RENT FREE**

**INSURANCE IS COVERED**

**COFFEE AND WATER INCLUDED**

**HYBRID MEETING POSSIBILITIES**

**BIG BOOKS TO USE WHILE IN MEETING SPACE**

**LOTS OF TIME SLOTS AVAILABLE**

**CONTACT OFFICE MANAGER AT:  
OFFICEMANAGER@HEARTLANDINTERGROUP.ORG**

# The First Step Prayer

DEAR LORD, HELP ME TO SEE  
AND ADMIT THAT I AM  
POWERLESS OVER MY  
ALCOHOLISM. HELP ME TO  
UNDERSTAND HOW MY  
ALCOHOLISM HAS LED TO  
UNMANAGEABILITY IN MY LIFE.  
HELP ME THIS DAY TO  
UNDERSTAND THE TRUE MEANING  
OF POWERLESSNESS. REMOVE  
FROM ME ALL DENIAL OF MY  
ALCOHOLISM.

## HYBRID MEETING- December Heartland Intergroup Representative Meeting, Monday, January 8th at 6:00PM.

Heartland Intergroup is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: January Heartland Intergroup Rep Meeting

Time: Jan 8, 2024 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2323580422?omn=81587308951>

Meeting ID: 232 358 0422

---

One tap mobile

+13052241968,,2323580422# US

+16469313860,,2323580422# US

---

Dial by your location

- +1 305 224 1968 US
- +1 646 931 3860 US
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
  - +1 309 205 3325 US
  - +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
  - +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
    - +1 360 209 5623 US
    - +1 386 347 5053 US
    - +1 507 473 4847 US
    - +1 564 217 2000 US
    - +1 669 444 9171 US
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
  - +1 689 278 1000 US
  - +1 719 359 4580 US
  - +1 253 205 0468 US
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 232 358 0422

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kWFhYUFGP>

**What does HYBRID mean you ask? HYBRID means, in person AND online! Thats right!!! We will be meeting at the Heartland Intergroup Office AND on Zoom! We want you to be a part of our Intergroup however you can!!**



**ACCEPTANCE**  
**IS THE ANSWER**  
**TO ALL OF MY**  
**PROBLEMS TODAY.**  
**WHEN I AM DISTURBED,**  
**IT IS BECAUSE I FIND SOME**  
**PERSON, PLACE, THING OR SITUATION**  
**- SOME FACT OF MY LIFE -**  
**UNACCEPTABLE TO ME,**  
**AND I CAN FIND NO SERENITY**  
**UNTIL I ACCEPT THAT**  
**PERSON, PLACE, THING OR SITUATION**  
**AS BEING EXACTLY THE WAY IT IS**  
**SUPPOSED TO BE**  
**AT THIS MOMENT.**  
**NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING,**  
**HAPPENS IN GOD'S WORLD BY MISTAKE.**

p.417

**We Would Love To Update Your Group Contacts:**

If it has been a while since you have updated the contacts for your group and if things have changed, please let us know.

We would love to stay in touch when we need to! No worries, we don't share this information with the public! The only people that see it are the Heartland Intergroup Board, web servants, and the District 3 Registrar.

Anytime you need to make a change or add a contact, just go to our website: [Heartlandintergroup.org](http://Heartlandintergroup.org)  
Click on MEETINGS in the upper right side on the screen, scroll down to SUBMIT MEETING CHANGES, and answer the questions! It's that easy!

If you would rather, you are always welcome to email [officemanager@heartlandintergroup.org](mailto:officemanager@heartlandintergroup.org) and send us your info that way!

Thank you everyone for your continued support!



November 17, 2023

Please direct all  
communications to:

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163  
Fax: (212) 870-3003

Dear A.A. Friends:

As a Fellowship, we celebrate and recognize November as Gratitude Month. This is a time when we A.A.s reflect on the many gifts and blessings sobriety has given us. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous encompasses many facets: our home groups, sponsorship, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Fellowship among each other, service on many levels, and many more. As the General Manager of the General Service Office (GSO), I'm grateful to see firsthand the many services GSO provides that support the spiritual purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous – carrying the message of sobriety to the alcoholic who still suffers. These services assist the many facets of the A.A. program.

With the spirit of Gratitude Month in mind, I write today to share with you the difficult news related to the current financial health of Alcoholics Anonymous and the potential continued challenges ahead as we strive to fulfill our spiritual purpose. I hope this letter will be met with understanding, and that the honesty and sincerity in my heart are apparent throughout. The last four years have been very challenging for A.A. in many respects. This began with the worldwide shutdown in early 2020 due to the pandemic, which immediately forced nearly all A.A. groups to close their physical doors and either stop meeting altogether or find other means of gathering. This was followed by a slow return of groups meeting in person, an economy filled with uncertainty, and a workplace that changed in many ways. During this time, GSO and our Boards, like other organizations and businesses, were forced to change dramatically. We quickly transitioned to working 100% virtual to continue serving the Fellowship.

The office, along with the A.A. World Services (AAWS) and General Service Boards (GSB), have worked hard to manage our finances through these last four years with the hope that many of the challenges we faced would subside and return to pre-pandemic conditions. It is apparent now that the financial challenges we face cannot continue to be met with the deferral of essential projects and office development that are necessary to carry out Advisory Actions of the General Service Conference and support the vital services GSO provides.

Our tradition of self-support has always been vital to the health and future of the Fellowship and been our main source of income. However, there has always been a need for additional support from the sale of our literature. When the pandemic hit in early 2020, the initial impact on our revenue was significant, with a steep decrease in contributions. Income from sales of A.A. literature was also significantly reduced as sales came to an almost complete halt. The Fellowship responded with tremendous generosity, resulting in contributions reaching record levels. That continued in 2021, and contributions in 2022 nearly matched the 2021 level. This year to date, we are on pace to reach similar levels to the last three years. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and heartwarming.



Unfortunately, literature profits have not rebounded back to pre-pandemic levels. In addition to the slow return of sales, inflation has resulted in substantial increases in the cost to produce and distribute literature. Conscious of the challenges facing groups and members, the AAWS board held literature prices steady for as long as possible until earlier this year, when it became apparent the costs to produce and distribute were not going to return to pre-pandemic levels. Despite increased contributions after the pandemic, the loss in literature revenue has left our total revenue short by approximately \$1,000,000 compared with pre-pandemic times.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on virtually all our expenses. Of note are increased costs related to meetings, events, and travel, which are a key necessity to support the Regional Forums, board meetings, and the General Service Conference. However, we have managed to reduce total operating expenses to an average of \$15,768,000 compared with pre-pandemic levels of \$16,258,000. Reducing total expenses below pre-pandemic levels truly illustrates the diligence the office and the boards applied to the budget and operations to offset losses.

Because of the significant decline in literature sales and revenue and the large cash outlay needed to continue printing and distributing our literature, we have also experienced a very tight cash position. Our reforecast budget for this year estimates a loss of \$997,000, after depreciation and the GSB support of *La Viña*.

The office and all three boards have worked diligently to address these financial challenges. A systematic and dedicated approach to budgeting has been developed over recent years and allows for the most informed group conscience possible. Throughout, budget managers and the AAWS Board work together to find the most effective ways to prioritize and execute services, maximizing the use of each A.A. dollar. In addition to the annual budget process, a reforecast is done midyear to adapt to the direction brought forth by the April General Service Conference and other factors impacting original estimates.

As difficult as this letter is to write, I'm hopeful and optimistic for A.A.'s future. Together we can overcome the challenges we're facing. We need your help to continue to adjust to and plan for the reality of current economic conditions and changes in our Fellowship. As members we often say that when A.A. needs money, the Fellowship will respond. This is one of those times. Your generosity has sustained us through very difficult times in the past. If your group is able, in the spirit of Gratitude Month, please consider a special contribution to the General Service Board. You can make a contribution through [aa.org](http://aa.org) by clicking [here](#) or by mail.

Make your check payable to the General Service Board to:

General Service Office  
P.O. Box 2407  
James A. Farley Station  
New York, NY 10116-2407

Moving forward, more frequent, and incremental contributions would be much appreciated as the office incurs many of its expenses during certain parts of the year. In particular, many of

Alcoholics  
Anonymous® | [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

*On this day you surrendered you  
mustered up some courage and asked  
for help. You began a new way of life.  
Slowly, you became honest. You sought  
to help others. You became a giver.  
You took less. You began to feel...  
pleasure, pain, sadness and joy.  
On this day... you got sober*



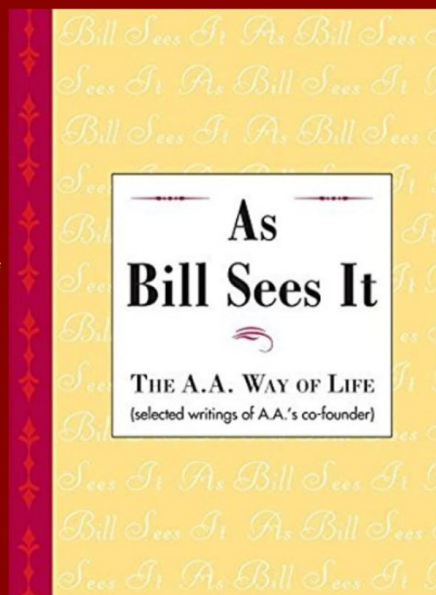
We are forming a Heartland Intergroup  
Outreach Committee.

Our goal is to bring the tri-county AA  
community closer together. We are looking  
for volunteers who are willing to travel to  
meetings throughout the tri-county area to  
spread the word that Intergroup is here to  
support and help them. If you are interested  
in attending new meetings, meeting new  
people and being of service, please call or  
text Mark C. at 863-307-6545 or send an

email to [LakelandWW@gmail.com](mailto:LakelandWW@gmail.com).

*Heartland  
Intergroup*

**January  
Merchandise of  
the Month  
20% off**



A source of comfort and inspiration, this collection of Bill W.'s writings addresses themes such as acceptance, gratitude and spirituality. Excerpted from the Big Book, the "Twelve and Twelve," Grapevine and other A.A. literature. With a topical index to help guide reading and discussion. General Service Conference-approved.

**Hardcover**

*May the New Year bring you  
closer to your dreams and  
aspirations*





# *Winter Closeout Sale*

**UP TO 60% OFF**

**WE ARE CLEANING HOUSE!**

\*In store only  
While supplies last

**4204 S. FLORIDA AVE.  
SUITE H  
LAKELAND, FL 33813  
863-688-0211**

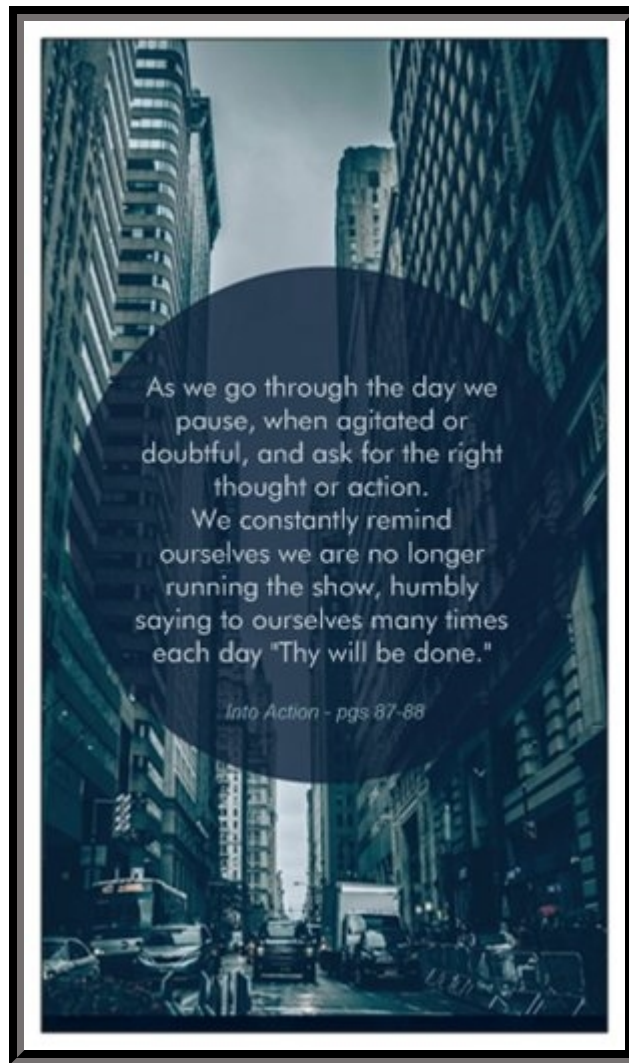
# **We want to know your Sobriety Birthdays AND Group Anniversaries!**

Heartland Intergroup wants to recognize greatness and remind the newcomers that IT WORKS!!!! Please send in your sobriety birthday and/ or group anniversary so we can share it for that month in our newsletter!! You can send them in via email at [officemanager@heartlandintergroup.org](mailto:officemanager@heartlandintergroup.org).

**THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**

## **JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

Kathy M.- 1/1/1983, 41 years  
Michael O.- 1/13/2007, 17 years  
Mark C.- 1/22/2014, 10 years  
Philip O.- 1/15/2017, 7 years



DISTRICT III BUSINESS MEETING- Meets at 2:00PM  
on the 3rd Sunday of every month at Holy Trinity  
Episcopal Church, 500 West Stuart St. Bartow, FL  
33830.



*Come celebrate  
with us!*



HEARTLAND  
—INTERGROUP—

# *40th Anniversary*

Saturday, February 17th, 2024

**Doors open: 5:00 PM**

**Dinner: 6:00 PM**

**Speaker: Jade D.**

Tickets are \$20.00

Available at Heartland Intergroup office

**DOOR PRIZES!**

**50/50 RAFFLE!**

**DESSERT AUCTION!**

**FAM Church**

**1400 E. Canal St.**

**Mulberry, FL 33860**



# Old Time A.A.

*Presents: A benefit for Dr. Bob's Home*



**January 20, 2024**

**9:30 AM to 4:30 PM**

**Tickets \$30**

**Breakfast & Lunch Served**

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**

**1200 Snell Isle Blvd NE,**

**St. Petersburg, FL 33704**

**oldtimeaa.com**

Gail L. - The Villages, FL  
The history of Dr. Bob's Home and updates

Deb H. - Akron, OH  
Getting sober in Akron

Stephen R. - Tampa, FL  
How "Florida and Akron" are so closely related

Sheryl R. - Tampa, FL  
Ambassador's Program for Dr. Bob's Home



*if preferred, make check payable to Old Time AA and mail to: 21632 State Rd 54, Lutz, FL 33549*  
For more information call (352) 556-7711 or email [oldtimeaa@gmail.com](mailto:oldtimeaa@gmail.com)

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Like to make a contribution to Dr. Bob's Home? Zelle @ 352-556-7711; Venmo @ Stephen-Ryan-56

☐ I wish to volunteer at Old Time A.A.





# 39th Annual Women's Day

Broadway Palm Dinner Theater

1380 Colonial Blvd

Fort Myers, FL 33907

**Tickets: \$35.00**

tax & gratuity included

**February 25th, 2024**  
**8am - 3pm**

Tickets: Kathy W. 239-738-9154

[fortmyerswomensday.org](http://fortmyerswomensday.org)

**Addresses for Contributions:**



**General Service Office**

Post Office Box 2407  
James A Farley Station New York, NY 10116  
Payable to: AA General Service Office

**Area 15 Treasurer**

PO Box 590835  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33359-0835  
Payable to: Area 15 Treasurer

**District III Treasurer**

District III  
5441 Chandler Drive  
Winter Haven, FL 33884  
Payable to: District III Treasurer

**Heartland Intergroup**

4204 S. Florida Ave, Suite H  
Lakeland, FL 33803  
Payable to: Heartland Intergroup



---

*Copyright © \*|2019|\* \*|Heartland Intergroup|\*, All rights reserved.*

**Any questions can be emailed to the office manager at:**

*\*officemanager@heartlandintergroup.org*

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

\*|Heartland Intergroup of AA, 4204 N. Florida Ave Suite H, Lakeland, FL 33813|\*USA

---

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Heartland Intergroup of AA · 4204 S. Florida Avenue #H · Lakeland, FL 33813 · USA

