

# FOCUS

FEBRUARY 2023 - MMXXIII ISSUE II

735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

## Teamwork: With God as Your Partner by Pastor Jim Fleming

And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel (Joshua 8:14).

It was only noon, and Joshua was having a very long day! It began about 30 hours earlier when a breathless runner stumbled into Israel's camp at Gilgal. His message: A coalition led by the five kings of the Amorites has laid siege to the city of Gibeon. They are going to "teach Gibeon a lesson" for breaking ranks and aligning with Israel. Gibeon will be no match for this overwhelming force unless their new ally, Israel, answers their SOS.

To Joshua's mind, the action of the five kings was a critical blunder (on their part) and a strategic opportunity (for him). The prospect of conquering the five walled cities of the Amorites in the hill country looked like a long and grizzly business. But now the armies of the five cities, including the army of Jerusalem, had left the safety of their walled defenses to take to the field. If Joshua could meet them on the field before they returned to their cities, he could do in a day what would otherwise take many weeks and lives.

Joshua sprang into action. He assembled the army of Israel for a stealth march under the cover of night. As they moved silently through the darkness, Joshua heard a voice outlining the necessary battle plan. It was God who spoke and informed Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you." So, this would be a battle that involves pursuing an enemy in retreat. When the morning sun rose behind their backs, Israel saw complete shock illumined on the faces of five armies.



The day of battle began with open field combat at Gibeon. With God's assistance, Israel promptly seized the upper hand and began paring away at their confused opponents. When it became obvious to the five kings that remaining on the field would lead to the total loss of their armies, they sounded the retreat. God slowed the retreating armies by providing a killer hail-storm at the descent of Bethhoron as Israel took up the pursuit.

So it was that Joshua found himself facing a dilemma at high noon. Despite his fatigue, he knew that Israel needed to finish the job TODAY! Once the five armies (or what was left of them) reached the safety of their walled cities, even a remnant could defy Israel with impunity. So Joshua made an audacious request of the God who promised him success in the day's battle. He asked God to make this a 48-hour day. The rest of the story you know well!

So what's the point? God had a job for Joshua and all that was required was faithfulness and trust. God supplied

what was missing to transform Joshua's faithfulness into unbelievable effectiveness. Look at all that God supplied: A key window of opportunity, timely information, encouragement and critical battle field intelligence, cosmic reinforcements (hailstones to die for!), and a supernatural day in which a man could accomplish what would otherwise require two.

The story turned out this way because Joshua did two things: He was doggedly determined to follow through with what God asked and was audacious enough to ask God to supply what he lacked. Our God is the same God who heard and answered Joshua's prayer. So commit to do whatever He asks of you and then pray for Him to supply what you lack to complete it. He can give you whatever is needed, including a single day in which you accomplish the work of two, if you will ask!

## SHEPHERD'S STAFF

#### "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...." by Robert Seay, Elder

We think of the Gospel as the good news of our future and unending life with the One who created us. We tend to be concerned for others in this same regard. But this is only the icing on the

cake of what we call our redemption. The cake is the fact that this good news Gospel affects each of us in the here and now! Not only does this good news offer a past of forgiveness and understanding a future of eternity with our Creator, but this good news speaks to a life (*right now*)—of Christ living in us and meeting all of our needs right now!<sup>2</sup> When we truly ponder this significance it leads to worship!

Worship is the theme of our Annual Global Missions Conference. There are as many God-given ways to worship as there are languages and cultures. This year we are focusing on ethnodoxology. "Ethnodoxology studies how different cultures worship God. It includes all the arts such as dance, drama, video and visuals. And it goes beyond worship as an event because it studies how worship shapes or is shaped

by life as lived within a culture or ethnic group."<sup>3</sup>

February 19–26 two speakers, Roger Lowther and Frank Fortunato, will speak about how the arts fuel worship and how worship fuels missions, or the cross-cultural proclamation of the Gospel. We will host some of our own Missionaries and National Partners during this time. There will be opportunities for you to meet and hear from them. Event details and specific times are included in this newsletter.

Since June 2022 I've had the privilege of joining our First Evan Global Missions Team (GMT). The GMT exists with many functions but with this encompassing pattern of effort: to mobilize, support, encourage, equip and enable ourselves and others in the promotion of this Gospel cross-culturally.

Membership on this board is a 3-year commitment with approximately 1/3 of the members rolling off (and on) each year. This strategy allows fresh faces and perspectives each year while preserving consistency and tradition. Speaking of tradition, our First Evan

mission strategy is guided by a mission policy document that although updated as needed to meet changing times, was originally crafted many years ago. It was originated to establish a vision for missions with a focus that has remained a mainstay and imperative for our church for many years. If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the GMT, please send names to me or to the Global Missions Office (missions@firstevan.org).

Global Missions is a vital aspect of who First Evan has been over the years. This is shown by noting that approximately 1/3 of our Missionaries grew up here. These are often multi-generational relationships that began at a young age at First Evan.

"It is no longer I who live ... " How do I show this? PRAY for our Missionaries! You can access up-to-date prayer requests by receiving the Missions Prayer Guide sent out by the Missions Office every Wednesday. To be added to the circulation list, simply send a note to missions@firstevan.org.

"Christ lives in me!"

## WORSHIP

#### **Baptism**

#### Ongoing and Sunday, April 23

We offer two different methods for baptism scheduling. April 23 is our next prescheduled baptism in the service. We also hold baptisms on an as-needed basis in the Chapel, so that those who have been recently converted and want to be baptized quickly may do so, patterned after the immediacy found in the New Testament (Acts 2:41; 8:12,36–38; 16:33). Please contact Katelynn Bernardini (kbernardini@firstevan.org) for more information. You can watch the baptism videos at www.firstevan.org/baptisms.





McKayla Rawlinson baptized January 29.





<u>Judi Simpson</u> baptized January 29.

#### Calling All Singers!

Join us for our Palm Sunday Services on April 2 for a special program on the Psalms. Contact Katelynn Bernardini (*kbernardini @firstevan.org*) for the rehearsal schedule and details.

#### **PULPIT PREVIEW**

FEB 5 "When the Pieces Fit" Daniel 8:15-27

FEB 12 "Prayer That Works" Daniel 9:1-19

FEB 19 Roger Lowther

FEB 26 Frank Fortunato

MAR 5 "Counting the Days" Daniel 9:20-27

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> NMM Paul Tripp 1/18

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Joan Huyser-Honig- Calvin.edu

## CHURCH-WIDE

#### "In the Know" Meeting

If you missed the meeting on Sunday, January 22, you can *click here* (password: firstevan) to watch the full presentation. Be encouraged as you see ways God has been working among us. Have your questions answered about our ongoing pastoral search. Learn what you can be praying for in the weeks ahead.









#### **NEW ON STAFF**



Joseph Lawrick Facilities Coordinator

Joseph Lawrick is currently a resident of Olive Branch, MS and has lived in the Mid-South area for the last 28 years. He has worked for several companies in a Facility Director capacity as well as owning his own home remodeling company. He also served in the United States Air Force as a Sr. Airman/Munition Systems Specialist. He and his wife Sue have been married for 24 years and have one adult child.

When Joseph is not working he enjoys spending time with family. Please welcome Joseph as our new Facilities Coordinator and thank the Lord for His provision.

#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Heather & Mark Mazzone

## Global Missions Team Recommendations

The Global Missions Team is seeking recommendations for new members to serve a three-year term. They must be committed members of First Evan with a deep interest in missions and have sufficient time and concern for worldwide missions to make a meaningful commitment to the GMT. First Evan members may send recommendations to missions@firstevan.org or speak to any current GMT member.

#### Going Deeper

Wednesdays, Now-March 8 6:15-8:00 p.m., A111

Come to this Wednesday night elective to better understand the depths of Daniel 7–12 and more. Bonus: You will also have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss implications of what is taught. Want to translate the Book of Daniel into dynamic life change? Pastor Jim Fleming will shed some light on what God says we need to know about our future. No preregistration required—these are all open sessions. Come to one or come to all.

#### Midweek at First Evan Wednesdays, Now-April 26 (No meeting on March 15)

There's something for everyone on Wednesday nights. It starts with dinner at 5:00 p.m., then we have activities for all ages. The food is prepared by John Dawson and Jimmy Garrison and is served by faithful volunteers. Each individual has a choice between an entree and side item or the weekly soup and salad bar. A dessert is served with every meal. Visitors and guests are always welcome and reservations are not necessary. Find details and our weekly menu at <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/midweek">www.firstevan.org/midweek</a>.

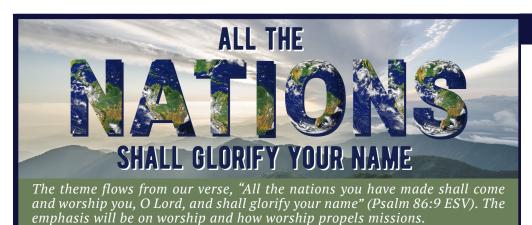
If you are attending or volunteering and need childcare, register at <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare">www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare</a> (For ages 2 and under. Subject to availability.)







## GLOBAL MISSIONS CONFERENCE



#### **CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Morning Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Sanctuary Roger Lowther preaches. Music led by First Evan Worship Team.

Evening Session, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary

Along with stories from missions partners, Roger Lowther will briefly take us though a biblical basis for the arts in worship and show the gospel in musical examples.

#### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Dinner, 5:00-6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Evening Session, 6:15-7:45 p.m., Sanctuary

Missions festival with music, visual arts, and stories of God working in Japan and around the world.

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Dinner, 5:00-6:15 p.m., Fellowship Hall Evening Session, 6:30-8:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Frank Fortunato speaks. Missionary Reports. Music led by Proskuneo.

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Light Breakfast Snacks, 8:30-9:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall Worship & Culture Workshop, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

God's people worship God in a marvelous diversity of ways around the world, and that can encourage us to consider how we can make worship more welcoming for the diverse people in our own midst. In this workshop you will experience a variety of global worship expressions and learn practical ways to worship God in diversity and unity within your own congregation. The workshop is geared toward church musicians, but is open to all. Led by Josh Davis and Jaewoo Kim (Proskuneo), Frank Fortunato, Ron Man, and Ken Boer.

Creative Arts Panel, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Missionaries, National Partners, and First Evan Members share how they use their creative art skills to honor the Lord.

#### **Evening Dinners**

Sunday School Classes meet with Missionaries and National Partners for Informal Dinners.

#### **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

Morning Worship Service, 10:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Sanctuary Frank Fortunato Preaches. Music led by Proskuneo.

Multicultural Worship Celebration, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary Multicultural Worship Celebration in partnership with area churches. Dessert Fellowship (ice cream and brownies) following.

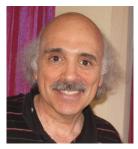
Throughout the week, there are small group get-togethers in homes or via Zoom with Missionaries and/or National Partners. Hear from Missionaries and National Partners in Sunday School Classes at 9:30 a.m.

#### **CONFERENCE SPEAKERS**

Bios found at www.firstevan.org/gmc.



Roger Lowther Mission to the World, Japan



Frank Fortunato
Operation Mobilization, USA

#### **CONFERENCE PROJECT**



Community Arts Tokyo works through the arts to connect people to God and the church. With the help of First Evan, this summer they will host evangelistic events with dancers, musicians, and visual artists to:

- 1) Help the churches of Japan reopen after three long years of COVID restrictions.
- 2) Give these churches opportunities to build relationships within local communities and share the gospel.

We will be collecting funds throughout the Global Missions Conference (goal: \$20,000) to assist with these outreach events in Japan. Please designate your giving as "GMC Project – Japan" or visit <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/japan">www.firstevan.org/japan</a>.

## **GLOBAL MISSIONS**

#### Sustain Ukraine

250+ volunteers, 100,000 meals, a memory to last a lifetime. On January 8, First Evaners and others came together to pack meals to replace those



that went to the front lines of Ukraine in 2022. Only a couple of hours produced hearty meals that will bless those less fortunate and provide an avenue for the Gospel to be proclaimed. What a unifying way to be the hands and feet of Jesus; children with their parents, family, and friends of all ages!

On behalf of Global Missions, *Kids Around the World*, and FEC missionaries in Ukraine, David and Katya, THANK YOU for your time, your hard work, and the love you put into these meals. All glory to God! Please continue to pray for these meals and the bellies they fill; pray the Lord will shine through this effort and continue to bless those on the frontlines in Ukraine and around the world.









## YOUNG ADULTS

Break is a welcoming group of college students and young professionals seeking to encourage one another in their walk with Christ and share their faith with those in their community. We connect through various Bible studies, weekly fellowship gatherings, and other events. Here are some of those offerings:



#### Fair Game

Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House Do you have a question you'd like some persepective on? Fair Game has started back for the Spring semester. This is a safe and welcoming space to ask most any question you might have, and we'll openly discuss in a group setting. We hope to see you there! Contact Anies Kunda at akunda@firstevan.org for the address.



Big Game Party
Sunday, February 12
5:00 p.m., The Hall's House
Young adults, you officially have
Bowl game plans! Dinner provided.
RSVP to akunda@firstevan.org.



Weekly Sunday Night Dinner Sundays, 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House On (most) Sunday nights, join us for dinner and fellowship at the Hall's house! Contact Anies Kunda for details at <a href="mailto:akunda@firstevan.org">akunda@firstevan.org</a>.

## **OUTREACH**

## Q/A: A Tool for Your Faith and Mission

This is the first of a number of articles in the newsletter to equip you for when you encounter hard questions. It isn't meant to be bulletproof, but helpful food for thought.

Q: How could a good and loving God allow evil?

That's a good question.

WE may not know why God allows evil, but HE knows why and He uses it to accomplish good purposes for His children. For example, Joseph was wrongfully sold into slavery and falsely imprisoned. In the end, he told his brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50:20). The evil that God allowed in Joseph's life led to Joseph being able to save starving nations. The greatest example was that God paid for the sin of the world through Jesus who was falsely accused and died on a cross.

God could have made a world without evil. Instead, He created a world where love is meaningful because the choice to not love is an option. God intended that people would choose to love Him and others willingly, and not robotically.

Our hearts instinctively tell us that there is something off because of the presence of evil. The gravity of evil sometimes makes us question, "Why?" What is not a mystery is that God never approves of evil. He despises it. The Bible teaches us that God's initial design existed without it and that Jesus is coming back to restore all things. He also promises that a day is coming when "he will repay each person according to what he has done" (Matthew 16:27). For the perpetrator, this is a solemn warning. For the brokenhearted, this is an encouragement!

However, a logical answer cannot heal a broken heart. If we are talking about your painful experience, may we listen, pray, and care for you?

## FEC KIDS

#### **FEC Kids Midweek**

Wednesdays, Now-March 8 6:15-7:30 p.m.(available until 8:00 p.m.) Preschool, C-Wing K-5th Grade, Gym

Our weekly Midweek program builds on our Sunday morning lesson and looks at what it means to live for Christ, K-5th graders will have theme nights, scripture memory work, discipleship groups, games, and guest speakers! Our preschoolers will reinforce Sunday's lesson and participate in crafts and play. New to Midweek this semester? Sign up at: <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/feckids-midweek">www.firstevan.org/feckids-midweek</a>.









#### Join Our Team!

We are actively recruiting teachers and helpers for Sundays. Email **feckids@firstevan.org** if you are interested in serving!

#### Here are the specific needs:

- Nursery (both hours)
- Sunday School (PreK, 1st grade)
- Children's Church (2-year-olds)
- Subs for all ages

## KMC 2023 "Made to Worship: Glorifying God Through the Arts"

Friday-Sunday, February 24-26 For 4-year-olds-5th graders >> Childcare for Age 3 and Under.



This year at the Kids Missions Conference (KMC), your kids will learn about our Maker and our call to make—including the call to "make disciples." We will hear from several "makers" to hear their testimonies on how God has used their gifts and talents to glorify Him and to share the gospel. Your kids will also have to opportunity to make: pottery, an art project, sign language worship and music! To wrap up, the kids will recite the theme verse and perform sign language worship at the Sunday night Missions Conference service.

Please register by February 8 at www.firstevan.org/kmc.

#### A LOOK AT FEBRUARY

FEB 5 Joash Wanted to Obey God (2 Kings 12, 2 Chron. 24)

FEB 12 Nahum Warned of God's Judgement (Nahum)

FEB 19 God's People Were Taken Captive (2 Chron. 36)

FEB 26 Every Person Matters (Psalm 139)

#### **Big Picture Question:**

What makes people special? People are special because God made us in His own image.

#### Memory Verse:

"I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your words; my soul knows it very well." (Psalm 139:4)

#### **Equipping Parents Dinner**

Friday, February 17 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Speaker: Jason Ellis Childcare for 5th grade and Under.



Parents of all ages, join us as we gather for dinner and open God's Word to discuss how to share the Truth of the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ with those that think truth is relative and to arm our children with confidence in what is true. Jesus Christ Himself is the way, the TRUTH, and the life! We will enjoy soup, salad, and baked potato bar from Jason's Deli and then hear from guest speaker, Jason Ellis. Pizza dinner and childcare will be provided for kids 5th grade and younger.

Jason Ellis graduated from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in May of 2012 with his Master of Divinity. After spending six years pastoring a church plant in Memphis, he began working as the Director of Student Ministries at Briarcrest High School in July of 2017. Jason and Colleen have four children—Avery (9), Hadley (7), Lucas (5), and Emerson (3). They attend Harvest Chruch, where Jason serves as an elder. Jason will be teaching on Truth in a Post-Christian Culture. Sign up at <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/equippingparents">www.firstevan.org/equippingparents</a>.



## **STUDENTS**

#### Student Ministries Lock-Out

Student Ministries had the best time at this year's Lock-out! Impact and Common Ground combined for a night of activities. We started the night with worship, which was the highlight of the night. Jeffery Johnson spoke to us all about making disciples exactly where we are. This was followed by a visit to Main Event with many rounds of bowling, arcade games, and laser tag. We got to have many races on the inflatable obstacle course and sing many, many songs in our karaoke room. We want to thank all of our volunteer leaders, church staff, and students for making this a night to remember.







#### Student Ministries Midweek

Wednesdays, January 11-May 3 6:15-8:00 p.m., E226/E202 Impact, 6th-8th Gr., E226 Common Ground, 9th-12th Gr., E202 We play games and have small groups. We are in our series called, "Four Chair," all about the Four Chair Discipleship method.

Romania Mission Trip Friday-Sunday, July 14-23



We have committed to sending a team of high school students and adults to Romania to serve with Dan and Ema Onu this summer. This team will be serving in a children's camp by sharing the gospel with those who have not yet heard the good news of Jesus. We are grateful for this opportunity and hope that through being faithful to the Lord that lives will be saved. Students will be able to apply to attend this trip.

#### IRL Weekend

Friday-Sunday, March 3-5 Pinecrest Camp

& Retreat Center, Moscow, TN Cost: \$135

This In Real Life (IRL) retreat is a time where middle and high school students get to enjoy camp life for a few days while focusing on the application of faith in our daily lives as we strive to live out the truth that those who follow Jesus have been adopted into His family. Register by Wednesday, February 22 at <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/irlweekend">www.firstevan.org/irlweekend</a>.

## **ADULTS**

#### ACT II Widows Fellowship

Monday, February 6
Amerigo Italian Restaurant
1239 Ridgeway Rd., 38119
11:15 a.m., Cost: \$25
For more information about this

For more information about this ministry please contact Cathy Graham at *cathygraham@icloud.com* or 685-1028 or 299-1426 (cell).

### **MFN**

#### Men's Fish Fry

Our men had a night of fellowship and great food. Steve Wiggins is a five-time Grammy Award nominee of the band Big Tent Revival and founder of Living Room Study and Groundworks Ministries—both discipleship ministries that focus on Biblical literacy. The Gideons distributed Bibles and tracts, and Steve exhorted men to be disciples and make disciple-makers as commanded in The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20). You can watch the message at <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/men-media">www.firstevan.org/men-media</a>.















## Men's Retreat Friday-Sunday, April 21-23 Riverside Resort, AR Details coming soon!

"The Book of Isaiah", Part 2 Mondays, January 30-May 1,

6:30-8:00 p.m., £143 and Wednesdays, February 1-May 3, 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom

Isaiah is known as the "Prince of Prophets" and his prophecy is the most theologically significant book in the Old Testament. The format includes weekly study assignments, small group discussion, and lecture. We will be studying Isaiah 40–66. New men are welcome. Contact Buddy Jones at <a href="mailto:buddyjones0@gmail.com">buddyjones0@gmail.com</a>.

			WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FEBR	UARY	2023 TUESDAY	Church Offices Closed For Inclement Weather	2	3	4 A Colorful Day 9:00 a.m1:30 p.m.
FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom  YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	ACT II Widows Fellowship 11:15 a.m., Amerigo  Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	H2H Women's 7 Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall YA Fair Game 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	Men's Bible Study 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom Midweek Meal 5:00-6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall Midweek Activities 6:15-8:00 p.m.	9	10	11
FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Big Game Party 5:00 p.m., The Hall's House	Council Meeting 6:15 p.m. Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	H2H Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall  YA Fair Game 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	Men's Bible Study 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom Midweek Meal 5:00-6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall Midweek Activities 6:15-8:00 p.m.	16	17 Equipping Parent Dinner 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall	18
GMC Service 19 10:45 a.m12:00 p.m. Sanctuary   Roger Lowther FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom GMC Session 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary	Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	H2H Women's 21 Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall YA Fair Game 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	Men's Bible Study 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom GMC Dinner 5:00-6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall GMC Evening Session 6:15-7:45 p.m., Sanctuary	23	GMC Dinner 5:00-6:15 p.m. Fellowship Hall KMC Kickoff 6:30-8:00 p.m., C-wing GMC Session 6:30-8:00 p.m., Sanctuary	GMC Light 25 Breakfast Snacks 8:30-9:00 a.m., F-Hall KMC & GMC Worskshop & Panel 9:00 a.m12:00 p.m. GMC Dinners
GMC Service 26 10:45 a.m12:00 p.m. Sanctuary   Frank Fortunato FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom KMC & Multicultural Worship Celebration 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary followed by dessert	Mon's Issiah	H2H Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall YA Fair Game 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House				