

# FOCUS

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735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

# Praise in a Pickle by Pastor Jim Fleming

And when they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed (2 Chronicles 20:22).

King Jehoshaphat was in a pickle. Years earlier, when Israel entered the Promised Land, they did not engage Ammon and Moab. God asked Israel to deal with Canaan, but Ammon and Moab were off-limits. Now, many vears later, these two nations decided they would reward Israel for the favor of being spared by invading and seizing the land God had given Israel. "Am" and "Mo" had the muscle (the ammo!) to pull it off, too. Along with the Meunites from Mount Seir, they comprised an innumerable horde. Jehoshaphat knew Judah didn't stand a chance against them.

He did what any genuinely smart king would do; he stood before the Lord and cried out for deliverance. The people stood with him, God heard, and a prophet named Jahaziel put things in proper perspective. Through this prophet, God declared His battle plan. He revealed the enemy's precise position, identified their strategy, and then invited the army of Judah to come as forward observers (but noncombatants) to the location where God would foil the enemy's designs.

The people accepted God's invitation and rose early the next morning to position themselves at the coordinates God had designated. Now granted, if God didn't come through, they would be walking into the yawning mouth of disaster. But they chose to believe God more than their reason. Jehoshaphat took "trusting God" up a notch, too. He asked the



praise team, "those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire," to broadcast their position as if this was a victory parade.

The lyrics to the robust chorus were a simple declaration of trust, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." Here's an expanded version of what they were singing: We have not yet seen what God will do, but we already know the motive behind whatever He does. It's love! This is the truth that will not change. However things play out, the result will put on display a God whose love never stops. So while someone who doesn't have this trust might march to the battlefield in sober silence, we are making a musical ruckus because we already know who will look good when the dust has settled. We are praising Him even now.

When the praise started ricocheting off the valley walls of Tekoa, something amazing happened. Ammon and Moab mistook Seir for the enemy and completely wiped them out. Then Am-

mon and Moab turned on each other. When the singing army of Judah came to a lookout point, this imposing horde from Ammon, Moab, and Seir had been reduced to a field of the fallen.

So here's the point: In this incident, there is a clear division of labor. God says, "I'll do the fightin'." Jehoshaphat says, "And we'll do the praisin'." So take a cue from Jehoshaphat. When you face opposition from someone who has decided to take on God, you may not know the specifics of how things will turn out. But you can start humming what you do know: God's lovingkindness is your constant.

If you are facing daunting opposition and impossible spiritual challenges, maybe you need to praise God for what you know rather than fret over what you don't. Quit stressing over the fightin' and start singing "Jesus loves me, this I know." When you're in a pickle, that's a great time to praise the Lord! Loudly!!

# **CHURCH-WIDE**

## **Newcomers Fellowship Dinner**

On Wednesday, July 19 we had a great time gathering together and getting to know some of the folks who have joined First Evan over this past year. New members and their shepherding elders enjoyed games and an "indoor picnic."









Whether you are new to First Evan or have been coming a while and just not joined, check out the next Discover First Evan class. Contact Jacki Stieferman at <u>jstieferman@firstevan.org</u> or visit <u>www.firstevan.org/dfe</u>.

SAVE THE DATE: Discover First Evan Class Sunday, September 17, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Chapel

#### Midweek at First Evan

Wednesdays, beginning September 6 There is something for everyone on Wednesday nights! Enrich your spiritual walk and deepen your relationships with others in our fellowship. It starts with dinner at 5:00 p.m., followed by electives for all ages. www. firstevan.org/midweek

Attending or volunteering and need childcare? (For ages 2 and under. Subject to availability.) <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare">www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare</a>



## Midweek Fellowship Meal

Wednesdays, September 6-November 15 (No meal October 11) 5:00-6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall During the school year the church gathers for dinner. Each individual has a choice between an entrée and side items 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. First time is FREE!

## Family Engagement Series

Wednesdays, September 6-November 15 (No meeting October 11) 6:15-8:00 p.m., A121/122



Taylor Park will facilitate a series covering a range of family-related topics. Learn from a variety of speakers from both inside and outside the FEC family who will share their expertise and/or experience with us. In today's culture can you truly be biblical in your marriage, parenting, and other relationships in the family? Can you give your family the foundation of truth that will be required to stand firm in the faith for generations to come—even as the world becomes increasingly hostile to our beliefs? Married, single, parent, or grandparent you'll find things relevant to your own stage of life, and you will be able to share God's truth with others. No registration needed. Topics vary each week.

## **PRAYER**

## First Evan Prayer Focus

Sundays, 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom Every week you are invited to pray specifically for our transition and the pastoral search. *Click here to join the meeting.* Meeting ID: 863 8809 4094 Passcode: 758395

Wednesday Prayer Meeting Wednesdays, 6:15-8:00 p.m., D114



A prayer guide is provided each week to assist in praying for our church, ministries, sick, bereaved, country, missionaries, and military.

# Other opportunities (<a href="https://www.firstevan.org/prayer">www.firstevan.org/prayer</a>):

- Men's Monday Prayer Breakfast
- Tuesday Women's Prayer Time
- Friday Morning Elders' Prayer Time
- Weekly Missions Prayer Guide
- Sunday Morning Worship Service Intercessors
- Warriors on the Wall
- World Prayer Focus

# RECREATION

## Fall Soccer

6-Game Season: Saturdays, September 9-October 21 (No game



October 7) Cost: \$65 (includes uniform: jersey, shorts, and socks)
Boys and girls in rising JK (4-year-olds)—SK (5-year-olds) are invited to play in the ESCRA soccer league with us! Register by Friday, August 11 at www.firstevan.org/soccer.

## WORSHIP

## STAFF

## **Baptisms**

Sundays, August 27, October 15, and December 17

Do you want to get baptized to express your faith in Christ? Jesus commanded all His followers to be baptized, publicly proclaiming that God has brought them from death to life. If this describes you, we'd love to help you take the next step. Sign up for the October baptism by September 17 at <a href="https://www.firstevan.org/baptism">www.firstevan.org/baptism</a>. Contact Katelynn Bernardini (<a href="https://kbernardini@firstevan.org">kbernardini@firstevan.org</a>) for other dates.



Cian Powers shares his testimony and is baptized on July 2, 2023.

Watch at www.firstevan.org/baptisms.

## Hymn Sing

Sunday, August 6 6:00-7:30 p.m., Sanctuary



Join us for an evening of singing hymns together! We'll sing some of our "regular" hymns as well as old favorites from years ago. Ken Boer will also share devotional thoughts about some of the hymns throughout the evening. Childcare available for nursery—age 2.

## Join Us!



The Worship Ministry welcomes members and regular attenders who are interested in participating in the choir, worship team, student bands, and more. Contact Katelynn Bernardini for more information at *kbernardini@firstevan.org*.

## Mickey Bowdon Joins Our Team

We want to welcome Mickey Bowdon to our staff team. Mickey will be coming alongside Jim Henry helping expand our ministry and better care for the needs of our senior adults. Mickey has a tremendous heart for our seniors, some of whom he has known his entire life.

Mickey's parents began attending First Evan before he was even born. Regarding the opportunity to serve on our staff, Mickey said:

"FEC has impacted my life from birth. At every stage in my life, FEC has been a foundation of faith and a blessing to me and my family. I pray that God will allow me to give back to this church which has given so much to me."

Mickey brings a wealth of experience as an administrator, organizational leader, consultant, shepherd and churchman. He was ordained as an elder at First Evan in 1975.

After serving 20 years as high school principal, Headmaster, and President at Evangelical Christian School in Memphis, Mickey went on to serve as Executive Director of the Institute for Christian School Development, Headmaster of Shoals Christian School in Florence, Alabama, Superintendent of Westminster Christian Academy in Opelousas, Louisiana, and President of SchoolMasters, a Christian school research and consulting firm. He has also served as a Regional Council member for the Association of Christian Schools International, President of the Memphis Association of Independent Schools, President of the Memphis



Association of Christian Schools, Independent School Management Board Member, and member of the Board of Trustees at Bryan College.

Immediately before returning to Memphis, Mickey served as Vice-President for Christian School Education at Columbia International University (CIU) in Columbia, SC. He is also founder and former Director of the Lowrie Center for Christian School Education at CIU. In 2013 Mickey received the Columbia International University Presidents Award for Outstanding Leadership. He served for 17 years as Moderator of the Christian School Roundtable, and is now Lead Partner in Bowdon Miller Shepherding Group, a Christian School consulting firm, and is a frequent speaker at Christian schools and conventions.

He and his wife Cheryl have been married 57 years, have 2 children, one grandchild, and now reside in Southaven, Mississippi.

Jim Henry and Mickey Bowden are both demonstrating to us the true meaning of life-long service to the Lord and showing us, in real time, what it looks like to "Glorify Jesus Christ and magnify His gospel in all of life until He comes."

# MEMPHIS MINISTRIES



Advance Memphis Art for Jobs Tuesday-Thursday, September 26-28 Join the volunteer team! Learn more about thisyear's event by reading the AFJ Volunteer Guide at www.advance

memphis.org/art-for-jobs-volunteers.

# **GLOBAL MISSIONS**

# God at Work: Acts Chapter 29— An Extraordinary Story of Ordinary People by P & J, SE Asia

Arthur T. Pierson, in his classic book Acts of the Holy Spirit, 1895, page 18 writes,

"Church of Christ! The records of these acts of the Holy Ghost have never reached completeness. This is the one book which has no proper close, because it waits for new chapters to be added so fast and so far as the people of God shall reinstate the blessed Spirit in his holy seat of control."

The book of Acts ended abruptly for a purpose. The story of the birth and the growth of the church continues to the present time, as faithful Jesus followers, around the world, are adding their words of God's work to **Acts chapter 29**.

See photos below of Jesus followers we have been working with in the last five years. They are adding their stories to ACTS CHAPTER 29. WHAT ABOUT US? Are we adding our stories to Acts chapter 29?













## JETS Report by Ron Man Missionary in Residence, WRI

I taught two weeks in June and July at Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) in Amman (for the 10th time). This is an amazing school that strategically draws students from across the Arabic-speaking world: my class included students from Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, and Armenia. God is at work in the school, and in the lives of these courageous students: most of them plan to return to their home countries after graduation to minister for Christ, often in very difficult situations. The students expressed that the course inspired them and deepened their understanding of worship, the Scriptures, and the glory of God.

Another highlight of the trip was attending the Friday(!) morning worship service at the Sudanese International Church in downtown Amman. (Friday is a day off work, following the predominantly Muslim culture and its Friday "Sabbath.") While founded by Sudanese immigrants, the church actually is attended by people from over 30 different countries, and the singing was in Arabic, English, and a number of other languages too (pictured below).



The photo (pictured below) is of my class at the foot of the seminary's prayer tower, all pointing to its inscription: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The school is truly "a city on a hill" and a "light in the darkness" in the heart of the Middle Fast!





# GLOBAL MISSIONS (CONTINUED)

## Romania Trip Report by Abigail Warren





Jesus said the world would know we are His by the way we love each other.

That verse was evident as First Evan sent eight high school students and seven adults to Romania July 15–24. The team partnered with Eclesia Church and nationals, Dan and Ema Onu to host a VBS-style camp. Many of the kids were from Paun, a poor

village outside of Iasi where Eclesia is building a youth and multi-purpose center.

The team partnered with young adults from Eclesia where about 100 elemen-





tary-age children heard the gospel and learned how God fights our battles through the story of Joshua. As the young adults and students led the camp, some parents came and Dan, Ema and their family and friends from the church were able to engage them in gospel-centered conversations. Romanian Orthodoxy has a stronghold on the culture. Oftentimes Eclesia and the Onus are having to unteach the burdens of the Orthodox religion and share the hope and freedom of a relationship with Jesus.

The team had some who had lived on the mission field and some who had never been on a mission trip. Only four had been to Romania before July 16, and it had been 10 years since First Evan had sent a team there, but it was hard to tell. The American team meshed with the Romanian team in a way that portrayed the gospel and gave the entire team a bigger picture of the global church.

Some of the kids at VBS were from Iasi. Some were wearing the same outfit multiple days, but the love of Christ was evident whether spending time at camp, visiting homes and praying for gypsies or loving the families of Paun.

We encourage you to come to the Missions lunch on August 20 to hear more about how God is at work in Romania.



#### Missions Lunches

Sundays, August 6 and 20 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Join us following the worship services for our final missions lunches of the summer. The Maynards will be speaking on August 6 and Summer Mission Trip reports for Romania and Czech Republic will be given on August 20.

# **YOUNG ADULTS**

# Break and Common Ground Chill Night

Saturday, August 12 6:00-9:00 p.m., East Lawn



The High School (Common Ground) and Young Adult Ministries (Break) are getting together for a few fun activities to get to know each other such as t-shirt bleaching, playing cornhole, playing kickball, and playing flashlight tag. No food. Contact Kassie Sanborn at ksanborn@firstevan.org for more details.

## **Break Pool Parties**

Sunday, August 13

3:00-9:00 p.m., The Ginn's House Gus's Fried Chicken for dinner Sunday, September 17

3:00-9:00 p.m., The Dease's House Grilling out for dinner



Join us! Contact Kassie Sanborn at **ksanborn@firstevan.org** for more details and addresses.

#### Fair Game

Wednesdays, September 6-November 15, 7:00 p.m., The Hall's All young adults are welcome to join us as we openly discuss young adults' questions such as: Did God create evil? Should guns be banned? Why is homosexuality treated differently than other sins in the church? and more! This is a safe and welcoming space. We hope to see you there! Text Anies Kunda at 901-304-4894 for address and details.

## **OUTREACH**

# On Ramps to Spiritual Conversations

Wednesdays, beginning September 6 6:15-8:00 p.m., E111

Bringing up the gospel may feel awkward or intimidating. It doesn't have to be! Join us as we share personal experiences and discuss creative on ramps to spiritual conversations. Contact Chuck Dalton with questions or interest at <a href="mailto:chuck@chuckdalton.com">chuck@chuckdalton.com</a>.

# **FEC KIDS**

## **Child Dedication**

Sunday, September 24 10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

If you are interested in dedicating your child, please sign up by Sunday, September 10 at www.firstevan.org/ childdedication.



On Father's Day Sunday, June 18, Lucy Latham, Mamie Duffy, Hosanna Ball, and Helen Hatcher were dedicated.

## **Promotion Sunday**

Sunday, August 6, 9:30 a.m. C-wing and Nursery

Kids nursery-4th grade will promote to the next class. Elementary kids will enjoy Kona Ice and meet their teachers.

## Summer Safari











**Equipping Dinner** 

6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

FEC Kids Midweek

6:15-7:30/8:00 p.m.

K-5th grade, Gym

org/feckids

Parents, please join us for an equip-

ping dinner with practical advice and

FREE Swanky's dinner. We will hear

from guest speaker Jeremy Jones about

"Parenting through Faith, Not Fear."

Childcare is available: please contact

FEC Kids at feckids@firstevan.org

Wednesdays, September 6-Novem-

PreK & Younger, C-wing & Nursery

Our program builds on our Sunday morning lesson and looks at what it

means to live for Christ. K-5th grad-

ers will have theme nights, scripture

memory work, discipleship groups,

games, and guest speakers! PreK will

reinforce Sunday's lesson and partici-

pate in crafts and play. www.firstevan.

ber 15 (No meeting October 11)

Friday, August 25

to reserve.



Our six weeks of Summer Safari have been filled with hands-on activities, field trips, and-best of all-learning that "when life is wild, our God is still GOOD!"

## **Terrific Tuesdays**









Each Tuesday this summer, parents and kids have met at different locations for a playdate—a chance to get out together and have fun building friendships. We have enjoyed popsicles at Riverdale playground, cooled off at the Suggs Park Splash Pad, thrown frisbees at Shelby Farms, and run through the "rain" at the Botanic Gardens. The favorite of many might be the giant waterslide on our own east lawn, followed by watermelon and ice cream. FEC Kids has been privileged to organize and host this chance for connection and fellowship within its body of believers, and we pray that God's love for us has been apparent not only to each other for support and encouragement, but also to the city in which we live.

### An Emphasis on Biblical Literacy and Discipleship

Our 2023-24 ministry goals for the year are to teach and encourage Biblical literacy and family discipleship. With those goals in mind, we have restructured Sunday mornings to better fulfill our role of walking alongside parents as they disciple their children.

## **NEW SCHEDULE**

## **Sunday School**

9:30-10:30 a.m., PreK-5th gr. FEC Kids will kick off the new year in the New Testament as we continue in chronological Bible study with The Gospel Project for Kids. Student Ministries and some adult Sunday School classes will also be following along the same lesson schedule with the Gospel Project curriculum. Our prayer is that rich, gospel-centered conversations will happen as a result of families studying the same portion of scripture during the week. Sunday School is available for PreK-5th grade.

#### Children's Church

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., PreK Children's Church will be available for preschool aged children. Preschoolers will stay in their Sunday School classes and their teachers will walk them to our new Children's Church room downstairs in the C-wing.

In an effort to further encourage family discipleship, starting on promotion Sunday, elementary-aged children (K-5th) will attend the worship service with their families. The Chapel will be available should anyone need it. Children's sermon notes will include two new questions each week to discuss over lunch or on your way home from church on Sunday morning. We are also restocking the resource shelves at each entrance to the sanctuary.

Please contact FEC Kids at feckids@ <u>firstevan.org</u> if your family needs extra support during the Sunday school and/or worship hour).

#### Nursery

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (birth-2 years old) Nursery is available during Sunday school and worship hour.

## WOMEN

## Women's Ministry Summer











This Summer, women had various opportunities for fellowship, learning, and fun!

## Women's Fall Kickoff Sunday, August 13 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

# MWOMEN'S OFALL NKICKOFF

All women are invited to gather during the Sunday School hour to preview the next year, register for Heart to Heart Bible Study and the Women's Retreat, as well as enjoy fellowship with each other.

## Women's Retreat

Friday-Sunday, September 15-17 Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa

We are excited to welcome Lea Lundy as our Special Speaker and Rachel Kraft as our Worship Leader. Register by Thursday, August 17 at www.firstevan.org/ womensretreat.



## Precept Bible Study

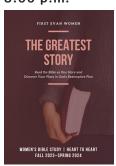
Tuesdays, September 5-November 14 6:00-8:00 p.m., Zoom

2 Corinthians: Ministers of Reconciliation To register, contact Sara Butler at 901-491-0101 or sarabutler6@gmail. com by August 28.

## Heart to Heart Bible Study (Fall Semester)

Tuesdays, September 5-November 14 (No meeting October 10), 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall OR Wednesdays, September 6-November 15 (No meeting October 11), 6:15-8:00 p.m.

Chapel | Cost: \$15 We will be studying *The Greatest Story:* Read the Bible as One Story and Discover Your Place in God's Redemptive Plan. Register beginning August 13 at www. firstevan.org/women.



# MEN

## Men's Bible Study (Fall Semester)

"Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon" led by Buddy Jones

Mondays, September 11-December 4, 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135 OR Wednesdays, September 13-

These letters were written by the Apostle Paul to four New Testachurches. ment Paul told Timothy that the Scriptures are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for



correction, and for training in righteousness. We'll look for those four benefits each week as we study these letters. We will cover Galatians and Ephesians in the Fall and the remaining letters in the Winter/Spring. The format includes weekly study assignments, small group discussion, and lecture. Contact Buddy Jones at buddyjones0@gmail.com with questions. Register at www.firstevan.org/ mens-bible-studies.

Men's Fish Fry SAVE THE DATE: Tuesday, September 26, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall & Chapel Purchase tickets in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays beginning August 27. Speaker will be announced soon.

# **STUDENTS**

## Miss Impact





The Impact girls had so much fun at our groovy 70's disco-themed night. All of the girls showed up and showed out in their best! Christy Bicknell came and shared what it looks like to surround yourself with people who bring us closer to Jesus and what it looks like for us to bring people closer to Jesus. We stayed up all night with pancakes at 3:00 a.m. and fellowship all throughout the night. We can't wait for next year!

#### Impact and Common **Ground Midweek**

Wednesdays, August 16-December 6 (No meeting October 11 or November 22), 6:15-8:00 p.m. Impact (6th-8th grade), E226 Common Ground (9th-12th gr.), E202



Students will learn how to apply Biblical truths to their lives through engaging worship and service as we connect with our local Memphis Ministry partners. Join us for community, worship, prayer and small groups as we learn to deepen our call to love our neighbors. www.firstevan.org/students

## Common Ground Run the River

Friday-Monday, September 1-4 Mammoth Spring, Arkansas Cost: \$135

High School students will camp out along the Spring River. During the weekend, students will enjoy time together



rafting, exploring, and engaging scripture for our weekend focus of "Listen" inspired by John 10:27 where Jesus calls His sheep to listen to His voice.

## Impact Retreat

Friday-Sunday, September 22-24 Impact will gather during this weekend to grow closer in our relationship with God and with each other. Be on the lookout for more information and mark your calendars! You can register soon!

		TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
AUG 2	2023	Conversations on Art and Faith 10:00 a.m., Dixon Gallery and Gardens	2	3	4	5
SUNDAY	MONDAY					
12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall 6 FEC Prayer Focus	7 A Dinner 30 p.m., The Hall's House Hymn Sing 00-7:00 p.m., Sanctuary	8	9	10	11	Break and Common Ground Chill Night 6:00-9:00 p.m., East Lawn
Women's Kickoff 13 9:30-10:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall Communion Break Pool Party 3:00-9:00 p.m., The Ginn's FEC Prayer Focus 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom	14	15	Homen's Breakfast & Business Cards 7:00 a.m., Sunrise Memphis Student Ministries Midweek Begins 6:15-8:00 p.m., E202/E226	17	18	19
Missions Lunch 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall FEC Prayer Focus 5:00–5:30 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	21	22	Student Ministries Midweek 6:15-8:00 p.m., E202/E226	Women's Supper Club 6:00 p.m., Pyro's Pizza	FEC Kids Parents Equipping Dinner 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall	26
Baptisms 27 10:45 a.m., Sanctuary FEC Prayer Focus 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	28	29	Student Ministries Midweek 6:15-8:00 p.m., E202/E226	31		