



# FOCUS

JANUARY 2024 - MMXXIV ISSUE I

735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

## Welcome Interview With Josh Raspberry

Interviewed by Taylor Park, Executive Pastor

At the December Session meeting, First Evan's Session voted unanimously to call Josh Raspberry to join our staff as Pastor of Family Ministry. Many of you have had opportunity to meet Josh through either the Family Engagement class he taught or the town hall held with he and his wife, Jane, on November 28th. Josh will assume his duties here sometime after the first of the year as he is able to finish well in his current role as a Bible teacher at Briarcrest. But, be on the lookout, you just might see him around before then. We asked Josh a few questions to help us get to know him and his family.

**Taylor:** Josh, give us a quick overview of your background. Where were you born and raised? Where did you go to school?

**Josh:** I was born in Jonesboro, AR and grew up in Maumelle, a suburb of Little Rock, AR. I went to High school at Central Arkansas Christian and college at Ouachita Baptist University. Since then, I graduated from Liberty University: Rawlings School of Divinity and UT-Martin.

**T:** Tell us a little about your story of coming to faith?

**J:** I grew up the son of a deacon and a children's choir director. We were \*very\* active at church! On top of that, I've always been a pretty good person who likes to follow the rules. Yet, at around nine years old, the Holy Spirit grabbed hold of me and revealed to me that I was a sinner in need of a Savior. Nothing dramatic, just a dead person coming to life and beginning the journey of faith.

**T:** Tell us about Jane. When and where did y'all meet and what are her gifts and passions?

**J:** Well, first of all, Jane is all kinds of amazing! As a wife, a mother, a friend...she's the best. We met our freshman year of college at OBU and started dating very soon after we met and married a couple years later. She is a gifted teacher, both of science and Scripture, a wise counselor and a trustworthy confidant. She is passionate about teaching women and pointing people to Jesus. For fun, she enjoys decorating and photography and hanging out with the family!

**T:** So, you have three kids. Tell us a little about each of them.

**J:** God has certainly blessed us with our kids! All of them currently attend Briarcrest. Chloe is in 10th grade and loves all things theater and the arts. She is a gifted singer and crazy smart. Lydia is in 8th grade. She loves music and runs on the Middle School cross-country team. Lydia is a hard worker and possibly the most organized of any of us! Caleb is the youngest and is our resident dinosaur expert. He also loves to sing and act.

**T:** You are not new to ministry. Please tell us about some of your past ministry experiences.

**J:** Before vocational ministry, I was very involved in various lay ministries. From choir and orchestra to mission trips and VBS I did it all. When God called us into vocational ministry, I began as a bi-vocational pastor in the tiny town of Omaha, AR. I served there for two years, learning a lot of lessons about shepherding and leadership. From there, we went to Bluffton, SC where I served as Pastor of Discipleship. There, I focused on small groups and new member assimilation. We made some wonderful friendships there and definitely loved living close to the beach! Next, we spent six years in Corning,



AR where I served as senior pastor of Corning First Baptist Church. At Corning, I learned many invaluable lessons about pastoral leadership, especially during COVID.

**T:** Josh, when you think about assuming this role at First Evan, what excites you the most?

**J:** Easy...the people! Every interaction I have had, I have witnessed a body who is passionate about seeing Christ glorified and people saved. I have witnessed a body who loves its staff and fellow members deeply, who trusts its leadership, and who is trusting God to do what only He can do. In the brief time I have spent with the staff, I see their joy in service and desperate hope to be used for the Kingdom.

**T:** Can you give us two or three specific prayer requests for you and your family as you make this transition to this new ministry at First Evan?

**J:** Of course! 1: That God would give me the energy and wisdom to serve well, rely on God fully, and grow in my own faith. 2: That my family and I will quickly get settled in and begin to build great relationships at FEC. 3: That I will adjust well to my new schedule and faithfully love, lead, and be present for my family as we make this transition.

# MIDWEEK AT FIRST EVAN

**Wednesdays, January 10–April 24 (No Midweek March 13)**

There is something for everyone on Wednesday nights! Enrich your spiritual walk and deepen your relationships with others in our fellowship. View full details at [www.firstevan.org/midweek](http://www.firstevan.org/midweek).

## DINNER

**Midweek Fellowship Meal**  
Wednesdays, January 10–April 24  
5:00–6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

During the school year the church gathers for dinner. The food is prepared by Nick Birdwell with help from Jimmy Garrison and Roberto Smith and served by faithful volunteers. 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.



**Meal Cost: \$8/adult; \$4/child (3–10 years old; \$40 family max; \$9/take-home meal.) We take cash, checks, or Venmo @fecmemphis.**

## KIDS

**FEC Kids Midweek**  
Wednesdays, January 10–April 24,  
6:15–7:30/8:00 p.m.

**Childcare (birth–age 2)**, Nursery  
**PreK Teaching (ages 3–5)**, C-wing  
**Elementary Awana (K–5th gr.)**, Gym



FEC Kids Midweek programming offers a variety of age-appropriate activities for children ages birth through 5th grade. Ages 0–2 will attend childcare with Mrs. Angel, who will teach through the attributes of God as seen in each week's **Gospel Project** lesson. Ages 3–5 will go on a learning adventure with Cubbie the puppet, who will be studying and memorizing **New City Catechism**. Kindergarten through 5th grade will continue **Awana** programming with Mrs. Kelley and her team of Awana leaders. New students welcome! Come join the fun. [www.firstevan.org/kids-live](http://www.firstevan.org/kids-live)

## STUDENTS

**Student Ministries Midweek**  
Wednesdays, January 10–May 1  
6:15–8:00 p.m.

**Impact (6th–8th grade)**, E226  
**Common Ground (9th–12th gr.)**, E202



*Providing a place for students to learn how to apply Biblical truths to their lives through engaging worship and service.* This year we are giving our students opportunities to engage with local Memphis Ministry Partners through informational sessions, worship, prayer, exposure, and active service. [www.firstevan.org/studentministrymidweek](http://www.firstevan.org/studentministrymidweek)

## YOUNG ADULTS

**Break Midweek Bible Study**  
**“Colossians: Grounded in the Gospel”**

Wednesdays, January 10–  
February 14, 6:00 p.m.  
**OFFSITE:** The Meadows' Home



What does it mean to be grounded in the gospel? Join Break young adults weekly as we study through Colossians together and find out! We'll meet at Kary and Debra Meadows' home. Contact Anies Kunda at [akunda@firstevan.org](mailto:akunda@firstevan.org) with questions and address.

## PRAYER

**Weekly 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.

## PARENTS

**“Doing Life With Your Adult Children” facilitated by Pastor Taylor Park**

Wednesdays, January 10–  
April 24, 6:15–8:00 p.m., C210



If you have an adult child, you know that parenting doesn't stop when a child reaches age 18. In many ways it gets more complicated. Both your heart and your head are as involved as ever, whether your child lives under your roof or barely stays in contact.

Join us in a support group format as we study this insightful book, learn from and encourage each other. We'll cover things like healthy and gracious boundaries, the difference between helping and enabling, supporting them when you don't support their choices, relating to their significant other, living with a broken heart, and much more.

Please purchase the book through [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) or other retailer prior to the class beginning. A study/discussion guide will be provided. [www.firstevan.org/doing-life](http://www.firstevan.org/doing-life).

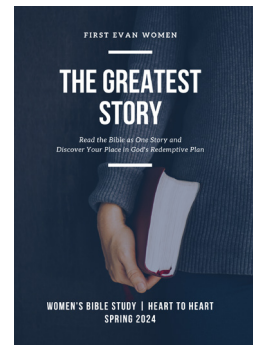
## WOMEN

**Heart to Heart Bible Study**  
**“The Greatest Story”**

Tuesdays, January 9–April 23  
9:30–11:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall  
Wednesdays, January 10–  
April 24, 6:15–8:00 p.m., Chapel  
Cost: \$15

Everyone is welcome to continue or start the study this Spring. As we move into the New Testament, we'll see clearly how the Old and New Testaments work together to tell the one story of the Bible and how God continues to prove His everlasting love and faithfulness to all of creation, especially through the life of Jesus Christ.

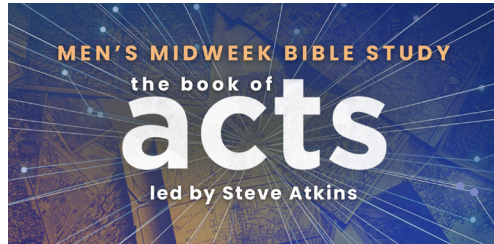
Register at [www.firstevan.org/women](http://www.firstevan.org/women). Books are available now at the church.



# MIDWEEK (CONTINUED)

## MEN

**Men's Midweek Bible Study**  
**"The Book of Acts"**  
led by Steve Atkins  
Wednesdays, January 10–April 24  
6:15–8:00 p.m., A121/122



Men, join us on Wednesday nights this semester as Steve Atkins, one of our Session elders, leads us on a study of the book of Acts. Acts walks us through the founding and history of the early church. *What is the church really to be about? What is God's plan and intention for it? What is our mission? How did those early followers of Christ spread the Gospel throughout the then-known world and establish the foundation upon which we continue to build to this day?*

**Men's Bible Studies**  
**"Philippians, Colossians, & Philemon"** led by Buddy Jones  
Wednesdays, January 31–May 1  
6:30–7:30 a.m. via Zoom  
Offered In-Person Mondays  
January 29–April 29  
6:30–8:00 p.m., E135



These letters were written by the Apostle Paul to four New Testament churches. 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. The format includes weekly study assignments, small group discussion, and lecture. Contact Buddy Jones at [buddyjones0@gmail.com](mailto:buddyjones0@gmail.com) with questions. Register at [www.firstevan.org/mens-bible-studies](http://www.firstevan.org/mens-bible-studies).

**On-Ramps to Spiritual Conversations**  
(Men's Outreach Community Group)  
Wednesdays, January 10–April 24  
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 [chuck@chuckdalton.com](mailto:chuck@chuckdalton.com).

**Wednesday Night Furniture Building for World Relief**  
(Men's Group)  
Wednesdays, January 10–April 24  
6:15–8:00 p.m., A109



Join us for a time of men's fellowship and some woodworking as we build furniture for newly arriving refugees. We are partnering with World Relief to build and deliver some basic furniture pieces (currently dining tables) for refugees coming from places like Ukraine, Cuba, and Central America. The skill level required is minimal. Come make some saw dust and enjoy an evening where you can see the results of your labor. Feel free to bring your power drill if you have one.

## CHILDCARE

**Attending or volunteering and need childcare?**

Register at [www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare](http://www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare) (For ages 2 and under. Subject to availability.)

# CHURCH-WIDE

Welcome New Member



Geoffrey Warberg

**Discover First Evan**  
Sunday, January 28  
4:00–6:00 p.m., Chapel

This class is offered to those interested in learning more about First Evan or desiring membership. Attending the class in no way obligates you to join, but it is the first step toward membership. Questions can be directed to Jacki Stieferman at [jstieferman@firstevan.org](mailto:jstieferman@firstevan.org). Sign up at [www.firstevan.org/dfe](http://www.firstevan.org/dfe).

## Elder and Deacon Nominations

Please begin praying about upcoming nominations for the offices of elder and deacon. Because leadership is so vital, our Lord Himself prompts and places men in areas of service within our fellowship. True elders and deacons will be found already doing the work. It is our task to discern who those individuals may be. Please give prayerful consideration to any nominations you would like to make. A biblical description of the kind of men we should identify is available on the First Evan [website](http://www.firstevan.org). The nomination forms will be available on Sundays, January 7, 14, and 21 on tables outside the Sanctuary. **The submission of nominations is limited to First Evan members and due Sunday, January 21.**

## GMT Recommendations

The Global Missions Team (GMT) 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](mailto:missions@firstevan.org) or speak to any current GMT member.

# FEC KIDS



FEC Kids had a great time celebrating the miracle of the incarnation on Wednesday, December 13 at “Emmanuel: A Live Nativity.” We were all eating pizza in the Fellowship Hall when a very surprised shepherd burst in to tell us that we had better come and see what had happened! Angels had appeared to him and announced the birth of a king—The King of all Kings! We followed the shepherd to the gym where we saw a mom, a dad, and a BABY surrounded by animals in the light of the star overhead. We sang carols by candlelight and then got to pet the sheep and donkey. Then, it was back to the Fellowship Hall for s’mores, hot chocolate, and time to make an ornament for the tree at home with mom and dad. All in all, it was a memorable night of celebrating the birth of our Savior together as a church. Young and old alike should save the date for years to come for this fun family Christmas tradition!

## JANUARY IN FEC KIDS



**JAN 7** Jesus Was Anointed (Matthew 26, Mark 14, John 12)

**JAN 14** Jesus Shared a Last Meal (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22)

**JAN 21** Jesus Was Arrested (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22)

**JAN 28** Jesus is Our Perfect Priest (Hebrews 7)

**Big Picture Question:**

*How is Jesus the perfect priest?*  
 Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin, and He speaks to God the Father for us today.

**Memory Verse:**

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*  
 Hebrews 4:15



### Child Dedication

Sunday, February 12  
 10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

If you are interested in dedicating your child(ren), please apply by Sunday, January 21 at [www.firstevan.org/childdedication](http://www.firstevan.org/childdedication).

### KMC 2024

The Month of February &  
 Friday–Sunday, February 23–25



In February, FEC Kids will be teaming up with our missions department to bring you Kids Missions Conference based on Mark 16:15 which says “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.” As Christians, we are to be people who “go” and people who “send,” bringing the Good News to all the world. But can a kid do this? And if so, how?? Come learn with us in February as we discover what the Bible has to teach us! Each Sunday in February, we will discuss a missions-oriented topic, culminating in KMC weekend Friday–Sunday, February 23–25.

### Summer Safari 2024

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Mondays and Thursdays

June and July, 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.



As you plan for 2024, save space on your calendar for Summer Safari with FEC Kids! This 2-day per week summer program will have six sessions in June and six in July, from 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. Each week will be full of fun crafts, activities, fieldtrips and more for kids, giving them structure and social time with their peers. Stay tuned for more details in February's newsletter!

### Looking for a summer job?

We will be looking for responsible adults and teens to help us teach Summer Safari and share the love of Jesus with the kids who will attend. Contact [ktaylor@firstevan.org](mailto:ktaylor@firstevan.org) for more details.

# WORSHIP

## “STAND FIRM” Sermon Series

Sundays, January 14–February 4

For four Sundays in January and February, David Stevens will preach the sermon series “Stand Firm,” based on Ephesians 6. This series will help us identify Satan’s schemes against the church and individual believers as well as the abundant spiritual resources that we have in Christ, enabling us to resist our Adversary.



**JAN 14** “STAND FIRM: The Fight” (Ephesians 6:10–12)

**JAN 21** “STAND FIRM: Spiritual Warfare 101” (Ephesians 6:13–15)

**JAN 28** “STAND FIRM: Spiritual Warfare 201” (Ephesians 6:16–17)

**FEB 4** “STAND FIRM: Praying in the Whirlwind (Ephesians 6:18–20)

David and his wife Mary Alice have been long-time missionaries of First Evan, providing Bible teaching, pastoral training, and mentoring in Europe and French-speaking Africa. He has also pastored churches in Portland, Oregon and Belgium. We invited Dr. Stevens to preach this series because of his studies and teaching on the topic of spiritual warfare as reflected in his doctoral dissertation (“The Angels of the Nations”) and his published book [God’s New Humanity](#). This series will help us to “Stand Strong,” which is one of the [six challenges](#) in which we’re asking God to help us continue to move forward.

## Baptism

Sunday, March 17

10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

Our next regularly scheduled baptism is March 17. If you are interested in being baptized for the March date then please apply by February 21 at [www.firstevan.org/baptismapplication](http://www.firstevan.org/baptismapplication). View baptism videos: [www.firstevan.org/baptisms](http://www.firstevan.org/baptisms).



On December 17, John David Moore, Lila Tashie, and Mabry White were baptized.

## Calming Rooms

Chapel or D102

Calming Rooms are now available during the Worship Service. If you need to step out of service with your child, you can participate in the service from the Chapel or D102 in the basement. A live stream of the service is available in both of those rooms.

# PRIME TIME

## Prime Time Express

We now have a Prime Time golf cart that will be driven by deacon monitors each Sunday morning in the east parking lot. They will be there before and after Sunday School and the worship service to pick people up at their parked cars and to take them back. If you are one of those who could use a lift to the east portico from your car and back, here is what you need to do:



(1) upon arrival, please put your hand out of your car window and wave down a driver, and (2) to return to your car, wait at the portico entrance to be driven back. The golf cart seats six people. We hope this blesses you!

# WOMEN

## A Colorful Day

Winter 2024

*Watch your email for details soon.*

## January Meet-Ups

Join us for any or all of the following times to meet with other ladies for fellowship:

### Supper Club

Thursday, January 18  
6:00 p.m., Central BBQ  
(6201 Poplar Ave.)

### Coffee Club

Thursday, January 25  
9:30 a.m., Sweet Lala's Bakery  
(6150 Poplar Ave., Suite 118)

### Foster/Adoption Group

Wednesday, January 31  
11:30 a.m., Sunrise Memphis  
East (5469 Poplar Ave.)

## Precept Upon Precept “Galatians” Bible Study

Tuesdays, January 9–February 27  
6:00–8:00 p.m. via Zoom

*What does it mean to live under grace? Do you have to keep the law to be a Christian? Register by January 9 by contacting Sara Butler at 901-491-0101 or [sarabutler6@gmail.com](mailto:sarabutler6@gmail.com).*

# CARE

## Caregivers Group

Thursday, January 18  
11:45 a.m., Chapel



Caregivers is a ministry for those caring for loved ones. This month we will enjoy lunch and hear from Dr. Curt Bicknell, PharmD, on managing medications and a Q&A. Contact [Christy Bicknell](#) or Sue Sharpe, 901-828-2624 with questions. Registration requested at [www.firstevan.org/caregivers](http://www.firstevan.org/caregivers).

## ACT II Widows Fellowship

We will not meet in January. Stay tuned for details on February.

# STUDENTS

**Student Ministries Lock-In**  
Friday–Saturday, January 12–13  
9:00 p.m.–7:00 a.m.



Get ready for a night full of worship, fellowship, and so many fun activities! We will have an exciting speaker to share with us about the gospel! This is one of our biggest events of the year, and we absolutely cannot wait! **Register by Sunday, January 7** at [www.firstevan.org/lock-in](http://www.firstevan.org/lock-in).

**Student Life Summer Camp**  
Monday–Friday, June 17–21  
Orange Beach, AL



Students will be attending a week-long conference style camp where we will be led in worship by Judd Harris and will hear from sessions speaker Matt Carter. The focus of the week will be highlighting John 8:12 where Jesus makes the bold claim that “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.” Students will be shown how God is a God of revival, redeeming His people and giving them purpose. If you have any questions before you register, as always, don’t hesitate to reach out. Total cost of the retreat is \$600 with a \$100 deposit due at registration. **Register by January 30** at [www.firstevan.org/student-life-camp](http://www.firstevan.org/student-life-camp).

## IRL Weekend

**SAVE THE DATE:**

**Friday–Sunday, March 1–3**

Student Ministries Spring Retreat at Pinecrest Camp in Moscow, TN.

Students will engage in a weekend focused towards spiritual growth and community building.

# MEMPHIS

## Life Choices: Bottles For Life



Each January, Life Choices invites churches and individuals to participate in their Bottles For Life campaign to raise awareness and funds for the sanctity of life. Pick up and return bottles to the Fellowship Hall filled with change, cash, or check. This is a great opportunity to get involved with Life Choices and help empower women to choose and cherish life!

Come see Rachel Davis from Life Choices in the Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, January 14**. She is coming to connect with us and share what’s happening in her ministry.



Each January, Life Choices invites churches and individuals to participate in their Bottles For Life campaign to raise awareness and funds for the sanctity of life. Pick up and return bottles to the Fellowship Hall filled with change, cash, or check. This is a great opportunity to get involved with Life Choices and help empower women to choose and cherish life!

# YOUNG ADULTS

## Break Sunday Night Dinner

**Sundays, starting back January 7 6:30 p.m., Location varies**

Sunday nights, join us for dinner and fellowship! Contact Kassie Sanborn at [ksanborn@firstevan.org](mailto:ksanborn@firstevan.org) for the address and more details, or see our Instagram [@fec.youngadults](https://www.instagram.com/fec.youngadults).

# MEN

## Men's Retreat

**SAVE THE DATES:**

**Friday–Sunday, April 19–21**  
Mammoth Spring, AR

## Men's Fish Fry

**Tuesday, January 23**

**6:00–8:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall**

**Cost: \$7/person or \$50/table**

**Speaker: Josh Raspberry,**  
Pastor of Family Ministry

Join us for an evening of fish, food, and fellowship with a message from Josh Raspberry. Table or individual tickets can be purchased in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday beginning January 7. Contact John Dawson, 901-485-0859, Sammy Bell, 901-210-7958 or email [men@firstevan.org](mailto:men@firstevan.org) for tickets or additional information.

# OUTREACH

## Fulfilling Your Role

**in God's Plan | January 20**

by Spencer Jordan, Outreach Team



*“It was less scary than I thought!”*

We are thrilled to share the incredible experience we have had so far at the Cojourner training sessions. In **Step One**, Gabor and Edina Gresz led us through the landscape of evangelism, encouraging us to venture out of the comfort of our Christian greenhouse and into the spiritual wild fields around us. We have learned to scatter seeds of the gospel in this diverse landscape, engaging with neighbors who have various backgrounds and beliefs, who, get this, are eagerly awaiting meaningful connections.

In **Step Two**, we shared how we are already putting the training to good use. Our Prime Time members are utilizing technology to reach their friends and family. Millennials and Gen Zers are acquiring conversational skills to engage in spiritual discussions with their peers. We are more willing and able to explore others’ spirituality through gracious questions and acknowledging objections as we lead them to Christ.

It’s been an encouraging time to witness HUNDREDS of our people endeavoring to turn one of our weaknesses into a strength for God. We are being prepared to scatter wherever He may carry us, and we have found that our neighbors are more open to discussing faith than we expected!

On **January 20, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall the Greszes will lead us through **Step Three** as we learn to embody the roles of builder, guide, and mentor. In this session, we will learn how to open God’s Word with neighbors and craft a personal evangelism plan for practical application. Pray for the growth of our church through this training and join us as we strive together for the glory of God! **Details and registration at (light refreshments served; Childcare available upon registration):** [www.firstevan.org/cojourner3](http://www.firstevan.org/cojourner3)

# GLOBAL MISSIONS



by Laura Love, Global Missions Team

Sometimes I think that I am prevented from accomplishing a goal by circumstances outside of my control. Then those circumstances are removed and, with no excuse to hide behind, I find that I was really the problem all along. It is easy to feel like we can't "go" to the nations when we live in the middle of the US, but the nations are coming right into our backyard. We have an incredible opportunity to reach out from our own homes, no passport needed!

In fact, I think we are particularly well-positioned here in the US. The people who have come from all over the world are in a very vulnerable position whether they come as refugees fleeing violence or as the "best and brightest" of their country arriving here to study or work. They have left home, family, community, comfort food, pets, and all that is familiar and they come to a wildly foreign place where they likely arrive not knowing anyone at all.

When I was in college, I had the privilege of studying abroad in South Korea. I lived in a dorm room with 4 bunk beds and 7 Korean roommates. Despite the fact that I traveled there with two friends, I often was lonely and overwhelmed, and my roommates were shy and kept to themselves. One night I cried myself to sleep in my bed, seemingly unnoticed. But the next day two of my roommates invited me to share some grapes with them. I rarely have experienced such meaningful hospitality. The simplest offerings can be so powerful in a moment of great need.

Statistics show that 70-75% of international students never see the inside of an American home, despite eagerness to experience American life. Never. This is a disturbing number, and it reveals that living in the US is not what is keeping us from reaching out to the nations. The harvest is plentiful, right in our backyard. Let's ask God to make us laborers in this field.

## Charity Gurley



Charity Gurley, who has been on staff at First Evan as Childcare Coordinator since September of 2021, spent August through November of this year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia serving with the Winstead's at International Evangelical Church. She also served with Make Your Mark Ministry with the women and children. Join us in praying for Charity as she continues to follow God's calling and returns to Ethiopia this month to continue her work there for a commitment of one year.

## Global Missions Conference



February 17-18 - Antonio Muñoz

February 23-25 - George Murray

The theme verse for the year is a good "great commission" verse. We learned, when George Murray was with us in November, that we need to "pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest." We want to build on that in February. We will hear from these speakers about the importance of GOING and also SENDING. Then, we will be asking you what you believe your role is in the Great Commission.



## Short-Term Mission Trips

Be on the lookout for these friends and let them know you'll be praying for them as they prepare to go!

- **Bart Bartolomeo** to **Honduras** for gospel outreach and youth activities with New Heights Church in March.
- **Tori Martin** to **Nicaragua** for gospel outreach with Christian Veterinary Missions in June.
- **Ken Boer** to **Taiwan** for teaching at Kairos International in January.
- **Benjamin and Robyn Brenner** to **Czech Republic** to teach and gospel outreach in May.

These are some trips that are in the planning stages. Please pray about joining, whether it is GOING... or it is SENDING!

- **Czech Republic** – English Camp with In-Life ministry partners. July 2024.
- **Uganda** – Various opportunities to partner with Dana Phillip or Sam & Suzie Davis.
- **Service in a Refugee Camp** – Opportunities are varied.
- **India** – Teaching trip
- **Nepal** – Teaching trip
- **Spain** – To serve at La Morada with the Galloways. Fall 2024.
- **Other trips** are being discussed.

If interested in taking the gospel cross-culturally and serving people who may not have good access to the Truth, please inquire at the Missions Office, [missions@firstevan.org](mailto:missions@firstevan.org).

## PRAYER

### Pastoral Search Prayer Focus

Please continue to pray for our Pastoral Search Committee on Tuesdays at your convenience. A weekly prayer guide is emailed to the church on Monday nights. You can visit [www.firstevan.org/pastoral-prayer](http://www.firstevan.org/pastoral-prayer) to view the prayer guide. If you would like to be added to the email list, please check "Pastoral Search Prayer Guide" out of the Church-wide subscriptions list at [www.firstevan.org/church-wide-subscriptions](http://www.firstevan.org/church-wide-subscriptions). Thank you for faithfully praying!

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
	1 Church Offices Closed For New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	
SUNDAY	7 Communion Break Dinner 6:30 p.m. FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom	8	9 Heart to Heart Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall Precept Begins 6:00-8:00 p.m., Zoom Council Meeting 6:15 p.m.	10 Midweek Fellowship Meal 5:00-6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall Midweek Activities 6:15-8:00 p.m.	11	12 Student Ministries Lock-in 9:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m >>> >>>	13 Church Closed
14 Life Choices Table Fellowship Hall Break Dinner 6:30 p.m. FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom	15 Church Offices Closed For MLK Day	16 H2H Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall	17 Midweek Fellowship Meal 5:00-6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall Midweek Activities 6:15-8:00 p.m.	18 Caregivers Group 11:45 a.m., Chapel Supper Club (Women) 6:00 p.m., Central BBQ (6201 Poplar Ave.)	19	20 Everyday CoJourney: Step 3 9:00 a.m.-noon, F-Hall	
21 Baptism Sanctity of Human Life Sunday Sunday School Leaders Meeting 4:30 p.m., E125/126 FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom Break Dinner 6:30 p.m.	22	23 H2H Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall Men's Fish Fry 6:00-8:00 p.m., F-Hall	24 Midweek Fellowship Meal 5:00-6:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall Midweek Activities 6:15-8:00 p.m.	25 Coffee Club (Women) 9:30 a.m., Sweet Lala's Bakery (6150 Poplar Ave., Ste. 118)	26	27	
28 Discover First Evan 4:00-6:00 p.m., Chapel FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom Break Dinner 6:30 p.m.	29	30 H2H Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hall	31 Midweek Fellowship Meal 5:00-6:00 p.m., F-Hall Foster/Adoption Group (Women) 11:30 a.m., Sunrise Memphis Midweek Activities 6:15-8:00 p.m.	<h1>JANUARY 2024</h1>			