



FOCUS

MARCH 2023 - MMXXIII ISSUE III

735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

Hostess Snoball Faith by Pastor Jim Fleming

Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the Lord; and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp (Numbers 11:1).

Fresh out of high school for summer break, I came into the world of heavy construction to labor alongside a seasoned WWII vet named Merle. In his fifties, he had perfected a minimalist art. He knew when effort was required (rarely, by his reckoning), and when it was not. His years of experience taught him how to accomplish only what was necessary with the least expenditure of energy, husbanding his strength to lunch time when he would enjoy the Hostess Snoballs® June (his wife) packed in his lunch box every day! After this 30 minute respite, he would offer timely scraps of effort to “get through the day” and later return to June, dinner, and couch-side television.

Contrast Merle with the weight-lifter in training. For this athlete, doing the minimum is wasting the day. He thrives on exertion. He even welcomes pain. He knows that if he pushes himself to his maximum, even pressing past it, his day will not be wasted. His strength will grow and he will be better prepared for the challenges ahead.



This contrast has much in common with Israel’s and God’s differing views of adversity. When we arrive at Numbers 11:1, Israel is starting to look (and sound) a lot like Merle. They have been on the road with Moses for months (it feels like years). The menu has been boring—how many ways can you prepare manna anyway? What they wouldn’t give for a Hostess Snoball®, or better yet, some roast beef! They were definitely NOT happy campers!

They did what we are all prone to do—complain. They complained because they were “Merlish Minimalists.” They viewed adversity as an obstacle, something to be avoided. But saints-in-training view adversity through God’s eyes. They recognize that God only allows a weight of adversity into the gymnasium of our lives when He knows we could use it to grow spiritual

strength. They see not an obstacle but an opportunity.

This explains God’s anger with Israel. To complain about adversity is to imply that God either doesn’t know what He is doing or doesn’t have our best interests at heart. Israel’s whining betrayed her perception that God is a problem.

If we do not trust God, we will respond to adversity by complaining. But if we see God as the perfect coach who only puts a challenge before us that He believes we’re up to, a challenge that is going to grow strength in us that wasn’t there before, then we can smile at adversity. Why settle for Hostess Snoball® living when we can become “heavy lifters” in the work of the Kingdom by trusting the perfect Coach? Smile, thank Him for the adversity, and show Him what you got!

PULPIT PREVIEW

MAR 5 “Counting the Days”
Daniel 9:20-27

MAR 12 “Mission-Critical Intel”
Daniel 10:1-21

MAR 19 “Sixty Puzzle Pieces”
Daniel 11:1-21

MAR 26 “The Turned & The Strong”
Daniel 11:22-35

APR 2 “A Golden Opportunity”
Psalm 118

APR 9 “Three Contrary Winds”
John 10:9-10

APR 16 “Spot the Difference”
Daniel 11:36-45

APR 23 “Between Scylla and Charybdis”
Daniel 12:1-4

APR 30 “Who Ya’ Gonna Call?”
Daniel 12:5-13

SHEPHERD'S STAFF

Trumpeting Along the Path

by Ken Eriksen, Vice Chairman of the Session and Chairman of the Transition Committee

It happens every year like clockwork, when daffodils emerge out of the ground and their buds bloom in full array, spring is around the corner! The daffodil is among the first to bloom ahead of spring, giving us hope that longer, warmer days are on the way!

The daffodil is one of my favorite flowers and has been since I was a kid. Growing up in the Puyallup valley of Washington State, there were many daffodil fields, and when in full bloom it was a sea of yellow, with Mount Rainier as a splendid backdrop! Many of those daffodils were cut and sold at plant stands along the roadsides. There was even an annual Daffodil Festival complete with a Daffodil Parade (including floats garnished with daffodils) that meandered through four nearby towns in honor of the marvelous flower! (Our own Rochelle Fleming was crowned a Daffodil Princess of her high school!)

The daffodil is one of my favorites because when I see them in full splendor, they remind me of a trumpet worshipping Creator God! The daffodil sprouts from a bulb, that was essentially dormant many months of the year, but around early December comes to life and by Christmas its first leaves are sprouting out of the ground. Then in February the bud stem stands tall and one day the flower opens triumphantly in tremendous yellow grandeur like a trumpet, yearning toward the sun and following it throughout the day!

This reminds me of [Psalm 96](#), a chapter entitled, "Worship in the Splendor of Holiness," and what splendor there is in worship.

Psalm 96:11-12

¹¹ *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;*
¹² *let the field exult, and everything in it!*

The daffodil is a remarkable plant. After hibernating for many months, it awakens to the unknown, warm and dry, cold and wet, and everything in between. I must admit, I doubted that our daffodil crop would have survived the single digit temperatures we encountered this year. But it is in fact a shot of cold temperature the daffodil



needs to awaken it out of hibernation! So, thankfully my fears were assuaged and assuredly, the daffodils came through in full bloom, leading me to write a short poem:

*Daffodil Standing Tall
Standing tall as a trumpet
Following the sun
The daffodil lives on*

Here are a couple more tidbits about daffodils. After they bloom, the bulb stores up energy in preparation for its hibernation while spawning new bulbs for more flowers the following year. What a picture of evangelism! The daffodil stands tall trumpeting the sun and lives on!

Coming off the Global Missions Conference the daffodil is a great reminder that "All the Nations Shall Glorify Your Name!" We learned at the conference that worship leads missions and evangelism. May the daffodil remind you and me to worship, trumpeting Jesus and living on in him!

Happy Spring as we Trumpet along the Path!

ADULTS

ACT II Widows Fellowship
Monday, March 6, 10:00 a.m., Chapel
Speaker: Anne Carter
For more information about this ministry please contact Cathy Graham at cathygraham@icloud.com or 685-1028 or 299-1426 (cell).

WORSHIP

Baptism Sunday, April 23

Are you ready to proclaim your faith in Jesus Christ through baptism? Sign up to be baptized on April 23, which is our next regularly scheduled date in the Sunday service. We also hold baptisms on an as-needed basis in the Chapel. Please contact Katelynn Bernardino at kbernardini@firstevan.org for more information.

HOLY WEEK

**APR 2 "Psalms for All Seasons"
Palm Sunday Services
9:00 & 10:45 a.m.
Worship Services**

In the book of Psalms, God gives us 150 songs for every season of the soul. Whether we're joyful or weeping, faith-filled or anxious, zealous or apathetic, the Psalms give us language to pray to God. Join us as we engage with God through key chapters of this book, led by choir, band, soloists, readers, and musicians from the Memphis Symphony Orchestra.

**APR 5 Seder Dinner
6:00-8:00 p.m., Gym**

Come and gather at the table to experience Seder together with your First Evan family. The Seder is a family-oriented ceremony that tells the story of Passover. During our time together, we will compare the principles of the Passover to the details surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's directives to ancient Israel foreshadowed His plan to deliver each one of us from our bondage to sin through Jesus' death and resurrection hundreds of years later. What a beautiful picture of God's redeeming love! **Registration begins on Sunday, March 12 in the Fellowship Hall or at www.firstevan.org/seder. \$8 for adults/\$4 for kids (age 3-10)/\$40 family max.**

**APR 7 Good Friday
6:00 p.m. Communion
Service, Sanctuary**

**APR 9 Resurrection Sunday
10:45 a.m. Service
Sanctuary**

CHURCH-WIDE

Reception for Crickett Keeth
Sunday, March 26
12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall



Please join us in the Fellowship Hall directly after the morning worship for a reception honoring Crickett and her 17 years serving as Women's Director. Crickett will be retiring at the end of March. All are welcome to stop by and wish her well in her retirement. There will be a basket available to receive cards and notes.

Midweek Fellowship Meals
Wednesdays, Now-April 26
5:00-6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
\$8 for adults/\$4 for kids (age 3-10)/\$40 family max



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 www.firstevan.org/midweek.

"Daniel Digging Deeper"
with Pastor Jim Fleming
Wednesdays, Now-April 26
(New end date)
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. These are all open sessions. Come to one or come to all.

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:**



Break Evangelistic Study
Tuesdays, beginning March 14,
7:00 p.m., The Hall's House
The event is focused on equipping young adults with the tools to effectively share the gospel with others in the secular environments where the name of Jesus is ignored and opposed. Each week we will take steps towards understanding how we can improve the way we reach out to those who are lost. Contact Anies Kunda at akunda@firstevan.org for the address.



Break Lake Trip
Wednesday, May 17-Saturday, May 20
Pickwick Lake, TN
Our Summer Lake Trip is fast approaching and we hope you can join us! The total cost of the trip is \$80 (a \$50 down payment is required for those who wish to make installments). Please register at www.firstevan.org/break-lake-trip. Contact Anies Kunda with questions at akunda@firstevan.org.



Break 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 akunda@firstevan.org.

Finals Coffee House
SAVE THE DATES:
Sunday, April 30-Tuesday, May 2,
7:00 p.m.-midnight, U of M BCM
A comfortable place to study for exams, get free food, free coffee, and meet new people. Updates on Instagram at [@finals.coffee.house](https://www.instagram.com/finals.coffee.house).

GLOBAL MISSIONS CONFERENCE & KMC 2023

Global Missions Conference "All the Nations Shall Glorify Your Name"

The conference was a true blessing and encouragement from the Lord. As First Evan sought to worship the Lord and glorify His name, the Lord blessed us with such a spirit of oneness and agreement. Our thanks go out to Roger Lowther and Frank (Fort) Fortunato, our main speakers and to Josh Davis and his team with Proskuneo who led us in worship.

Our Missionaries and National Partners who attended reminded us of what God is doing around the world to reach people who don't have access to the Good News. Our Project, supplying Community Arts Tokyo with funds for creative evangelistic events, and our Collaborative Art Piece were both meant to show the people of Japan that we care about them and are praying for them...because we love them as Jesus loved us.

Here are some comments made about the conference:

I thoroughly enjoyed the Arts in Worship Panel. It gave me a new perspective on art and how art can be a springboard to spiritual conversations. - Deborah McWhorter

Such a great experience to worship with other cultures and see a room full of people with different backgrounds join together in their love for Jesus! - Robert Dycus on the Worship Workshop

The Creative Arts Panel presented viewpoints that were powerful and emotionally moving—art critique can open the door to meaningful conversations about faith, disbelief, and reason. - Robin Cisneros

My favorite part was the music because it led me to break out in private worship to the Lord ALL throughout the weekend and into this week. "There is none like You among the nations, O Lord. All the nations You have made will glorify Your Name, O Lord!" - Sally Jones



This missions conference has not been what I expected at all. What a delight!!! For the first time in years I am filled with hope. Hope like maybe there could truly be another global revival!!! A revival that utilizes the language of Art to speak across all the barriers of understanding. - Jenna Fergus

GMC '23 was WORSHIP in all CAPS! - Dotsy Adams Liles

The creative approach of the Collaborative Art project shows how God can use any tool to create interest and attract the unreached with the gospel. We should all be challenged in that area. - Bryan Miller

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

We had so much fun learning about our Creator and King and purpose—to glorify God and enjoy Him forever! Thank you so much to Georgia Peeler, Kathleen and Campbell Kizer, Doris and Jeff Shifflette, Pattie Dingeldein, and our wonderful staff and volunteers for teaching our kids how to glorify God and share the gospel through the arts.



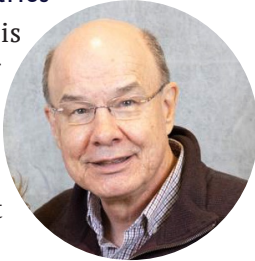
MEMPHIS MINISTRIES

Stand and Pray—What the Post-Roe v. Wade America Needs From Our Church

by Gerald Thompson,

Memphis Ministries Team Liaison for Child Evangelism Fellowship, MCFL, and Multinational Ministries

Seventy five! That is the average number of cars in a week that visit an abortion center in Illinois. Most of them are from out of state.



Steven Yeo and I recently met with Sarah and Karen, two representatives with one of our church's local ministry partners, Memphis Coalition for Life (MCFL) to learn about their ministry in the post Roe v. Wade world. They explained to us that the battle is not over. Planned Parenthood is now sending women to Illinois for abortions. Once the mothers have traveled that far, they feel as if they've gone too far to consider alternative options. While abortion is illegal in Memphis, it is clear that Memphians are becoming more resolute in deciding to abort their babies.

MCFL's strategy is to reach mothers through their sidewalk ministry, never shouting, arguing, or showing graphic pictures. What they do is far from a protest. Instead, one person silently prays while a sidewalk counselor reaches out to Planned Parenthood abortion center visitors by providing medical and spiritual resources. These counselors pray with the women, share with them, and walk them to the pro-life center across the street.

This amazing work takes many faithful volunteers. And you can join the effort by participating in their 40 Days for Life campaign. Sign up for a 1-hour prayer shift to stand and pray by Choices. Sarah and Karen told us that the no show rate at abortion clinics can be as high as 70% when someone is present on the sidewalk. Your prayerful service will make an impact! May God bless the work of MCFL and First Evan's partnership with them.

Pray Tuesdays (1-hour shifts)
February 28–March 28,
9:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m., CHOICES

To sign up, visit www.firstevan.org/40daysforlife. For more information, contact me at gerald.marie.thompson@outlook.com.

Meet Memphis

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 15
(Weekday opportunities are also available.)



Memphis is longing for healing. Join us by stepping into this great need. Come to serve and fellowship with Memphis ministries who are seeking the welfare of the city and spreading the gospel. You'll also get to consider opportunities to build authentic and Christ-centered relationships with nonbelievers. Sign-ups begin on March 12. More details coming soon.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

World Prayer Focus

Sunday, March 19
6:00–7:00 p.m., Chapel



Join us for our quarterly time of prayer as we go before the Lord in prayer for our world, country, county, city, and church.

Global Missions Conference Project: Creative Arts Tokyo



Roger Lowther and his team seek to find ways to contextually present the Gospel and reach the Japanese people in creative ways. Please help us reach our goal of \$20,000! As of February 28, we've raised \$11,980. Designate your check "Global Missions Conference Project" or visit www.firstevan.org/japan.

OUTREACH

A Tool for Your Faith and Mission

Q: What happens to people who never heard about the gospel?

A: That's a good question. At first, it sounds like a question about God's moral character. If Jesus is the only way to heaven, how could God send people to hell who never got to hear the gospel? Isn't that unfair?

The question presumes that the hypothetical man in the remote jungle, island, or desert deserves heaven. In contrast, God claims that no one is good enough (Rm. 3:10-12). Jesus affirmed this by saying that God didn't send Him to condemn, but save the world (Jn. 3:17). In other words, Jesus is the doctor and not the disease.

According to the Bible,

- 1) Everything in the universe points to the Creator who created it. Yet we choose to worship the created things, including ourselves, rather than worship and thank God. (Rm. 1:18-21)
- 2) We were given a conscience, but we go against our sense of "ought to" and choose the wrong. (Eccl. 7:29; Rm. 2:14-16)

Not hearing the gospel doesn't send people to hell; their sinful choices do.

The question also presumes that hearing the gospel automatically promises heaven. This is also false. Salvation requires a person to repent, believe, and confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior. Unfortunately, most choose to reject Him. But hope is not lost.

The Bible says that God appoints when and where a person will live. They are to seek after Him from there (Acts 17:26-27). God does not abandon an earnest seeker. He will make a way. Cornelius had Peter, and the Ethiopian eunuch had Philip (Acts 10, Acts 8:26-40). The history of global missions attests to God who reaches the unreached. Then it is also possible that God made it so that in a particular isolated location during a particular time in history lives some particular people who would never get to hear about the gospel but also would never have received Jesus even if they did.

Lastly, Jesus desires that everyone be saved, including the isolated man. Perhaps it starts with the skeptic you are discussing this question with.

FEC KIDS

Summer Safari

Mondays and Thursdays,
9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m., First Evan
June 12–July 27 (closed July 3)



Join us for summer fun! Rising Kindergarten–rising 5th grade may register for this two-day/week program where we will learn about God through hands on STEM projects and fun field trips. Spots are limited. Registration begins Monday, March 6! Pricing details available soon at www.firstevan.org/summersafari.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) “Mystery Island: Tracking Down the One True God”

Monday–Friday, June 5–9



At Mystery Island, your kids will be transported to a beautiful paradise, where they will track down the truth about the one and only God. They’ll discover amazing things about God—His attributes—as they look to the only source of truth, God’s Word. Registration will begin Sunday, April 16 at www.firstevan.org/vbs.

Equipping Parents Dinner



It was a joy to examine our current cultural worldview with guest speaker, Jason Ellis, as we collectively attempt to disciple our kids (and others) into Christian maturity. We plan to continue the conversation, so be on the lookout for upcoming dates for our “Raising Aliens” series. “I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one” (John 17:14–15).

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

A LOOK AT MARCH

MAR 5 Jeremiah Encouraged
God’s People
(Jeremiah 29–30)

MAR 12 Daniel Was Faithful
(Daniel 1)

MAR 19 Daniel Served God
(Daniel 5)

MAR 26 God is Present With Us
(Isaiah 7)

Big Picture Question:

Where is God?

God is in all places at all times and is always with His people.

Memory Verse:

“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”
(Zephaniah 3:17)

March Midweek Schedule

No Midweek on March 15 for Spring Break. We will wrap up regular Midweek activities on March 29 with final awards and Treasure Box Store Night!

Spring Family Fellowship

Wednesdays, April 5–26
6:15–8:00 p.m.

APR 5 Seder Meal in the Gym
(Registration Required)

APR 12 Work Night in the C-Wing

APR 19 Movie Night in the Fellowship Hall

APR 26 Bounce Houses and Face Painting on the East Lawn



WOMEN

A Colorful Day: Rooted in the Seasons of Life



After a week of cold and ice, women gathered for a morning to learn from one another in fun, practical, and spiritual breakouts focused on our theme: “Rooted in the Seasons of Life.” Our diverse group included women of all ages, culminating with a panel discussion with Lauren Jordan, Kellye Stelling, and Sue Gail Tackett. Thank you to the phenomenal planning team: Gail Alverson, Kim Bouck, Amy Irvine, Sally Klinke, Earline Long, Brenda Maschmeyer, Debra Meadows, and Molly Summers for a morning that will have an ongoing impact.

Garden Gathering: Resurrection Tomb

Friday, March 31
6:15 p.m. at the home of
Dawn Dalton (8960 Glendale
Cove, Cordova)



Come join us to hear a devotional from Cindi Montgomery, and then watch a demo from Dawn Dalton on how to make a resurrection tomb centerpiece for Easter. Refreshments will be provided. Registration is required at www.firstevan.org/gardengathering. Limit: 19 people.

Precept Bible Study

Tuesdays, March 28–April 25
6:00–8:00 p.m. via Zoom

“Nehemiah: Rebuilding, Revival and Restoration of the People of God”

Nehemiah shows us leadership and obedience in the face of opposition, as well as God’s miraculous blessing and provision. Workbook purchased online, cost: \$11.25. For more information or to register, contact Sara Butler at 901-491-0101 or sarabutler6@gmail.com.

Summer Refreshments

Registration begins in May!



Ladies, this summer we are excited to return to offering Summer Refreshments! These will be groups meeting at various times and places throughout the summer on different topics. Stay tuned for more details in April. **If you are interested in leading a group or hosting a group in your home, please contact Sharon Mrok, smrok@firstevan.org.**

MEN

Men's Retreat

Friday–Sunday, April 21–23
Mammoth Spring, AR
Speaker: Pradip Ayer



Men ages 18 and up are invited to join us for a fun weekend of fish tales, fellowship, and good food. There will be trout fishing, horseshoes, canoeing, kayaking, and more. Bring a friend! Dads are welcome to bring sons age 16 years and older. Register Sunday, March 19–April 16 online or in the Fellowship Hall. Full details at www.firstevan.org/mensretreat.

STUDENTS

Romania Mission Trip

Friday–Sunday, July 14–23

We have committed to sending a team of high school students and adults to Iasi, 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.



Student Ministries Midweek

Wednesdays, Now–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.

MARCH 2023

			WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4 Students IRL Weekend
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY				
NO STUDENT SS 5  Communion FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	ACT II Widows Fellowship 10:00 a.m., Chapel Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	H2H Women's Bible Study & Lunch 9:30-11:30 a.m. Lesson 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Lunch, Fellowship Hall	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
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS 12 FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	13 SPRING BREAK Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	14 Break (Young Adults) Evangelistic Study 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	15 Men's Bible Study 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom NO MIDWEEK MEAL OR ELECTIVES	16	17	18
19 FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom World Prayer Focus 6:00-7:00 p.m., Chapel YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	20 Council Meeting 6:15 p.m. Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	21 Break (Young Adults) Evangelistic Study 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	22 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.	23	24	25
26 Reception for Crickett Keeth 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	27 Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135	28 Break (Young Adults) Evangelistic Study 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	29 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.	30	31	