



FOCUS

MAY 2023 - MMXXIII ISSUE V

735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

He Knows!

by Pastor Jim Fleming

Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

On a Sunday in New York, the leader of a worship service encouraged members of the congregation to pray for each other. An unknown woman (unknown to us, not to Father) approached my wife, Rochelle, and began praying for her. There was no accounting for the insight of those prayers. How could she know the burdens we carried? How could she pray so specifically, her prayers so on point to our need?

We had come to New York at a time when we were famished for some heavenly encouragement. This dear sister's prayer was an echo of God's own voice, "I am not blind to your sorrows and fears. Take heart! You are my beloved children, and I am with you." What incredible power and renewal crackled in the air around us. Thank you, Lord!

The poignancy of that moment is but a faint shadow of something far greater. Imagine yourself in a similar situation, but the One praying on your behalf is Jesus. He knows! His requests reveal a level of insight into our deepest souls, transcending even our knowledge of ourselves. John 17 is a good window into what Jesus sees weighing on the hearts of His children. Here are the intercessory requests of Jesus' high



priestly prayer for us on the night He was betrayed:

Preservation/ Protection	<i>keep them in Your name (17:11) keep them from the evil one (17:15)</i>
Joy	<i>that they may have My joy made full in themselves (17:13)</i>
Transformation	<i>Sanctify them in the truth (17:17)</i>
Unity	<i>that they may all be one (17:21)</i>
Expansion	<i>that the world may believe (17:21)</i>
Reunion/ Communion	<i>that they... be with me where I am (17:24)</i>

Lest one think this prayer was just about the Apostles, Jesus clarifies, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word" (John 17:20). These are the things Jesus was praying for **FOR YOU AND FOR ME** almost 2,000 years ago—spiritual protection, fullness of His joy, transformation by truth, true unity, ministry impact, and a sweet reunion into His presence.

Now someone might object, "Yea, that was two millennia ago." To which the author of Hebrews responds, "Don't you get it? Jesus is no ordinary intercessor. Every priest ever born is either dead or soon will be. Their ministries of intercession turn to silence." But Jesus is alive, and this perfect and living intercessor is **even now** bringing your greatest needs before the Father. Right now, at every place of true need, Jesus is standing in the gap for you. He does not pray in mere pious platitudes and inane generalities. His prayer is on point and 20/20-insight driven. He is calling in the necessary reinforcements from the Father! He is praying for you and **He knows!**

MAY PULPIT PREVIEW

MAY 7 *God's Man, God's Woman, God's Servants, Part 4 "Praise-worthy"*
Titus 2:3-5
Pastor Jim Fleming

MAY 14 Special Speaker:
George Murray
(Mother's Day)

MAY 28 Special Speaker:
Seth Stevens
(Memorial Day)

MAY 21 Special Speaker:
Taylor Park

Sailing on the Path

by Joel Scoggins, Session Elder and Young Life Memphis Area Developer



For the past 18 years, I have taken a group of Young Life graduated seniors on a sailboat through the Exuma Islands in the Bahamas. Most of them come from fairly wealthy families and, on the outside, seem confident and ready to take on the world. By the time graduation is over, they know who their college roommate will be, have all their classes lined up, and have coordinated all the bedding and decor for their dorm room.

We intentionally board the boat in late July, just a couple of weeks before they will leave home and dive headlong into the next phase of their journey as a college freshman. The confident, 'I've got this all figured out' senior from a few months earlier is now anxious and uncertain of the future. *Will I make new friends easily? What if I don't get along with my roommate? Will I get into the fraternity/sorority I want? Can I make it academically? Am I going to continue to walk with Christ away from home?*

My favorite moments on our sailing trip are the late-night conversations and hearing my high school friends open up about their concerns and fears for what's coming next. As I listen, I ask God for wisdom in encouraging and challenging them to continue seeking Christ and never forget his love for them and his desire for them to know real, abundant life.

Many of our First Evan students are also in a transition season, moving from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, or high school to college. On the outside, it may seem they can't wait to move on to

what's next, but I imagine many are apprehensive and scared about what's around the bend.

So, over the next few weeks and months, reach out to our youth and let them know you are for them through hugs, handshakes, and listening ears. Ask what they're excited or anxious about and how you can pray for them. Being a kid has never been more challenging, and they need to know their church is with them. When someone joins the church, dedicates a child, or is baptized, we often acknowledge our intent to support and encourage them as a congregation. So, let's take our pledge seriously and come alongside and continue to point them to Jesus lovingly.

The truth is, I struggle in the same ways. I put out confidence in where we are heading as we walk through our transition at First Evan. But on the inside, I'm unsure, and when I'm not looking into the eyes of Jesus, I can quickly begin to sink along with my friend Peter. I imagine Peter was never the same after calling for Jesus and being pulled out of his rapid descent into the sea. As for our search for pastor next (by the way, I'm growing tired of that phrase), may we be reminded that keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus is where we will find authentic, abundant life.

Encourage one another, be intentional, and let's continue to walk alongside each other, faithfully praying for God's provision.

Sail on!

Holy Week



We're so grateful to the Lord for all He did through our Holy Week services. Our faith was strengthened as we reflected on the Psalms on Palm Sunday, the Last Supper on Wednesday, Christ's sacrificial death on Good Friday, and the joyful news on Resurrection Sunday. Thank you for inviting your friends! A huge thanks to the hundreds who participated in various ways to make Holy Week special. Jesus is worthy of our worship!

Baptism

Sunday, June 25 & Ongoing

We offer two different methods for baptism scheduling. June 25 is our next pre-scheduled 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). Contact Katelynn Bernardini (kbernardini@firstevan.org) for more information.



Maggie Johnson baptized April 23, 2023.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Please make plans to attend this important meeting!

Sunday, May 21
6:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Dessert Fellowship to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

On the agenda will be the election of Elders, Deacons, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Congregation and Global Missions Team members who will begin serving in July. In addition, we will be voting on the 2023–24 church budget and will hear an update from the Pastoral Search Committee. Copies of the nominee profiles, budget summary, Session, and Deacon annual reports and financial reports are available at all entrances to the Sanctuary and online at www.firstevan.org/congregational-meeting.

Reminder, you must be a member to vote and a provision for [proxy voting](#) is available for those who cannot attend due to illness, being out of town, or scheduled work conflict.

2023–24 NOMINEES

DEACONS

David Coates*
Mike Fergus*
Sam Hezlep
Lee Howell
Bill Granger
Jonathan Klassy*
Moses Kute

SITTING ELDERS

Mickey Bowdon
Joel Scoggins*
John Touliatos*

NON-SITTING ELDERS

John Main
Brian Ward

*Returning for a second consecutive term.

If you have concerns about a particular person serving as an Elder or Deacon, a copy of the procedure for expressing concern is available at the church office.

Pastoral Search Committee Update

Greetings, First Evan!

We want you to know what is happening in the life of our Pastoral Search Committee. Round One of our active search was formally initiated in June of 2022. This round produced over 230 applicants but no applicant was a match for the needs of First Evan. Round Two began in January of 2023 and year-to-date we have reviewed over 100 applicants. We are praying for “straight paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6) as we trust in the Lord and acknowledge Him. We are also mindful that God’s ways are perfect and even if He does not lead us to recommend one of the men currently under consideration, we trust Him. This trust that we are praying for includes resting in His perfect timing. Indeed God has faithfully guided the process and we are pleased to report that, in this round, we have made it farther and deeper than ever before with some excellent applicants. In fact, during the month of May our team will be hosting an applicant and his family for a weekend of live interviews while also coordinating a visit at his church where we will experience a live worship service and hear him preach in person.

Just to be clear, this does not mean we have identified someone whom we are recommending to the Session. (We are bearing down on that goal, but not there yet.) When we can confidently commend someone to the Session, then the Session members will need to do their due diligence to confirm our recommendation. Once the Session approves our recommendation as a candidate for the position of Senior Pastor of First Evangelical Church, that’s when the formal candidating process would commence. That is also when the entire FEC church family would get involved.

We encourage you to come to the Congregational Meeting on May 21 at 6:00 p.m. where we will be giving a complete report of our progress. Who knows how God might work between now and then. Come boldly before the throne for the next three weeks, then come on May 21 to learn how God has answered our pleas.

Here are some prayer prompts to get us started: Pray that God would prepare us for the shepherd He will bring, that we will truly love one another, that the world may know that we are His disciples (John 13:34–35, 15:12–17) and that we will be faithful encouragers of him and pray for him when he comes (I Timothy 5:17–22). With thankful hearts we must remember all God has done in and through our body and anticipate what He has in this next season for us (Phil. 4:4. II Thess. 5:18, Psalm 103).

Blessings to you and thank you for the privilege to represent our church family in this capacity.

In Him,
Eric Fuhrman, Debbie Frazier, Katelynn Bernardini, Kevin Weaver,
Chris Cannon, Jim Graham, and Ralph Hughes

National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 4, 12:00–1:00 p.m.
Sanctuary & [online](#)

Join us to pray for these spheres of influence in our country: government, military, media, business, education, church, and family. (James 5:16b)

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Larry and Vicki Nobles

STUDENTS



Silent Auction Last Call

Bids close Sunday, May 7 at 1:00 p.m.

Our students have two awesome opportunities this summer, Student Life Summer Camp and a mission trip to Romania. Come by the Fellowship Hall to bid on sweet treats, manual labor, crafts and art pieces made by our students and leaders! We are so excited for these opportunities for our students, and you can help them get there!

Summer Judges Series

Sundays, 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Middle School, E226, High School, E202 Impact and Common Ground will be spending time through the summer taking an in-depth look at the book of Judges. Judges reveals Israel's failure to be obedient to the Lord and their need for a Savior.

IMPACT SUMMER 2023



MOVE UP DAY

Welcoming new 6th graders to Impact!
9:30–10:30 a.m.

June
04

June
16

BONFIRE

S'mores, stories and shared memories will be made!
6:30–8:30 p.m.



ST LOUIS

Take a day trip to St Louis for a great adventure! Save the date, more details to come.

July
15

July
29

REDBIRDS

Family fun to cheer on our local AAA baseball team.
\$15



BIBLE STUDY

Studying the word of God together at homes throughout the Memphis area.
6:30–8:30 p.m.

June
14 & 21
July
12, 19 & 26

Instagram @fecimpact

COMMON GROUND SUMMER 2023



MOVE UP DAY

Welcoming new 8th graders to CG!
9:30-10:30am

JUNE
04

JUNE
13

GHOST RIVER

Adventure on the Ghost River in Moscow, TN!
7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
\$40



PAINTBALL

Join us for a night of paintball at Memphis Paintball Park.
6:00–8:00 p.m.
\$25

JULY
11

JULY
29

REDBIRDS

Family fun to cheer on our local AAA baseball team.
\$15



BIBLE STUDY

Studying the Word of God together at homes throughout the Memphis area.
6:30–8:30 p.m.

JUNE
14 & 21
JULY
12, 19 & 26

Instagram @fecommonground

MEMPHIS MINISTRIES

MEET MEMPHIS 2023



Meet Memphis '23 was a huge success! Over 90 First Evaners participated in 8 projects over 3 days. In addition to sharing meals with students and young mothers, cleaning and renovating facilities and neighborhoods, fellowshiping and praying with our neighbors...



- At least 15 people met with Advance Memphis for classes related to work, faith, and finances.
- A group of First Evaners are going to provide a meal and fellowship with an Advance Memphis cohort.
- At least 1 First Evaner decided to lead a Good News Club with Child Evangelism Fellowship.
- We raised \$1,600 for World Relief during the yard sale.



Praise God! Meet Memphis was just a glimpse of our partners. Their daily mission is to organize opportunities for volunteers to naturally build Christ-centered relationships without Jesus being an awkward or pressured topic. You are invited to walk with Memphis now!

You can get involved in various types of opportunities such as providing, serving, and sharing a meal with the ministry, becoming a mentor, teaching the Bible. If you are interested, please visit the Meet Memphis Next Steps table in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, May 7.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

More Abundantly Than We Ask or Think by Missionary Dan Wicher, Malaga, Spain



Spending time away on a short-term mission trip has a hidden surprise. You can expect to try new foods, learn new facts, meet new people, and see new sites. Jet lag is common when you cross multiple time zones, and weariness is assured when you do physical labor. But, most everyone is caught off guard when they discover God's power personally manifested during the trip.

From March 10–18, Team Malaga invested about 500 man hours upgrading the auditorium building at the Media Center. But, the experience was more than physical labor. The team learned how the Media Center starts spiritual conversations with Darija speakers in North Africa. Many of those conversations lead to sharing the gospel. Last year, over 3,600 contacts were made, of which 15 became Christ followers.

Meals in homes of national staff exposed the team to their warmth and generosity. Over the dinner table, stories of faith, dedication and sacrifice emerged in testimonies. Laughter and tears were part of the fare.

The collective experience of a short-term missions trip does something to your soul. One team member said she confronted a struggle she's had for years. Another said that as a result of the trip, he was challenged how he needed to invest his time during his upcoming retirement. Yet another said his circle of missions understanding was expanded.

In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul says, "God is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work in us..." The team sensed God's power made manifest personally in Malaga. He answered prayer and kept the team safe and healthy. The work completed will encourage the staff for years to come. But, on top of all this, team members returned thankful for what God did and is doing in their lives.



FEC KIDS

Vacation Bible School (VBS) "Mystery Island: Discovering the Meaning of Life"

Monday-Friday, June 5-9

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

For Rising K-5th Grade

At Mystery Island VBS, kids will embark on a treasure hunt, searching for the meaning of life—from the lives of pre-born babies to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Using God's Word as their guide, they'll discover that from the tiniest to the oldest, each person is made in the image of God—wonderfully designed to know Him and live for Him!



[Click here for the Spotify VBS playlist.](#)

Ahoy friends! With our Children's Ministry setting sail over the briny deep this summer, we are in search for some swashbucklers to volunteer during the week of VBS!

So, me hearties, are you up for making those five days the biggest adventure of these mini pirate's lives? Heave the sails and sign up today!

Register to attend or volunteer at www.firstevan.org/vbs.

VBS Calendar

VBS Work Night, Thursday, May 11
6:30-8:30 p.m. (no childcare, but kids are welcome to help)

VBS Work Days, Tuesday, May 30
and Wednesday, May 31
9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
(childcare available)

VBS Volunteer Training, Thursday,
June 1, 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

VBS Celebration Sunday, June 11
10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

FEC KIDS VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



The Dycus Family

FEC Kids is thrilled to recognize our volunteers of the year, Beth and Robert Dycus, along with their kids Allison (6), Caroline (5), and Ben (1).

The Dycus family has served the children of FEC Kids faithfully and cheerfully every Sunday during this past school year doing whatever is needed to keep Sunday programming running smoothly. They are a precious gift to FEC Kids and are loved!

Summer Fun!

Terrific Tuesdays

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

- JUN 13 Popsicles at Riverdale Park
- JUN 20 Picnic at Shelby Farms
- JUN 27 Blueberry Picking at Nesbit Farms
- JUL 11 Water Days at FEC
- JUL 18 Botanic Gardens
- JUL 25 Bellevue Indoor Playground
- AUG 1 End of Summer Skating Party

A LOOK AT MAY: THE PEOPLE RETURN



- MAY 7 Esther Saved Her People (Esther)
- MAY 14 Nehemiah Rebuilt the Walls (Neh. 1-7)
- MAY 21 Ezra Read the Law (Ezra 7-10, Neh. 8)
- MAY 28 The People Promised To Be Faithful (Neh. 9)

Memory Verse:

"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death (2 Chron. 7:10)."

Big Picture Question:

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

5th Grade Bible Breakfast

Sunday, May 21

9:30-10:30 a.m., C209

Parents are invited to attend. Look for an invitation in the mail. 5th graders will be promoted to Impact on Sunday, June 4.

Child Dedication

Sunday, June 18 (Father's Day)

10:45 a.m., Sanctuary



If you are interested in dedicating your child, please sign up by Sunday, June 4 at www.firstevan.org/childdedication.

MEN

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion/Belonging (DEI/B) and God's Kingdom



The Men's Retreat is an annual event that brings men of all ages from First Evan together for good food, great fellowship, and mutual encouragement. Relationships are strengthened and new friendships are made.

On April 21-23, we went to Riverside Resort near Mammoth Spring, Arkansas, and enjoyed God's beautiful creation along the Spring River. Fishing was enjoyed, games were played, bonfires were created, and there was plenty of time just to chill (and it WAS chilly at times).

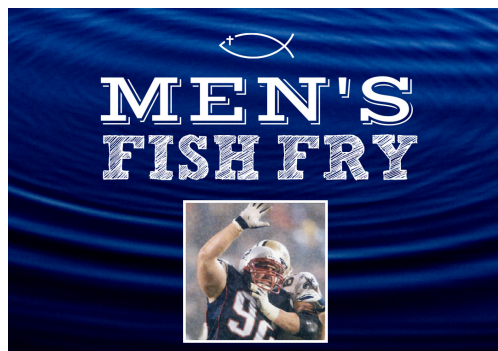
Pradip was our speaker this year. He took us into the Word to help understand, from a biblical perspective, the words **diversity, equity, inclusion/belonging**. These are controversial words in our culture today. When we look at what heaven will be like, with every nation, tongue, and tribe represented, we see **diversity** from God's viewpoint (Revelation 7:9-12). **Equity** of grace is shown as all will be wearing white robes (Revelation 7:9) as they stand before the throne, no matter how long they have known Jesus personally (Matthew 20:1-16). If we have received such grace from God, we should extend it to others, no matter how different they are from us. **Inclusion/belonging** is the result of our being brought into the family of God by the blood of Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Thanks to the many folks involved in putting this great event together. We are looking forward to our gathering again next year, the third weekend of April 2024. And as always, bring a friend!



Men's Fish Fry

Tuesday, May 23
6:00-8:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Cost: \$7/person or \$50/table



Join us for an evening of fish, food, and fellowship with speaker **David Nugent** (former NFL football player and current ECS Athletic Director). Purchase tickets in the Fellowship Hall on Sundays. Questions: Contact John Dawson, 682-8452, Jack Pepper, 833-0721, or email men@firstevan.org.

YOUNG ADULTS



Finals Coffee House

Monday, May 1-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).

We need volunteers! If interested, visit www.firstevan.org/fch.

WOMEN

Summer Refreshments



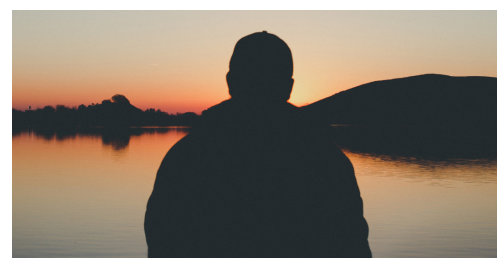
We will have various opportunities throughout the summer for fellowship and learning. Visit www.firstevan.org/refreshments to view the options and to register.

Girls' Night Out: Potluck and Recipe Exchange

SAVE THE DATE:
Thursday, June 22
6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall
More details to come.

Deepen Relationships and Spark Change

Discipleship creates unity and maturity in our shared pursuit of Christ. We have many ongoing opportunities for discipleship this summer and throughout the year. For more information, visit www.firstevan.org/women.



Break Lake Trip

Wednesday, May 17-Saturday, May 20
Pickwick Lake, TN
Our 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 by May 2** at www.firstevan.org/break-lake-trip. Contact Anies Kunda with questions at akunda@firstevan.org.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Men's Isaiah Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E135 Finals Coffee House 7:00 p.m., U of M BCM	2 Morning Brew Crew 9:00 a.m., Levee Creamery Germantown (Women)	3 Men's Bible Study 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom Final Student Ministries Midweek 6:15-8:00 p.m., E202/E226	4 National Day of Prayer 12:00-1:00 p.m., Sanctuary	5	6
7 Communion Student Ministries Silent Auction FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	8	9 Garden Gathering: Jackson, TN Tour RSVP to Mary Ewing, whewingjr@gmail.com (Women)	10	11 Foster and Adoptive Mom Meet-up 11:00 a.m., Sweet LaLa's Bakery, East Memphis VBS Work Night 6:30-8:30 p.m.	12	13
14 Mother's Day Child Dedication FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	15	16	17	18 Break Lake Trip Pickwick Lake, TN	19	20
21 5th Grade Bible Breakfast 9:30-10:30 a.m., C209 Membership Sunday FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom Congregational Mtg. 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary	22	23 Men's Fish Fry 6:00-8:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall	24 Breakfast and Business Cards 7:00 a.m., Sunrise Memphis East (Women)	25	26	27 Church Offices Closed
28 FEC Prayer Focus 5:00 p.m., Zoom YA Dinner 6:30 p.m., The Hall's House	29 Church Offices Closed	30 VBS Work Day 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.	31 VBS Work Day 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.	<h1>MAY 2023</h1>		