



# FOCUS

SUMMER 2023 - MMXXIII ISSUE VI/VII

735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

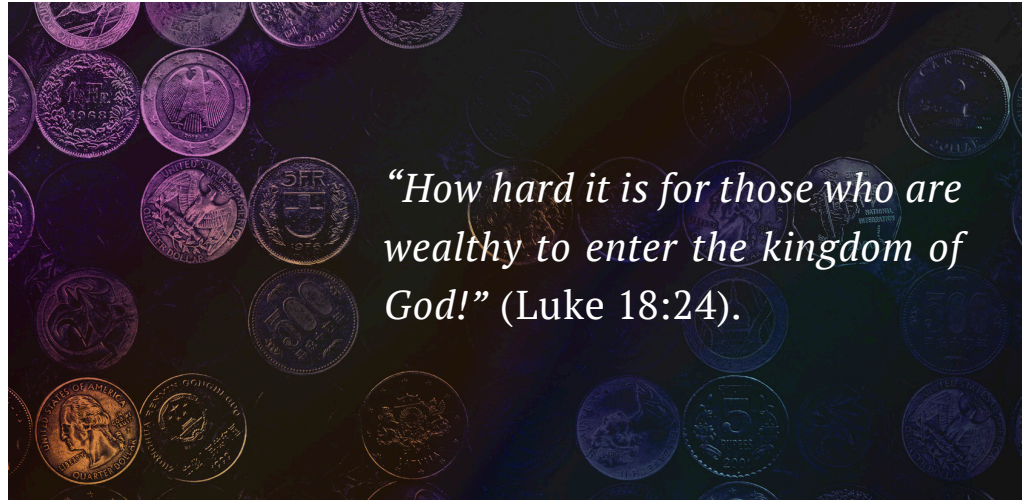
## Lost-Cause Worship by Pastor Jim Fleming

*But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).*

1967: I was a teenager at the time and had been invited by a friend to hear about an exciting business opportunity. The speaker began the evening by having us dream of what we could do with \$10,000, \$50,000, or \$100,000. When our dreaming had been properly stoked, he told us how Amway could make our dreams a reality.

"Mr. Amway" was counting on the fact that most (all?) people fantasize about receiving (and spending) a financial windfall. We do this because we see the inherent power of money. We appreciate its ability to accomplish grand and desirable things. Jesus' perspective on money is profoundly different. He knows that wealth has tremendous power, but it is a power with great potential for hurt and harm.

When Jesus declared, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God," the relevant topic was the negative potential of wealth. He had just boldly declared, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24). Wealth is a powerful disincentive for allegiance to Jesus. Other passages (like 1 Timothy 6:17) tell us why: A wealthy man easily



*"How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24).*

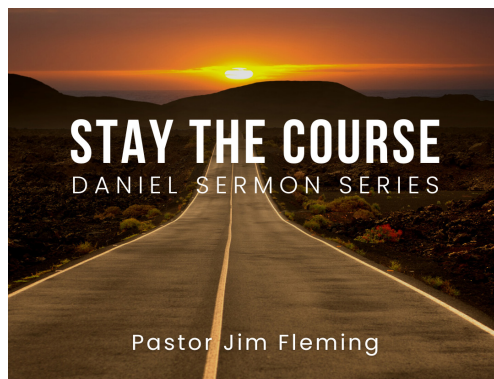
attributes his success to himself and finds his security in his stuff. He is naturally blinded to the fact that true success and security are always and only found in God.

This "power of wealth" is so potent, so persuasive, that saving a wealthy man is almost a lost cause. The power of wealth is great enough to push from a man's grasp even the kingdom of God. So when Jesus is talking about the God who accomplishes the impossible, what He has in mind is something truly amazing, the grand miracle of wealthy men receiving a Savior.

This is precisely what gives the Zacchaeus incident its poignancy. Luke tells us this tax collector is rich, but not beyond the reach of God's abilities. Jesus says of him in Luke 19:9, "Today

salvation has come to his house." When Jesus declared that He must dine with Zach, it was because a miracle of the highest order was on the menu.

So recognize this! In comparison to most people in the world, we are unimaginably wealthy. But God's ability to save is greater than the power of our stuff to ensnare. So when we gather to worship, we ought to sing with impossibly grand passion, because we are the lost-causes. We are the ones who would be beyond rescue except for one simple fact: God is able to do the impossible. We worship the God who has saved us. The fact that we are able to do so is TRULY a miracle!



## Rounding Home

Can you believe it? We began our series in the book of Daniel on August 28, 2022. Now here we are 19 sermons and almost 10 months later, ready to bring it all home. The final five sermons in this series will be delivered between June 18 and July 16. We will unpack what Daniel 11:22-12:13 tells us to expect in our imminent future. We will also learn how faith can thrive despite an increasingly hostile culture for followers of Jesus. Don't let what's coming catch you unprepared. Make the most of these five mid-summer Sundays to learn the overcomer protocol and stay strong for Jesus, no matter what.

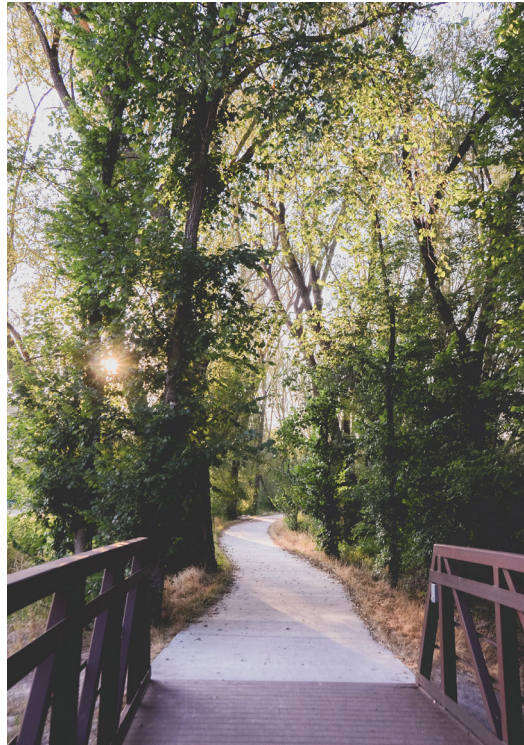
Have you missed any of the previous sermons in this series? Visit [www.firstevan.org/resources](http://www.firstevan.org/resources).

# SHEPHERD'S STAFF

## Praying Along the Path

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

It was Sunday night, and several of us were having dinner in the cafeteria at Washington State University. We were sharing what we heard in sermons that day or experienced that weekend at a men's retreat. One person shared how he was moved to pray. Another added that there is a need to pray. And someone else said we need to pray together. Others chimed in saying we have lots to pray about, let's meet in my dorm, on Tuesday nights, so on and so forth. We came together each Tuesday, praying for each other, the gospel to go out, for our churches, and our campus. Prayer moved us together and closer to God. Prayer was what we needed, and for those whom we prayed. Prayer moved us into action.



Returning to the book of Nehemiah as we have in previous Shepherd's Staff articles, we see the Israelites were moved to prayer. They had just finished rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, celebrated God's provisions and read from the Book of the Law. From the ninth and tenth chapters in particular, the leadership of the Israelites called the people to "Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting." The leaders then prayed unto God, and from that prayer Israel *consecrated* God (remembered all that He did for their forefathers and themselves), *confessed* their sins and made a *covenant* to observe and do all the commandments of God. Prayer moved the Israelites into action.

For me, those weeks, months, and years praying with my friends at WSU had a profound impact on my prayer life. As I was nearing graduation, and looking where God wanted me to move and work, it became abundantly clear I was to move to Washington, D.C. to prayer walk. So, I moved to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and walked the city, around the Capitol, the Supreme Court, the federal agencies, lobbyist offices, and the White House, praying for those in leadership and for our country. Prayer moved me into action.

Since our transition began in March 2021, many of you have told us that you have been moved to pray for First Evan, its leadership and staff, and the Pastoral Search Committee. Your prayers have been heard, and they have been and are being answered. The elders had a season of prayer, culminating by praying together on behalf of First Evan. Since then, there have been many prayer gatherings for our transition, including the [Sunday Prayer Focus](#), dedicated to our season of transition. Prayer moves us into a position of humility unto the Father, and is our chief weapon against the enemy, the devil. Prayer propels us along the path.

We encourage you to continue praying for our [six challenges](#): Give Grace, Preserve Unity, Stand Strong, Impart a Godly Legacy, Seek the Lost, and Work Smart. We especially ask you to pray for our [Pastoral Search Committee](#) (Eric Fuhrman, chairman, Kevin Weaver, Chris Cannon, Ralph Hughes, Jim Graham, Debbie Frazier, and Katelynn Bernardini), for their stamina, protection, unity, and wisdom. And pray for our staff and congregation that we would persevere along the path doing the work at First Evan, "to glorify Jesus Christ and magnify His gospel in all of life until He comes."

May we be a church that *consecrates* God, *confesses* sin, and *covenants* to following Him.

# PRAYER



FIRST EVAN  
PRAYER FOCUS

## First Evan Prayer Focus

Sundays, 5:00-5:30 p.m. via 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



WORLD PRAYER  
FOCUS  
QUARTERLY

## World Prayer Focus

Sunday, June 11

6:00-7:00 p.m., Chapel

Join us in intercessory prayer as we pray for nations and peoples in different parts of the world. We will pray for the effectiveness of our missionaries in "making disciples of all nations." Further, we will pray for the City of Memphis and First Evan's involvement with our local ministry partners.

### Other opportunities

([www.firstevan.org/prayer](http://www.firstevan.org/prayer)):

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

# CHURCH-WIDE

## Discover First Evan Class & Lunch

Sunday, June 25, 12:00–2:00 p.m., E234



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. Childcare will be provided, but you must register by Sunday, June 18. Lunch is being provided for both adults and children. For questions or additional information, please contact Jacki Stieferman at [jstieferman@firstevan.org](mailto:jstieferman@firstevan.org). Sign up at [www.firstevan.org/dfe](http://www.firstevan.org/dfe).



### Congregational Meeting

At the May 21 Congregational Meeting we elected the Elders, Deacons, and Global Missions Team members who will begin serving in July. In addition, we approved the 2023–24 church ministry and missions budgets and selected **Preston Klinke** as Chairman of the Congregation and **Jordan Bernardini** as Vice-Chairman of the Congregation for the coming fiscal year.

Our Pastoral Search Committee gave a positive report on the process and progress made. The night concluded with a time of fellowship over dessert.

You will find all reports at: [www.firstevan.org/congregational-meeting](http://www.firstevan.org/congregational-meeting).

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Benny & Sarah Balderrama

# WORSHIP

## Baptisms

Pre-scheduled on Sundays, June 25, July 2, August 27 and Ongoing  
We offer two different methods for baptism scheduling: pre-scheduled during the Worship Services or 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](mailto:kbernardini@firstevan.org)) for more information.

## Slated Council 2023–24



### ELDERS

Mickey Bowdon  
Joel Scoggins  
John Touliatos  
John Main\*  
Brian Ward\*  
*\*Non-sitting Elders*

### DEACONS

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

## Global Missions Team 2023–24



Scott Arnwine, Continuing Member  
Bernie Housholder, Continuing Member  
Jordan Carpenter, New Member  
Christopher Marino, Continuing Member  
Laura Love, Continuing Member  
Marie Thompson, New Member  
Sheila Battle, Continuing Member

# MEMPHIS MINISTRIES

## ARISE2Read Partnership

by Stephanie Moore, Memphis Ministries Team Leader



Memphis Ministries Team launched a new FEC partnership this year with ARISE2Read. Several First Evan members had already been volunteering with the program as reading tutors when Balmoral Ridgeway, a neighbor to FEC, asked for the reading program and the optional after school Bible club last fall.

Alyson Riggs, Mae Sistrunk, and Stephanie Moore led the Bible club which grew to over 25 children. We journeyed through the Bible using the same curriculum as our children's ministry, weaving the gospel into each lesson. As the children became more comfortable, they began to ask many questions about God, the Bible, and the gospel. We saw the great benefit in having the availability of enough volunteers to engage in small group and individual conversations. To cap off our Bible club, we ended the year with a review of what we had learned and a party where the kids had fun drawing sidewalk chalk pictures of their favorite lessons.

One of the parents shared: "Thank you so much. My daughter loves this so much and I'm thankful that the school allowed Christ in the school as it makes a major difference. JaNiyah will definitely see you all next year."

Children are looking for identity, meaning, and community. First Evan has the opportunity to help the children at Balmoral Ridgeway find what they are looking for through this gospel-focused Bible club. The difference you can make is huge. If you would like to be a part of this next school year, contact Stephanie Moore at [makeupmommam@gmail.com](mailto:makeupmommam@gmail.com).

## Thank You For Your Participation!

Christ's Community Church's food box ministry is a tool to build relationships with neighbors in the 38126 area. The food drive was a huge success with 1,700+ items (50 boxes of food) packed!



# OUTREACH

## A Tool for Your Faith and Mission

**Q:** How do we know that our Bible accurately records what was originally written?

**A:** That's a good question. In the game of Telephone, one person whispers a phrase to someone, then this person whispers to the next, and so on until the last person blurts out the message. The original message is often comically twisted by the end. Skeptics assume that the lost in translation during Telephone occurred to the Bible.

However, the Jewish oral tradition wasn't like playing Telephone. They were an oral culture that regularly and meticulously memorized and recited scripture. Accuracy seriously mattered when it came to God's words. Further, they scrupulously wrote hand-written copies of the originals. Although we don't have the originals, we have over 5600 written copies, some as early as the second century, of the New Testament originals. Sure, the manuscripts have variations between them; but 99 percent of these differences can be explained as copying errors and none of them affect our understanding of any core doctrine (Mounce, 141; Windle, 2019). The accuracy of the original content was meticulously preserved... but could the original writers be trusted?

Yes! The New Testament authors were either eyewitnesses or close to the eyewitnesses of Jesus. One author shared that his report could be fact-checked by over 500 other eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). In addition, these writers faced tragic losses, even death, for holding onto their message. If they had written lies, the writers could recant them and save themselves. But there were no lies to take back. They simply shared what they saw Jesus do and heard Him say. And they didn't flinch even when their testimony cost them their lives.

The Apostle Paul explained that the Bible is God-breathed or inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). This means that God used human writers to reveal His truth through them. When we consider that the original eyewitness messages were preserved over 2000 years, through oral and written transmission, despite persecution, their preservation shouts God's desire to share His true words to all nations throughout all generations. God's word has been reliably recorded. Trust it!

Mounce, W. D. (2021). *Why I Trust the Bible*. Zondervan  
Windle, B. (2019, February 15). *The Earliest New Testament Manuscripts*. Bible Archaeology Report. <https://biblearchaeology-report.com/2019/02/15/the-earliest-new-testament-manuscripts/>

# GLOBAL MISSIONS AND MEMPHIS MINISTRIES

## Missions Fund Summary

The annual contribution/expense budget of the **Missions Fund** for 2022–23 is **\$333,300**. This fund is divided between the Global Missions Team and the Memphis Ministries Team. Some of the funds spent during the fiscal year went to the following projects:

### PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE GLOBAL MISSIONS TEAM SINCE JULY 2022

\$6,000	<b>Butes/EST Poland:</b> From the Ukraine Crisis Fund
\$3,300	<b>Orphanos:</b> Biennial Conference/Retreat
\$2,660	<b>Gideon Peter:</b> Pastor Training (IPL)
\$2,500	<b>Nasser Kajou:</b> Pastor Training
\$2,000	<b>Tlapanecos:</b> Electrical Project
\$2,000	<b>Uganda:</b> Bugoba Project
\$2,000	<b>In-Life:</b> Staff Training
\$1,503	<b>Joshua David:</b> Conference in India with Jon Frazier
\$1,200	<b>Joy Gill:</b> North Indian College of Christian Studies
\$1,000	<b>Noah Mrok:</b> Thailand Trip with Cru

Your giving to the **Missions Fund** is pivotal for Global Missions to provide our partners with the financial support we need. In the 2022–23 year, we had 12 requests for project funding. Due to a lack in funds, only one project out of the twelve was completely funded, another project had to be delayed for five months, and one more project has been placed on hold until August.

### PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE MEMPHIS MINISTRIES TEAM SINCE JULY 2022

\$2,000	<b>Advance Memphis:</b> Art for Jobs
\$500	<b>Restore Corps:</b> Free 901 5K/10K Run
\$4,250	<b>World Relief:</b> Beds for Refugee Family of Eight
\$1,000	<b>Young Lives:</b> Overnight Retreat for Teen Moms and Their Children
\$500	<b>Multi-National Ministries:</b> Transportation
\$1,300	<b>Binghampton Christian Academy:</b> Boys Dorm Dining Table and Chairs
\$1,000	<b>Streets Ministires:</b> Bowling for Streets
\$336	<b>ARISE2Read:</b> Bibles for Students

The **Missions Fund** must be designated on your giving in order for your contribution to be allocated to the Missions Fund, in support of Global Missions and Memphis Ministries. **Please consider an end-of-the fiscal-year gift to the Missions Fund:** [www.firstevan.org/online-giving](http://www.firstevan.org/online-giving).

# YOUNG ADULTS

## Finals Coffee House



We had a great time meeting new students and welcoming others back to Finals Coffee House during finals week. Lots of coffee was made, breakfast food was eaten, and connections were made. We even had the chance to collect prayer cards from students so we can pray for them specifically. Thanks to the Baptist Collegiate Ministry for letting us use their facility to bring this event to the U of M campus. And a big thanks to all of our volunteers.

## Break Lake Trip



About 20 young adults from Break took a trip to Pickwick together to kick-off the summer. It was a wonderful week-end of fun on the water and relaxing with friends. They studied passages in Acts looking at essential elements of the Gospel, as they are making growing in their knowledge and practice of sharing the Gospel a priority this year.

## Break Summer Book Study

Tuesdays, June 6–July 25

(Not meeting July 4)

7:00 p.m., The Hall's House

### SUMMER BOOK STUDY



This summer, Break will read through *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller. We'll talk about how belief in God is sound and rational, and how to communicate that to others. Contact Kassie Sanborn at [ksanborn@firstevan.org](mailto:ksanborn@firstevan.org) for the address or more details.

# MISSIONS LUNCHESES

SUNDAYS, 12:00 P.M., FELLOWSHIP HALL

JUNE 11 - BRITAIN & ARAM BALL  
JUNE 25 - MIDDLE EAST PARTNERS  
JULY 16 - PRADIP & JUDITH  
AUGUST 6 - FLETCHER & MARY ELIZABETH MAYNARD

# FEC KIDS

## FEC Kids Summer

We will pause our regular curriculum schedule this Summer to review all of the Old Testament and memorize the New Testament books of the Bible this summer before we start in the New Testament August 6.

**Sunday School, 9:30–10:30 a.m.**  
(Nursery–Rising 5th Grade)

- Nursery & 2's Classes:  
1st floor Main Building Nursery
- Current 3's and 4's Preschool Classes  
1st floor C Building, C108
- Rising 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Graders  
2nd floor C Building, C210
- Rising 4th/5th Grade Girls  
2nd floor C Building, C209
- Rising 4th/5th Grade Boys  
2nd floor C Building, C203
- Rising 6th graders will move up to Impact (Middle School). Their new Sunday School class will meet in the Impact Room (E226).

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**Promotion Sunday**  
Sunday, August 6  
9:30–10:30 a.m.

## 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](http://www.firstevan.org/childdedication).



On Mother's Day Sunday, May 14, Charles "Charlie" Bennett Sanborn (Kassie and Caleb) and Thomas Gray Dyer V (Joanna and Thomas) were dedicated using Isaiah 43.

## 5th Grade Bible Breakfast



On Sunday, May 21, we celebrated our rising 6th graders with a Bible Breakfast. Psalm 119:9

## VBS "Mystery Island: Discovering the Meaning of Life"



Please join us as we make final preparations to welcome 138 kids to our church to learn about God and why He created us! Registration is now closed, but limited spots will be available on Day 1 of VBS (June 5) at 9:00 a.m. Please contact FEC Kids at [feckids@firstevan.org](mailto:feckids@firstevan.org) if you have any questions.

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

**JUN 1 Volunteer Training**  
6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

**JUN 4 VBS Set-up**  
Noon, Fellowship Hall  
Stick around after the worship service for a pizza lunch and help us set up the stage and craft and snack areas! (No childcare).

**JUN 5–9 VBS Week**  
9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

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

## Terrific Tuesdays

Weekly, June 13–August 1  
(Will not meet July 4)  
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.



Join us for more summer fun and fellowship for kids of all ages on Tuesday mornings all summer long! Activities vary weekly! Visit [www.firstevan.org/kids-events](http://www.firstevan.org/kids-events) for details.

- 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 (Creation Station)
- AUG 1** Family Skate Party at Cordova Skating Rink

# RECREATION

## ESCRA Soccer



We had such a fun spring season! Thank you to all the kids who came out to play. We love our coaches and appreciate the hard work they put in!

**WE NEED COACHES!** In order to offer a Fall Soccer season, we must have coaches. The league is for JK–6th grade boys and girls with a 6-game season beginning in September. If interested, please contact John Dawson at [jdawson@firstevan.org](mailto:jdawson@firstevan.org) or 901-682-8452 by Sunday, July 2.

# WOMEN

For full details or to register, visit [www.firstevan.org/women](http://www.firstevan.org/women).

## Summer Refreshments

We have various opportunities throughout the summer for fellowship and learning (*Please register*):

JUN 8, 13, & 21, JUL 14

Garden Gatherings

JUN 12 & JUL 10

Stories of God's Faithfulness

JUN 14 & AUG 1

Conversations on Art & Faith

JUN 22-JUL 27 Sage, Thu at 11:30

JUN 24 iPhone Photog. Workshop

JUN 26 Healthy Boundaries

JUL 18 7 Basic Needs of a Husband

## Community Gatherings

Build or continue relationships through the following opportunities (*No registration required*):

JUN 15 Supper Club

6:00 p.m., Swanky's G-town

JUN 20 Adoption & Foster Meet-up

11:30 a.m., Sweet Lala's

JUN 27 Morning Brew Crew

7:00 a.m., Voodoo Café

JUL 19 Supper Club

6:00 p.m., Pyro's Pizza

AUG 16 Breakfast & Business Cards

7:00 a.m., Sunrise Memphis

## Girls' Night Out: Potluck and Recipe Exchange

Thursday, June 22

6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

All ladies are invited to join us for a recipe swap. Bring a dish (appetizer, main dish, or dessert) to share and the recipe to display. You will have the opportunity to take pictures of your favorite recipes or handwrite them on provided recipe cards, and we will also collate the recipes into a book. Register at [www.firstevan.org/women](http://www.firstevan.org/women).

## SAVE THE DATES:

AUG 13 Women's Fall Kickoff

SEP 5/6 Heart to Heart Bible Study

SEP 15-17 Women's Retreat

# MEN

## Men's Fish Fry



On May 23, First Evan men and guests enjoyed an evening of fish, food, fellowship, and heard a message from ECS Athletic Director David Nugent.

# STUDENTS

## Student Ministries Summer

- June 04** CG & IMPACT MOVE UP DAY: Welcoming new 8th graders to Impact and new 9th graders to CG! 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- June 13** CG GHOST RIVER: Adventure on the Ghost River in Moscow, TN! 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. \$40
- June 16** IMPACT BONFIRE: S'mores, stories, and shared memories will be made! 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- July 11** CG PAINTBALL: Join us for a night of paintball at Memphis Paintball Park. 6:00-8:00 p.m. \$25
- July 15** IMPACT ST LOUIS: Take a day trip to St. Louis for a great adventure!
- July 29** CG & IMPACT REDBIRDS: Family fun to cheer on our local AAA baseball team. \$15

## Silent Auction

Our Silent Auction was a hit! We had so much fun making all of our items to help us get to **Student Life Camp and Romania!** So far, we have raised over **\$3,000!** We are so thankful for the generosity of our church family. If you think you may have won something, email [aphillips@firstevan.org](mailto:aphillips@firstevan.org) and we will double check!

## Summer Bible Study

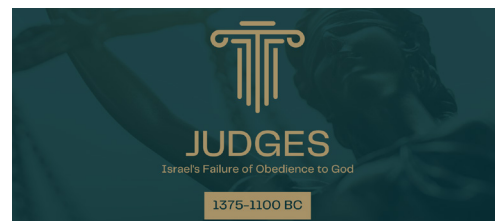
Wednesdays, June 14 and 21, and July 12, 19, and 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

This summer, Impact and Common Ground will be having bible studies in different host homes. We will be going over the book of James. Join us to study the word of God together! For the location, email [aphillips@firstevan.org](mailto:aphillips@firstevan.org)!

## Summer Judges Series

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

Middle School, E226, High School, E202



This Summer during Sunday School, we are covering the book of Judges. In a book of the Bible where it seems like everything is falling apart, we will look at God's sovereignty and how through everything God is still working.



**SCAN FOR SUMMER  
2023 CALENDAR:**



[www.firstevan.org/events](http://www.firstevan.org/events)

