



FOCUS

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735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

Where to Stand? by Pastor Jim Fleming

*“But if they had stood in My council,
Then they would have announced My words to My people,
And would have turned them back from their evil way
And from the evil of their deeds” (Jeremiah 23:22).*

Israel liked the ego gratification of being called God’s chosen people. They were proud of their temple and the religious pageantry that went with it. They valued what could be called “life in the spirit” and the encouragement they received from prophets who used God’s name to endorse their self-assessments. But there was something profoundly askew.

Despite how much these people loved their religion, they didn’t love God. It showed in the ease with which they would embrace adultery with the spouse of another, the quickness of their resort to deception and injustice to secure their evil desires, and the hearty encouragement they would extend to others for cleverness in the practice of wickedness (Jeremiah 23:14). What hope is there for a people who practice such a sham religion?

It is a banner of God’s grace that He sends prophets to declare what men don’t want to (but need to) hear. Father would be justified to administer swift and complete judgment to those whose behavior shouts defiance against Him. But He takes no pleasure in the judgment of the wicked. He prefers to hold His sword of retribution at bay while sending warnings. Jeremiah was one such watchman commissioned to sound the alarm. Unfortunately, Jeremiah was the only true watchman.

He was not the only prophet. There were many prophets declaring, “Thus says the Lord.” But their message was at odds with Jeremiah’s so-

ber warnings for the fact that their counsel actually strengthened the hands of the evil doers. Rather than speak to the defects of sham religion, they salved over whatever doubts the people might harbor. These prophets’ assistance made it possible for disobedient people to say, “I actually feel pretty good about my walk with God.”

Where does this kind of distorted thinking come from? Jeremiah 23:22 provides the answer. The ability to have a positive effect on someone walking a path of disobedience turns on having first stood in God’s council. Unless a man has **stood in this place**, he will be ineffective ministering to those who have become comfortable with their disobedience. Jeremiah stood here; the false prophets were false for the fact they had not.

To stand with Jeremiah is to daily present yourself to God in quiet expectancy. Most mornings you will find me in this place as the sun is rising. I come to God’s Word asking Him to teach me what I need to know and apply to my life. I journal what I am learning so I don’t lose it. I internalize this truth so that it will inform my counsel to others. To do so is my assurance that my



counsel will give someone insight into what God thinks of sin and will fuel a desire to make a clean break from it.

When the actions of others shout defiance against God, only those who have stood in the council of the Lord can offer hope of real change. **Let’s stand there together.**

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF

Celebration Time!

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

Celebration was a marked event throughout the Bible, at harvest (Leviticus 23) and Passover (Ezekiel 45), after Jerusalem's wall was rebuilt (Nehemiah 12), upon the return of the prodigal son (Luke 15), and so on! But nothing compares to the celebration of God's grace for His people, who do not deserve such grace, but grace that God sent through His son Jesus Christ.

Last month we took time to Celebrate Grace, the grace God gave us through His son Jesus Christ, and the grace we give and receive to and from one another. As part of our Give Grace challenge of [On Mission](#), the Session, through the work of the [Transition Committee](#) called for a Celebration of Grace, a culmination of work the Transition Committee compiled as outlined in the [Six Challenges Action Plan](#). We came together to say "Amen" and "praise God" as the Israelites did when they experienced restored relationships.

Here are some key moments of the morning. Pastor Jim, Eric Fuhrman, and Mickey Bowdon (both the most recent Session Elder Chairmen, and Eric is the Chairman of the Pastor Search Committee) reported on their trip to Nashville on behalf of the Session to ask for Cole's forgiveness and to min-



ister encouragement to him. Mickey read excerpts from Cole's touching and gracious response. Kevin Weaver (current Session Chairman) called the Session to the platform and asked for the congregation's forgiveness for not shepherding the flock well and for not guarding our unity. The congregation responded with a hearty "We forgive you." Then, five individuals and one couple told tales of grace, accounts of how they have personally used confession, forgiveness, teachability, and exhortation. Finally, we participated in communion by partaking of the bread and cup as emblems of God's grace to us in Christ. At the same time, we brought to the communion

table our commitments to give grace as we have been given grace. What a rich morning!

Following the celebration, many of you shared how you were greatly touched by the morning. Others had tears, another person said he was encouraged and looks forward to what God does next, while others were moved by the leadership's humility. Eric

Fuhrman shared that he mentioned to a Senior Pastor applicant and his wife that we were having this service to apply grace to past relationships. They both exclaimed, "Wow, this is rare, extremely rare, and never done!"

Thank you for your support and prayers during this season. Let us speak grace in a world that does not know grace language. May God bless us and protect us being a grace-filled and grace-speaking church.

You can read a more detailed summary of our morning celebrating grace [here!](#)

Pastoral Search Update

by Eric Fuhrman, Chairman of the Pastoral Search Committee

We wanted to take a moment to share an update on behalf of your Pastoral Search Committee. First, we would like to provide a little background. The Pastoral Search Committee assisted the Transition Council in conducting the church-wide health assessment, bringing into focus the "6 Challenges" that our church has actively engaged in since April. While conducting the health assessment, the Search Committee spent time developing its process to handle a large number of applicants for the senior pastor position.

In May we went "live" and to date, the Pastoral Search Committee has reviewed over 230 applications for the senior pastor position at First Evan. Each application receives a careful, initial evaluation based upon certain minimum standards

provided by the Session. Once an applicant is determined to meet the minimum standards they are assigned to a three-person team. This is the "Green Zone" phase where teams get to know the applicant and where applicants have an opportunity to learn about First Evan. During this phase the teams will also conduct Zoom interviews, obtain transcripts, check references, and verify doctrinal alignment.

The next step in our process is an evaluation of applicants as a whole team. We call this the "Blue Zone". This is where we conduct deeper-level interviews, drill-down on specific doctrinal questions, check tertiary references, and perform background checks. Over the course of the past 6 months we have had approximately 15 applicants who have progressed

through the "Green Zone", and we are pleased to report of good progress being made with several applicants now in the advanced, Blue Zone.

We are getting close to inviting three or four of our top applicants (and spouses) to come to Memphis where the Search Committee would be able to meet and interact with them face-to-face. These visits might be spread out over several weeks. (Please Note: This would not be a "candidating" weekend that involves the whole congregation - This final step would not occur until after the Committee has identified the one whom we are recommending to the Session as our candidate.)

We invite your prayers for our committee, for strength and wisdom, and the grace needed to complete the mission, welcoming our next pastor.

CHURCH-WIDE (CONTINUED)

NEW ON STAFF



Meg Burgess
Common Ground
Girls Coordinator

I've lived in the Memphis area for most of my life. I'm in my final semester at the University of Memphis, and will begin my Master's in Counseling program with Southeastern University in January! I love to read and to do anything that involves being outside! Throughout middle and high school, I was blessed with people who poured into me and pointed me to Christ in every situation. My foundation in my relationship with Jesus was steady because of these people and their willingness to be present in my life! My hope is that I can do the same with the students here! I'm so excited to be a part of this ministry!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Doug and Terri Barnes
6565 Quail Pointe Cir. S.
Memphis, TN 38120



Ryan and Lauren Johnson
8223 Scuggs Dr.
Germantown, TN 38138



Phil and Kate Taylor
2133 Rolling Valley
Germantown, TN 38138



Allie Williams
5376 Mason Rd.
Memphis, TN 38120

David and Cynthia Johnson
754 Shady Grove Rd. S., Memphis, TN 38120



NEW MEMBER SUNDAY

New Member Luncheon
Sunday, November 13
12:00-1:30 p.m., Chapel

We're excited to celebrate you becoming a member of First Evan! Invite the First Evaner who welcomed you and RSVP with the headcount by Monday, November 7 to Jacki Stieferman at 901-682-8452 or jstieferman@firstevan.org.

Discover First Evan
Next opportunity is
Sunday, January 29, 2023!

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. Sign up at www.firstevan.org/dfe.



Picture Directory

Sundays, November 6, 13, 20
9:00-9:30 a.m., 10:25-10:45 a.m.,
12:00-12:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Let's update our church member database! Having a photo entry in our directory will familiarize staff members, shepherds, and our congregation with our church family.



ADULTS



SENIOR HOLIDAY LUNCHEON



Senior Holiday Luncheon
Sunday, November 20

12:00-2:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Join us for a Senior Holiday Luncheon following the worship service. Ronnie Stevens will be bringing a short devotional and some of our musicians will be leading us in worship. RSVP to Jim Henry if attending by November 6 at jhenry@firstevan.org.

CHURCH-WIDE & WORSHIP



Thanksgiving Eve Soup Supper & Service

Wednesday, November 23
5:00 p.m. Supper followed by
6:00 p.m. Service, Fellowship Hall

God delights in us not only giving thanks to Him personally, but also declaring His works to fellow believers. Psalm 111:1 says, “Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.” Come for soup and cornbread at 5:00 p.m., then we’ll follow up with a time of praise and thanksgiving beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Are you grateful for something God has done in your life? Why not praise the Lord in the assembly? Others will do so, too, and you will go home ready to celebrate Thanksgiving with a full heart.



Thanksgiving Offering

A Christmas Gift for our Missionaries

Give now through December 1

Part of our Thanksgiving tradition is to collect an offering to be sent as a Christmas gift to our First Evan missionaries. Designate “**Thanksgiving Offering**” on your check to First Evan, or give online at www.firstevan.org/thanks.

A. Duane Litfin School of Mission, Ministry, and Leadership

(Picture from www.wheaton.edu)



Former First Evan Pastor Duane Litfin is having a school named after him at Wheaton. See details here: <https://www.wheaton.edu/news/recent-news/2022/september/litfin-symposium-announcement/>.



“The Arrival of the King” A Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 11
9:00 and 10:45 a.m., Sanctuary
International friends are invited to the International Brunch at 10:20 a.m. “The Arrival of the King” is presented by the Worship Choir, orchestra, soloists, and readers. The long-awaited King has come, humble and bringing a message of mercy (Isaiah 9:6-7)! Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join us.



It's Christmas Again

Tuesday, November 29, 7:00 p.m.

Here is an opportunity to open gospel conversations with friends and family. First Evaner, **Lawson Touliatos**, stars in the film *It's Christmas Again*, showing in theaters November 29. He plays Jake Young, who is ready to skip the church's celebration of Christmas until an unexpected turn



of events lands him in a field outside Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born. While journeying with the shepherds to find the Messiah, he discovers the meaning of Christmas. Find show times and locations for this modern-day musical at <https://www.fathomevents.com/events/It's-Christmas-Again>.

Additional resources to aid in gospel conversations are “The Case for Christ” by Lee Strobel or “Hidden Christmas” by Tim Keller.



Next Baptism

Sunday, December 18

10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

Our next regularly scheduled baptism is December 18. If you are interested in being baptized then, please apply by November 28 at www.firstevan.org/baptismapplication.

Going forward, we will offer two different methods for baptism scheduling. We will continue to hold pre-scheduled baptisms in the Sunday service. In addition, we will 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). Please contact Katelynn Bernardini (kbernardini@firstevan.org) for more information.

Shepherds and Flock Sunday

Sunday, November 13

10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

At the Celebration of Grace service on Sunday, October 23, there was a point in which the Session, representing the entire shepherding community, affirmed a commitment to “do better” in regard to shepherding the flock at First Evan. On November 13 we will have a time when we will ALL look at our respective roles—both those who are shepherds and those who make up the flock. We will recognize those who have become members over the past year and together affirm our commitment as members of this church body.

PULPIT PREVIEW

NOV 6 “An Embrace of Grace”
Genesis 45:1-15, Pradip

NOV 13 Shepherds & Flock Sunday
Exec. Pastor Taylor Park

NOV 20 “The Fifth Kingdom”
Daniel 7:1-14
Pastor Jim Fleming

NOV 27 Jason Seville

FELLOWSHIP



Fall Fun Fest

Fall Fun Fest this year was a blast and we are grateful for the opportunity that the Lord placed in front of us to host this community focused event. Even though the rain tried to thwart our plans, our incredible group of volunteers and staff pivoted indoors to host bounce houses, a “Hall of Treats”, photo booth, face painting, giveaways and incredible food. We welcomed around 500 people into our doors with many of them being visitors. We hope to connect those who visited into having gospel conversations at our upcoming 3-week [Hope Explored](#) program discussing Hope, Peace, and Purpose. Thank you to all who participated in serving our neighbors during Fall Fun Fest.



YOUNG ADULTS



Break Friendsgiving Dinner
Saturday, November 26
5:30 p.m., The Sistrunk's House
 Come enjoy a meal and sit around the fire pit. Contact Kassie with questions and address at kсанborn@firstevan.org.



Pictured top to bottom: Break Camping Trip and Candy & Costumes Party.



Finals Coffee House
Sunday, December 4-Tuesday, December 6, 7:00 p.m.-midnight, Gym
 We need your help! From making coffee or flipping pancakes, to setting up tables and taking orders, we'd love to have you join us as we create a safe and welcoming space for college students during exam week. Please contact Kassie Sanborn for more information at kсанborn@firstevan.org.

FEC KIDS

Child Dedication

Sunday, November 27

10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

If you are interested in dedicating your child, please sign up by Sunday, November 6 at www.firstevan.org/childdedication.



FEC Kids Midweek

Wednesdays, 6:15–7:30 p.m.*

Preschool, C-Wing | K–5th Grade, Gym

Interested in joining us? It's not too late: www.firstevan.org/feckids-midweek.

NOV 2 Bring a Bible for CEF

NOV 9 Service Project:
Pack Sunshine Stockings

NOV 16 GIVING STORE NIGHT!

DECEMBER SCHEDULE

DEC 4 We Are to Worship
God Alone (Isaiah 44)
(Children's Choir)



Children's Christmas Choir
Sunday, December 4

10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

Kids four years old–5th grade are welcome to participate. Please contact Cortney Cannon at ccannon@firstevan.org if your child is interested.

DEC 11 Lessons & Carols
(Nursery only)

DEC 14 "Emmanuel"



"Emmanuel": A Live
Nativity Family Event

Wednesday, December 14

6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Join us for a live nativity and celebration of Jesus' birth. We will meet inside and then we will journey outside to see Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and live animals. While outside we will sing by candlelight and then enjoy s'mores, hot chocolate, and a Christmas craft. Please invite your friends and neighbors to join us as we proclaim the coming of our King!

DEC 18 Christmas Lesson

DEC 24 Christmas Eve Service
with Children's Nativity

Children's Nativity

Saturday, December 24

5:00 p.m., Sanctuary

Please contact Cortney Cannon at ccannon@firstevan.org if your child is interested.

DEC 25 Christmas Day (Family
Worship/No Childcare)

STUDENTS

Thanksgiving Feast

Wednesday, November 16

6:15 p.m., Impact Room

This month, Student Ministries are having one of our favorite events of the year, the annual Thanksgiving Feast. This is a potluck style dinner where we will talk about the heart of giving. We can't wait to gather together in the season of giving. We are so thankful to have a student ministry to fellowship with one another and grow closer to Christ.

WOMEN



Women's Christmas Dinner

Thursday, December 8

6:00–8:00 p.m., Memphis Hilton

Ticket Sales begin

Sunday, November 13

8:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Cost: \$20/seat (\$200/table of 10)

*If you purchase an entire table,
please plan to decorate the table.

We are excited to have singer/songwriter, Hannah Kerr for a night of Christmas Celebration. For more information, visit www.firstevan.org/christmas-dinner.

Garden Gathering:
Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 3, 10:00 a.m.

At the Home of Mary Ewing

1500 Cobblestone Cv., Germantown

Invite a friend and come make a live Christmas wreath and enjoy some hot cider or hot chocolate. Registration required at www.firstevan.org/garden-gathering. Limited to 25 participants.

Deck the Halls

Tuesday, November 29

9:30 a.m., Chapel

Join the staff as we decorate the church for Christmas! Enjoy fun fellowship while making our church inviting to others during the Christmas season!

A LOOK AT NOVEMBER The People Disobey

NOV 6 Jeroboam Disobeyed God
(1 Kings 12–13)

NOV 13 Elijah Served as a
Prophet (1 Kings 16–18)

NOV 20 Elisha Served as a
Prophet (2 Kings 2)

NOV 27 Elisha Performed
Miracles (2 Kings 4–6)

Big Picture Question:

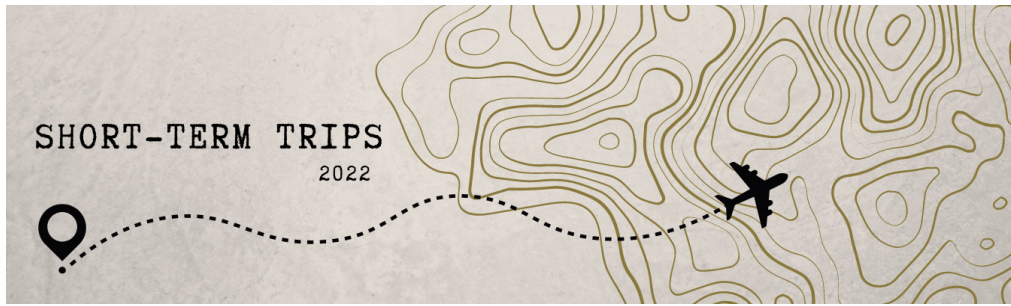
What is idolatry?

Idolatry is loving something else more than God.

Memory Verse:

"You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Deuteronomy 6:5

GLOBAL MISSIONS



Short-Term Missions Trip Opportunities

Global Missions is considering a number of short-term missions trips over the next several months. Though many are not yet on the calendar, we are considering the following opportunities. Please let the Missions Office know if you are interested in considering going on a trip in order to serve and to see what God is doing through our ministry partners.

Malaga, Spain: SentWell Center with Alex and Amy Galloway
Work/Prayer Trip

Dominican Republic: Cru with Meg Robbins
Evangelism and Work (geared toward families)

Uganda: Sam and Suzie Davis
Vision/Prayer/Evangelism/Training

India/Nepal: Ministry Partners in Area
Teaching/Training (men and women's trips)

Mexico: Tlapaneco Ministry Partners
Teaching/Work/Evangelism (students and adults)

Romania: Ministry Partners in Area
Children's Ministry/Vision Trip

However, there is one trip that is on the calendar. Consider this opportunity:

Media Center Work Team

The Media Center in Malaga, Spain, uses creative communication methods to guide Darija-speakers of North Africa into abundant life and to walk with Moroccan communities of believers toward their maturity. First Evan is organizing a 10-day trip to Malaga to support the ministry by refurbishing the training facilities at the Center. The work team will hang a new ceiling, install lighting, air conditioning, and audio video equipment, paint several rooms, and do some light landscaping. To that end, the team needs adult men and women who, above all, like to work with their hands, including individuals to help prepare meals.

The Center's location is ideal to understand the spiritual needs of Spain and North Africa, and to be exposed to other First Evan supported ministries in the area. **Tentative dates for the trip are March 10-19.** Applications to join the team must be received on or before **November 30.** For more information, please contact Dan Wicher (dwicher@avmi.org), Chuck Downs (n4bsn@bellsouth.net), or Jim Pendleton (jpendleton@firstevan.org).



International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians

Sunday, November 6

9:30-10:30 a.m., E234

Join the Cross Generations Sunday School class to pray specifically for persecuted Christians around the world. To learn more, visit <https://www.persecution.com/idop/>.



Monthly Meet & Greet with Dottie Hoppe living in Arkansas and serving in Colombia

Saturday, November 5

12:00 p.m., Zoom

We would love for you to join as we fellowship with and encourage our Missionaries and National Partners! Times and days will vary. Below is the zoom info we will use for the meetings. Please stay tuned to social media and emails to get the latest update on who we will be meeting with and when. [Click here to join meetings.](#) Meeting ID: 824 2619 1429; Passcode: 518957.

International Brunch

Sunday, December 11

The International Brunch is an opportunity to honor our international friends in the community by inviting them to *Lessons & Carols* at 9:00 a.m., then having them join us for a reception/brunch. We will celebrate the diversity of peoples attending that Sunday morning and enjoy great food.

		TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Heart to Heart 9:30-11:30 a.m., F-Hall	2 ACT II 9:30 a.m., Halls, TN Midweek Fellowship Meal 5:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Midweek 6:15-8:00 p.m.	3 Break Book Study 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	4 Global Missions Meet & Greet Dottie Hoppe 12:00 p.m., Zoom	5
SUNDAY	MONDAY	8 Heart to Heart 9:30-11:30 a.m., F-Hall Election Day Polling Site in Gym	9	10 Break Book Study 7:00 p.m., The Hall's House	11 Offices Closed Due to Veteran's Day	12
6 DST Ends Communion IDOP 9:30-10:30 a.m., E234 FEC Prayer Focus 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom	7 Men's Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E143	13 Christmas Dinner Ticket Sales 8:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall Shepherds & Flock Sunday 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary FEC Prayer Focus 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom	14 Council Meeting 6:15 p.m., Fellowship Hall Men's Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E143	15 Heart to Heart with Luncheon 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., F-Hall	16 Midweek Fellowship Meal 5:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall Midweek 6:15-8:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Feast 6:15 p.m., Impact Room	17
20 Senior Holiday Luncheon 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall FEC Prayer Focus 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom	21 Men's Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E143	22	23 Thanksgiving Eve Soup Supper & Service 5:00 p.m. Supper 6:00 p.m. Service Fellowship Hall	24 Offices Closed Due to Thanksgiving	25 Offices Closed	26 Break Friendsgiving Dinner 5:30 p.m. The Sistrunk's House
27 FEC Prayer Focus 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom	28 Men's Bible Study 6:30-8:00 p.m., E143	29 Deck the Halls 9:30 a.m., Chapel It's Christmas Again 7:00 p.m., Select Theatres	30	<h1>NOVEMBER 2022</h1>		