



# FOCUS

NOVEMBER 2023 - MMXXIII ISSUE XI

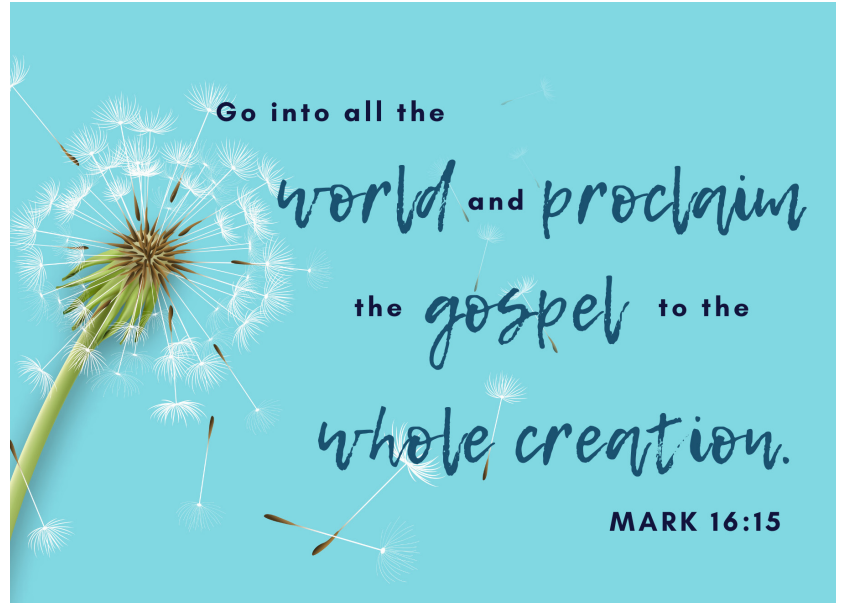
735 RIDGE LAKE BOULEVARD | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38120

## GOING/SENDING Into the Fields... The fields are ready for the Harvest! Are we ready?

by Leigh Sistrunk, Chairperson, Global Missions Team  
and Jim Pendleton, Director of Global Missions

Jesus tells us in five different “commissioning” statements, from the time He rose from the dead to the time He ascended into heaven, that His disciples should “make disciples of all nations.” Once we belong to Him, we are His disciples.

The theme verse for Global Missions this year is based upon one of these “commissioning” statements, Mark 16:15... *“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”* As a church, we want to consider what our roles are in this commissioning by Jesus. Our prayer is for every First Evan member to be involved in the GOING or the SENDING of others into the glorious work of making disciples world-wide!



We know that Jesus is our first example of the One who was sent, and that He has sent US to be His disciplemakers. This world-wide commissioning extends from where we live to where the least-reached live. As disciplemakers, we certainly have opportunities locally. One of our National Partner couples, **Gabor and Edina Gresz, will be leading us in training on Saturday morning, November 18**, about “Becoming a CoJourneyer.” We will be given tools for gospel conversations where we play, live, learn, and work. It is open to everyone from middle school to adults of all ages, so plan now to join us!

As the Spirit equips us to be disciplemakers, we look for God-opportunities to share. While evangelism and outreach take us to the lost in our community who do not believe in Jesus, Missions compels us to be a part of taking the Gospel to those who, because of barriers like language, persecution, or lack of access, do not know there is a Jesus to believe in. In the local cultural context, most of those barriers are not present. In Missions, we purpose to cross barriers in order to take the Gospel to the least-reached peoples of the nations—both among us and to the world abroad!

We are excited to bring to you **Dr. George Murray on November 19** and again in late February, to help further consider our role in the Great Commission. In February, we will also be **joined by Pastor Antonio Muñoz**, on staff at Redeemer Community Church in Katy, TX, and a graduate of Moody Bible and Dallas Seminary. He will also be encouraging us as we consider our roles in GOING/SENDING.

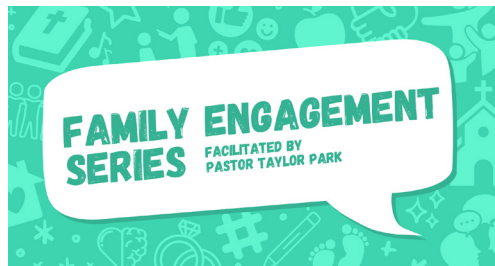
We are prayerfully working to offer a variety of opportunities to GO and opportunities to SEND. These may be one week, one month, one year, or longer opportunities, and tailored to various occupations, skill sets, and locations. We hope that as a church, we will collectively seek the Lord, and ask what our role is in the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel. And, we remember that “world-wide” may be on the other side of the globe OR crossing barriers of language or culture right here in the Memphis area.

May the LORD guide and bless our efforts!

# CHURCH-WIDE

## Family Engagement Series

Wednesdays, 6:15–8:00 p.m., C210  
No registration required.



### November 8: “Marriage Busters” (Rescheduled from October 4)

There are lots of ways to tank a marriage. There are little “bugs” sort of like marital viruses or bacteria that inadvertently and sometimes overtly we let into our marriages that start to eat away at the fibers and foundations of marital stability. During this session, we will hear from a First Evan couple who were in danger of not making it. But they turned to God’s healing power to bring them back together and heal their marriage.

### November 15: “No Matter the Relationship” led by Taylor Park

To wrap up our Family Engagement series, Taylor Park will be sharing the one passage about which he says, “After 40 year of counseling, if I only had one chapter of the Bible I was allowed to use for every relational situation regardless of the issue, this is the chapter I would pick.” Whether it’s marriage, parent-child, siblings, friends, work related or any other, this one chapter will give you a wealth of guidance.

### Did you miss one?



Visit [www.firstevan.org/family](http://www.firstevan.org/family) to view the previous chats or discussions.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



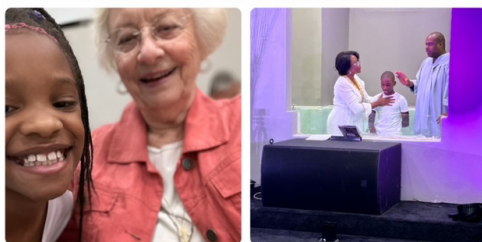
Steve and Kathy Ethridge



Bill and Patricia Ramia

If interested in attending our Discover First Evan membership class, please contact Jacki Stieferman at [jstieferman@firstevan.org](mailto:jstieferman@firstevan.org).

## GOOD NEWS!



Pictured: Members Sally Jones and Sue Gail Tackett celebrating the baptisms of some Youth Striving for Excellence students!

# WORSHIP

## A Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 10  
9:00 and 10:45 a.m., Sanctuary



International friends are invited to the International Brunch at 10:20 a.m. “Prepare Him Room” is presented by the Worship Choir, orchestra, soloists, and readers. As the hymn “Joy to the World” says, “Let earth receive her king, let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing!” Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join us.

## Baptism

Sundays, December 17  
10:45 a.m., Sanctuary

Our next regularly scheduled baptism is December 17. If you are interested in being baptized then, please apply by November 19 at [www.firstevan.org/baptismapplication](http://www.firstevan.org/baptismapplication).



On October 15, two sets of siblings were baptized. Emma and Claire Thompson and Caroline and Haston Alley. Watch at [www.firstevan.org/baptisms](http://www.firstevan.org/baptisms).

## Pulpit Preview

View all recorded sermon messages at [www.firstevan.org/sermons](http://www.firstevan.org/sermons).

- NOV 5 Andrew Beach, The Center Memphis
- NOV 12 Gabor Gresz, National Partner, Cru
- NOV 19 Dr. George Murray, Columbia International University
- NOV 26 Wayne Smith Jr., Pastor of Pinnacle Church at Cedar Creek Lake in Texas

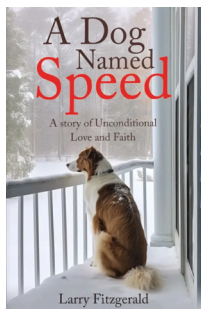


# CELEBRATING SOME PUBLISHED FIRST EVANERS

## “A Dog Named Speed”

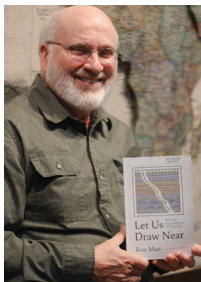
by Larry Fitzgerald

I am very excited to have the opportunity to put an exciting book into the hands of young people who will be able to hear the Gospel in a new and unique way. It also should interest pet owners who wonder if their four-legged friend might join them in heaven. Besides that, it is an exciting story.



Details: [larryfitzgeraldauthor.com](http://larryfitzgeraldauthor.com).

## “Let Us Draw Near: Biblical Foundations of Worship” by Ron Man



Drawing upon his experience in teaching this material over the past twenty-five years in forty countries, Ron provides a rich and deep examination of biblical worship, drawing principles out of a rigorous study of the text of Scripture. He also writes as a practitioner, from the perspective of one who served as First Evan's worship pastor for twenty-two years.

In recognition of First Evan's investment in and support of Ron's ministry over the 35 years since he first came to this church, he has dedicated his book “to the congregation and the Worship Choir of First Evangelical Church.” Ron joyfully acknowledges that this book is not just a personal legacy, but (as his overseas teaching has been) is an extension of the ministry of First Evan to the wider body of Christ.

Anyone interested in purchasing his [book](#) can talk to Ron at [ronman9@gmail.com](mailto:ronman9@gmail.com) about a special deal for \$30 (list price \$58).

## “The Best Times”

published by Jimmy Grubbs



*The Best Times* has been the voice and advocate for the boomer/senior market in metro Memphis since 1989. We do this by providing valuable and interesting information for our readers and we get results for our advertisers.

*The Best Times*, with more than 65,000 readers, is the third most read local publication and it's the only one directed exclusively to seniors.

*The Best Times* was first published by MIFA. It was a monthly newsletter for the recipients of their program, Meals on Wheels. The newsletter became so popular that *The Best Times* was born. It began to take up so much of MIFA's time that they turned the publication over to others.

Jimmy Grubbs, the publisher, bought the newsmagazine 10 years ago. Jimmy is originally from Georgia. He moved to Memphis in 1985 from Jacksonville, Florida, as owner of the Dale Carnegie training franchise in Memphis, West Tennessee, Northern Mississippi and Eastern Arkansas.

After retiring in 2001, Jimmy soon found the need to be active, which led him to *The Best Times*.

Jimmy is married to Sheila and they are members of the Eternal Prospective Sunday School Class. They have three daughters, five grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

**Pick up a copy of the November issue with the Prime Time Resources located around the church.**

## “Poetry of Life: From a Biblical Perspective”

by Kenneth McIntosh

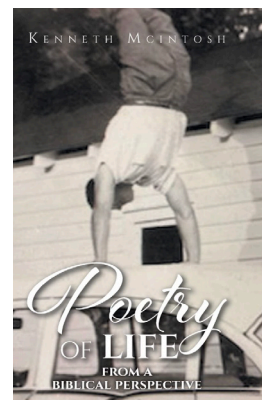
(below article by his daughter, Melissa Ruleman)

My father, Ken McIntosh, 94, a longtime member of First Evan, has published a book of verse, *“Poetry of Life from a Biblical Perspective.”* The 230 poems were written over a 20 year period during my father's quiet times.

Many of the poems such as “Praying Through My Hymnbook” or “Why I Believe Christ Is the Only Way” are devotional or apologetic in nature. Other poems celebrate Christian holidays like “Christmas a Time of Wonder, a Time to Ponder.”

Much of his work, such as the poem “When Tragedies Strike,” was written to encourage those facing suffering, loss, death and grief.

For many years my mother, Nancy McIntosh, sent his poems to family and friends in cards or with strawberry bread to celebrate an occasion or encourage someone who was grieving, caregiving or facing their own health problems,



When my mother died in 2019, we decided to publish the poems in a book, which is available through [Amazon](#).

Often when I visit my father at his residence at the Brookdale, he is sitting in a chair, reading his own book, encouraging himself and reminding himself of all of the promises of God.

*We love to celebrate our church members! Let us know if you have a publication you'd love to share with the congregation: [sjohnson@firstevan.org](mailto:sjohnson@firstevan.org).*

# PRIME TIME & CARE

## Prime Time Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

On Tuesday, October 24, the Prime Time Strategic Planning Committee met. The committee included representatives from each Prime Time Sunday School class (10 classes in all). They focused on priorities for Prime Time and Care Ministries and mapped out exciting plans for 2024–2025. Stay tuned for what's next.



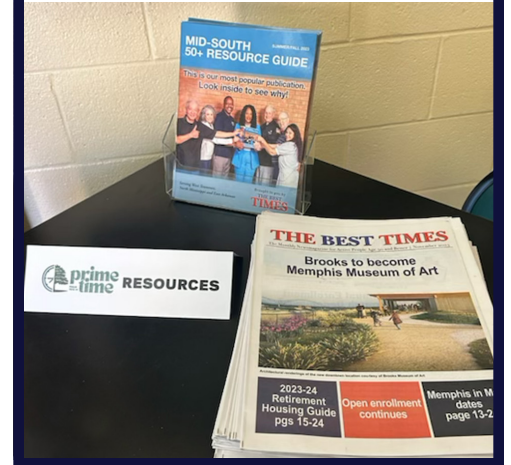
## Thanksgiving and the Generation Mandate

Family Thanksgiving dinners are one of the most significant family events of the year. Grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren rarely all meet together. Psalm 78 proclaims a generation mandate. Each generation is responsible to teach succeeding generations to put their faith and hope in the faithfulness of God. Thanksgiving is a wonderful opportunity for parents and grandparents to share stories of God's faithfulness.

As senior adults who have experienced God's faithfulness over the years, we have stories of His faithfulness to pass on. Please consider writing your stories in a format that you can give copies to your children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren. How does someone experience the faithfulness of God? Let your story answer how you experienced the answer to seeing God's faithfulness in your life. Our legacy of trusting God's faithfulness, is the most significant truth that we can share.

In our current culture, we see a significant decline in faith being passed down from one generation to the next. The emerging culture says that faith is unreliable, there is no absolute truth and the Bible is not relevant to the trends of today. That is why it is vital that we share our personal stories of God's faithfulness. This Thanksgiving, share your stories so that a legacy of faith is captured and can be passed along. Then, if you are willing, please share those stories with Prime Time by December 1, 2023. We would like to collect these stories to share with our congregation.

**Prime Time Resources can be found at three locations around First Evan: The A-Building West Entrance, the Missions Wall, and the Gym Entrance.**



**Caregivers Group**  
Thursday, November 16  
11:45 a.m., Chapel



Caregivers is a ministry for those caring for loved ones. This month we will enjoy lunch and hear from Dr. Paul Neal of the Christian Psychological Center about how to approach the holidays well. Contact [Christy Bicknell](mailto:Christy.Bicknell@firstevan.org) or Caregivers Director Sue Sharpe, 901-828-2624 with questions. Registration required at [www.firstevan.org/caregivers](http://www.firstevan.org/caregivers).

**Prime Time and Care Christmas Luncheon**  
Sunday, December 3, 12:00–2:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall



Come hear stories of God's faithfulness and learn about the new Prime Time Ministry plan (event for adults 55+). Donations appreciated. Registration required Sundays, November 12, 19, or 26 in the Fellowship Hall or at [www.firstevan.org/christmasluncheon](http://www.firstevan.org/christmasluncheon). Contact Paige Poloni with questions at [ppoloni@firstevan.org](mailto:ppoloni@firstevan.org).



# FEC KIDS



## Kids Carnival Recap



Many thanks to parents, kids, and volunteers who made this year's Kids Carnival a success! We had fun playing games, bouncing, taking silly pictures, making pumpkin faces, and getting our own faces painted! We loved hosting all who attended, from youngest to oldest, and look forward to more fun events to come as we celebrate Thanksgiving and especially the birth of our Savior at Christmas time!

## Lifting Our Voices

In November, FEC Kids will begin practicing a song for our Christmas Eve service. Each Sunday, we will set aside a small portion of time during Sunday School to learn the song we will sing. Parents, we will also send the song to you via email, so you can listen and practice singing it at home as well!

### FEC KIDS IN NOVEMBER

This November, we are studying "The Warnings of Jesus":

- NOV 5** People Welcomed Jesus as King (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12)
- NOV 12** Leaders Wanted to Trick Jesus (Matthew 22)
- NOV 19** Jesus Warned About Not Loving (Matthew 23)
- NOV 25** Jesus Warned About Not Acting (Matthew 25)

#### Memory Verse:

*"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen."*  
Deuteronomy 18:15

#### Big Picture Question:

*How is Jesus the Perfect Prophet?*  
Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

## Child Dedication

**Sunday, November 26  
10:45 a.m., Sanctuary**

If you are interested in dedicating your child(ren), please sign up by Sunday, November 12 at [www.firstevan.org/childdedication](http://www.firstevan.org/childdedication).



On October 8, Jace Alexander Cisneros was dedicated.

## SAVE THE DATES:

**Last Midweek & Awana Store  
Wednesday, November 15**

Keep memorizing, and save up those Awana Bucks!

## Emmanuel: A Live Nativity Event

**Wednesday, December 13**



Join us for a heart-warming and fun-filled evening event for adults and kids alike. Plan to come and invite your friends too—you don't want to miss it!

# YOUNG ADULTS

## Break Camping Trip

A little rain, a lot of fire wood, and wonderful people made for a memorable Break camping trip in October! We enjoyed teaching from Tim Holler on how our identity intersects with our activity. We played disc golf, watched the sunrise, ate some delicious food, and enjoyed the outdoors together for the weekend. We hope you can join us next year!



## Global Friends Thanksgiving Dinner

**Friday, November 11, 6:00 p.m.  
3703 Guernsey Ave, 38122**



Break Young Adults will join with Global Friends for a Thanksgiving Dinner!



# GLOBAL MISSIONS & GIVING

## Year-End Support for Missionaries

by Christopher Marino  
Global Missions Team Member

With the Christmas season preparations and end of the year approaching, I wanted to give a reminder of some different possibilities for year-end giving at First Evan. The **Ministry Fund** is our primary means of supporting our ministries, the staff, and the church building. But there are also possibilities to support missions and these must be designated when giving. **Pass-Through** allows First Evaners to give directly to any of our approved missionaries by name, and 100% of such a gift is passed directly to their missions organization. Additionally, there is the **Missions Fund** and through it we give a monthly stipend to our missionaries and national partners, we consider special projects of our missionaries in which to invest, and we support the outreach efforts of our Memphis Ministries partners.

Some recent examples of approved projects include: money sent to support Pastoral training in India and South Sudan, a leadership training retreat for In-Life in the Czech Republic, assistance for several missionaries making trans-continental moves, among other projects.



As Thanksgiving approaches we also have the opportunity to give toward a **Thanksgiving Offering**. This provides an additional year-end gift to all our missionaries. One can bless them by giving now through December 1. Designate "Thanksgiving Offering" on your check to First Evan, or give online at [www.firstevan.org/thanks](http://www.firstevan.org/thanks). Be praying for all our missionaries this holiday season, and consider giving opportunities as a way to bless, encourage, and come along side of them!

## International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church

Sunday, November 5



Pray for Christians persecuted around the world for their witness and faith in Christ. Contact the missions office at [missions@firstevan.org](mailto:missions@firstevan.org) if you would like resources to inform your prayers or visit [www.firstevan.org/idop](http://www.firstevan.org/idop).

## Missions Lunch

Sunday, November 12  
12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall



Join us as we share a meal and hear from FEC National Partners Gabor and Edina Gresz, serving with Cru in Kansas, USA.

## World Prayer Focus

Sunday, December 3  
6:00-7:00 p.m., Chapel



Join us in intercessory prayer for our world, country, county, city, and church.

## International Brunch

Sunday, December 10  
10:20 a.m., Fellowship Hall



The International Brunch is an opportunity to honor our international friends in the community by inviting them to **Lessons and Carols "Prepare Him Room"** at 9:00 a.m., then joining us for a reception/brunch. We will celebrate the diversity of peoples attending that Sunday morning and enjoy great food. Think about who you might invite!

## Global Missions Conference

**SAVE THE DATE:**

February 17-18 - Antonio Muñoz  
February 23-25 - George Murray

## FAMILY

Trail Life and American Heritage Girls Coming Soon!



We had a great discussion on Wednesday, November 1, about next steps for bringing **Trail Life** and **American Heritage Girls** to First Evan. If you're curious about that and couldn't make it to the meeting, please reach out to Richard Marsh at [richardmarsh@yahoo.com](mailto:richardmarsh@yahoo.com) or Mark Stelling at [mstelling@irmllc.com](mailto:mstelling@irmllc.com). We look forward to seeing these great discipling programs for parents and their children age 6-18 coming soon to First Evan.

# WOMEN

## Women's Christmas Dinner

Thursday, December 7, 6:00–8:00 p.m., Memphis Hilton



Join us for a night of Christmas Celebration with singer [Caroline Cobb](#). Tickets go on sale **Sunday, November 5 at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall**, and then remaining seats will be available by contacting Sharon Mrok at 901-682-8452. Cost: \$20/seat; \$200/table of 10. For more details visit [www.firstevan.org/christmasdinner](http://www.firstevan.org/christmasdinner).

**Men, we will also need some waiters to volunteer to serve meals!**

## Garden Gathering: Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 9, 10:00 a.m. Mary Ewing's Home



Ladies, come hear a devotional from Crickett Keeth, and then Mary Ewing will walk us through how to make a Christmas wreath. Bring greenery from your garden to share. Light refreshments provided. Registration is required at [www.firstevan.org/gardengathering](http://www.firstevan.org/gardengathering). Limit: 25.

## Deck the Halls (Decorate the Church for Christmas)

Tuesday, November 28 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!

# STUDENTS

## November Midweek Schedule

- NOV 8** Impact Serve w/ World Relief Common Ground Teaching
- NOV 15** Thanksgiving Feast
- NOV 22** **NO MIDWEEK**
- NOV 29** Impact Teaching Common Ground Serve w/ World Relief

## World Relief Service

This month, Student Ministries is partnering with World Relief, an organization that helps welcome incoming refugees to Memphis. There are physical needs that we will be able to aid World Relief Memphis in as they continue to welcome new refugees into the Memphis area. If you might consider purchasing some of these items and bringing them to the Student Ministry Office we would greatly appreciate that. We will be collecting items until December 6, but as always, if you have items after that date we will be happy to deliver them to World Relief. See our weekly emails for a list of suggested items.

# OUTREACH

## Are you like me?

I must confess something to you. Despite being equipped with God's Word from years of learning from the many great teachers at First Evan, I often find myself hesitant to share my faith. I don't want to force my religion on others. Damaging my relationships is the last thing I want to do. However, I am still convicted that the Gospel can bring restoration and redemption in their lives. But am I confident that I can effectively share meaningful things with them? Perhaps I am not alone in this regard. Are you like me?

If so, I am excited for both of us that Gabor and Edina Gresz will train First Evaners to listen, ask compelling questions, and discuss profound matters with the non-believers in our lives. Let's learn to navigate discussions of faith with grace and understanding.

Sincerely,

*Member of the Outreach Equipping Team*



## Event Details:

### Everyday CoJourney: An Outreach Training with Gabor & Edina Gresz

**Saturday, November 18 9:00–11:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall**  
The deadline for childcare is Sunday, November 12—sign up at [www.firstevan.org/ecchildcare](http://www.firstevan.org/ecchildcare). Register for the event at [www.firstevan.org/cojourner](http://www.firstevan.org/cojourner).



*Pictured: Gresz Family*

# NOVEMBER 2023

			WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 1 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom <b>Fellowship Meal</b> 5:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall <b>Midweek Electives</b> 6:15 p.m.	<b>ACT II Widows Fellowship Outing</b> 2 9:30 a.m., Offsite	3	4
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY				
<b>Communion</b> 5 <b>Daylight Saving Time Ends</b> <b>Christmas Dinner Ticket Sales (Women)</b> 8:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall <b>Break Dinner (YA)</b> 6:30 p.m., Host Home	6	7	<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 8 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom <b>Fellowship Meal</b> 5:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall <b>Midweek Electives</b> 6:15 p.m.	<b>Garden Gathering:</b> 9 Hanging of the Greens 10:00 a.m. Mary Ewing's Home	10	<b>Veteran's Day</b> 11 <b>Break Attending Global Friends Thanksgiving Dinner (YA)</b> 6:00 p.m., 3703 Guernsey Ave.
<b>Missions Lunch</b> 12 Gabor & Edina GresZ 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall <b>FEC Prayer Focus</b> 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom	13	14	<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 15 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom <b>Fellowship Meal</b> 5:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall <b>Thanksgiving Feast</b> 6:15 p.m., Hallway (Students) <b>Midweek Electives/ Awana Store</b> 6:15 p.m.	<b>Gym Closed for Voting</b> 16 Fitness Room Available <b>Election Day</b> Polling Site in Gym <b>Caregivers Group</b> 11:45 a.m., Chapel	17	18
<b>New Member Sunday</b> 19 <b>FEC Prayer Focus</b> 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom <b>Break Dinner (YA)</b> 6:30 p.m., Host Home	20	21	<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 22 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom <b>No Midweek Students</b>	Thanksgiving - Church Offices are closed for the holiday		
<b>Child Dedication &amp; Baptism</b> 26 <b>FEC Prayer Focus</b> 5:00-5:30 p.m., Zoom <b>Break Dinner (YA)</b> 6:30 p.m., Host Home	27	28	<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 29 6:30-7:30 a.m., Zoom <b>Midweek Students</b> 6:15 p.m., E226/E202	30		
	<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 6:30-8:00 p.m., E143	<b>Heart to Heart &amp; Luncheon</b> 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall				<b>Everyday CoJourney:</b> An Outreach Training with Gabor and Edina Gresz 9:00-11:45 a.m. Fellowship Hall
	<b>Men's Bible Study</b> 6:30-8:00 p.m., E143					