



First Church of God
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Pastor Paul J Rutledge

**JULY 2023
NEWSLETTER**

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Pastor's Meditation July 2023

A Happy July to all! July 4th, fireworks and remembering our nation and its independence is coming soon. We're in the midst of summer, and VBS will be happening in the middle of the month. Busy and fun times we're living in.

When I think of summer, I sometimes remember one of the first jobs I had when I graduated from college. I earned a B.A. in Comprehensive Social Science Education, which means I could be a secondary social studies teacher. When I graduated from college in 1990, there were not many job openings in that area of teaching, so I worked where I could because I had bills to pay. In the summer of 1990, I worked at The Toggery in the Findlay Mall, selling menswear. I was an average salesman, and I did okay in retail. The Toggery was a small, specialty store, and I enjoyed the job, even though I didn't make much money.

In 1990, one of the anchor stores at the Findlay mall was K-Mart. While working in the mall, I met a woman who was a female security guard in K-Mart. This woman dressed as a shopper, and she followed people she thought might steal merchandise. She was trained that certain people fit profiles local law enforcement thought were suspicious. Others not considered a threat were left alone. I was amazed at the number of shoplifters she caught over the summer of 1990. I also discovered that when I was younger, I was profiled in stores and sometimes followed, because I fit a certain description. It was an interesting experience because as I talked to the security guard, I came to recognize some of the tactics used to catch thieves.

In sharp contrast, David said he was followed, not by a security guard, but by a divine blessing. God's goodness and mercy followed him. These two gifts always stay close, following him not with suspicion but real love. The "twin guardian angels," as evangelist Charles Spurgeon described the pair, follow God's people closely during both bad days and good days. Spurgeon said that God's goodness and mercy are with us in "...the dreary days of winter as well as the bright days of summer. Goodness supplies our needs, and mercy blots out our sins."

As a shepherd, David understood this intentional pairing of goodness and mercy as it's provided by God. Other things can follow us, things like fear, worry, temptation, doubts, but "surely," David declares in Psalm 23, with undoubting certainty, God's goodness and loving mercy follow us always.

God's goodness and mercy always being with us caused David to rejoice, "Surely your goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6). What an amazing gift to follow us all the days of our lives.

If you have an item to put in the newsletter, please submit it to Susie Hoffman by the 3rd. Sunday of the month. Susie's email address is fcogrisingsun@gmail.com

Camp Otyokwah

Kids love to get mail at camp. If you would like to send a card or a letter to them, here is the address: Camp Otyokwah

(please list the youth's name)

3380 Tugend Rd

Butler OH 44822

Jr. High 2, July 2-7.

Keely Albert, Karmen Albert

Junior 2, July 9-14.

Brayden Dean, Colton Albert

Please pray for the campers, staff and counselors, pray that God will move mightily in the lives of each of these young people and they will encounter the risen Jesus and start a new or deepen the relationship with Him.

VBS Info/Prep/Decorating Dates!!

July 9: 9:30-10:30 (SS hour) for all station and crew leaders, table set-up after 2nd service, we will need some muscle...MEN!!!

July 11&13: 7-9pm, decorating classrooms and stage area...ANYONE INTERESTED IN HELPING ARE WELCOME!!!

July 15: 10-12noon, final decorating and prep...AGAIN, ANYONE IS WELCOME!!

In addition...July 16, alternate locations will need to be found for SS classes as the rooms will be set and ready for VBS!!

Children's classes may come to the gym to begin learning the VBS songs and dances! Adults may join in, too!!

It's not too late!

If you haven't signed up your child for VBS it's not too late. Please go to our

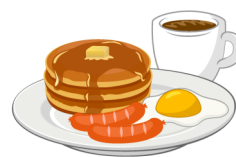
website and register them. Pre-K through 8th grade.

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB FUN!!

The next monthly breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, August 19, and will be hosted by Jennie Harman! Please refer to our private message stream for Jennie's address/phone number. Jennie lives in Bowling Green and breakfast will begin at 9am! For those who would be interested in carpooling or caravanning, we will leave the church parking lot by 8:20am. If you can, please bring a breakfast yummy to share! Other dates to add to your calendar...

SEPTEMBER 10- Pay To Eat breakfast during the Sunday School hour!

NOVEMBER 11- Men's Appreciation Dinner, time TBD during our August breakfast!



Yacht Club

The Next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday, July 15th, 8:30am at Tim's house. All the men are

welcome to join us for breakfast but if you're planning on going on the retreat you should plan to be at this breakfast. We will be making the final preparations for our retreat. Men's Retreat: August 18-19-20.

Location: Camp Otoywkah

Cost: \$60

Events: Food-Fun-Fellowship-RELAX

Sign-up sheets are on the clipboards.

Safety Team



Schedules are out through September. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Tim.

If you have a conflict, try to work out a trade with another team member. If you can't, let Tim know.

Thank you

A huge thank you to all those that helped with the church workday, although our numbers were a bit smaller, we accomplished a lot of chores.



Keep Watch

VISION Transforming our city through winning the war in the spiritual. MISSION To see every school covered in prayer so that the power and presence of God are experienced in our communities. Establish Prayer Walks We connect with school communities and help volunteers launch prayer walks. Equip Parents & Teachers We provide tools and training to pray effectively for children. Encourage School Personnel We provide individual prayer for school staff that desire it and we encourage them in their vital roles. Engage the Faith Community We host city-wide prayer events highlighting superintendents/principals/teachers and assist in church/school partnerships. Please call Judy cell number 419-619-0400 & Jim's cell number 818-522-7152 to be contacted if interested for this fall.



HANDS, HEARTS, MINDS and FEET

A Note to ALL Currently Active Church Teachers, Officers, Volunteers and Participants

We need ALL current KFC, Sunday School, VBS, Junior Church, Teachers, Helpers and Volunteers, as well as Overtime Volunteers, Committee and Board Members to COMPLETE one of the forms (handed out in March 2023), including YOUR Names and areas marked where YOU currently serve in the many ministries of the church. Please COMPLETE and Turn in TODAY to the designated holder in the Overflow Room.

NOT Currently putting your talents into any area of the church? Then we ALSO welcome YOU to complete a form and place it in the marked holder in the Overflow Room. Either way, we are delighted YOU are here, worshipping with us!

Some groups and individuals have already started putting their hands, hearts, minds and feet to use in Visitation, Worship, Landscaping, Cleaning, Decorating and other areas of ministry, inside and outside the walls of the church. Many areas noted on the form will be much more effective with many hands, hearts, minds and feet. WE WANT YOU, so that we can together, plan our work and work our plans.

FORMS are available at the church bulletin stand, each Sunday and everyday at the designated form holder on the wall of the Overflow Room. Our Christian Education Directors, Lou Ann Hoiles and Sherry Adams, also will be handing forms out to current Sunday School, KFC and VBS movers and shakers.

THANKS SO MUCH FOR BE AN ACTIVE PART OF THE CHURCH and its MINISTRIES !

VBS Prayer Guide

We believe that prayer is powerful and effective, through Jesus' name and righteousness he has given us. Let us all join together in praying for these same things, and in faith, we wait expectantly for what God will do!

Pray for our directors that they would hear God's Spirit clearly and that she would be obedient to the Holy Spirit.

Lord, Your Word says, "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). I pray that they would feel Your Presence and hear Your specific instructions. Speak clearly through Your Word and the Holy Spirit so they may be an instrument of Your work, giving You the glory. Help them to be obedient for, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28)

Pray for the entire VBS team: that they would be strengthened and filled with God's Holy Spirit as they minister to the children.

Lord, I ask for Your protection for those helping with VBS. Remind them that You know the plans that You have for them and that You will give them everything they need for the week. I pray for strength and endurance for their physical bodies and their minds. May the Holy Spirit lead them. I also pray that their hearts, minds, eyes and ears are open to receiving all the blessings you want to pour out to them. Lord, please fill their hearts with your love and grace to be poured out upon the kids. I pray that our helpers will shine God's light as they minister to the children, and the children will be drawn to His light and love.

Please pray for the children who will attend VBS: that they would feel the loving presence of God and be drawn into a relationship with Him. Pray also for the families of the children, that they would also be drawn by His Love.

Lord, I pray for the children attending VBS. Tear down any walls and take away all distractions. If they are afraid to come, help them to know that "perfect love drives out fear" (John 4:18). Lord, may they feel Your love drawing them to You and may they have a peace about coming. I pray that through VBS, kids in our communities will grow in their relationship with you. We ask that you begin to break down any wall that might be preventing their young hearts from receiving your love. I ask that the truth of who you are sinks deep into their hearts. Open their ears to Your Word and open their hearts to your salvation.

Lord, I pray for all the families of the children that will attend VBS. Let the changes in the kids' hearts this week be an inspiration to their families. Let parents and caretakers pursue a deeper relationship with you. Give kids strength to stand firmly rooted in their faith and relationship with you.

Pray for those who will come to this week of VBS who have never committed their lives to Jesus Christ. Pray that they will do that this week.

Lord, I pray for those who do not know You or who have never given their life to You. May they hear You calling them and feel You drawing them and may they say, Yes to believe, repent of their sin and follow Jesus. May they accept Your grace and offer themselves to You with sincere hearts.

Pray for those who have made a commitment to Christ, but have fallen away. Pray that they will be drawn back.

Lord, I pray for those who have fallen away from You. Speak to their hearts by Your Holy Spirit. May they surrender themselves to following You. Fill them afresh. Break the bondage of their other desires, distractions, or even addictions. Help them to accept your freedom and blessings that are greater than anything this world could offer.

Pray for the Church (The Body of Christ), that God will build us into a light for Him in our communities. Pray that this week will result in great spiritual and numerical growth of followers of Jesus.

Lord, Please use us to be an influence in our community through VBS. We want your perfect love to be at the foundation of our communities. We pray that we would spread your love. Let our doors be open and our hearts be welcoming to all kids and their families. Let your goodness shine through us. Make us 'salt and light, a city shining on a hill' (Matthew 5) in our communities. I pray that You would pour out Your Spirit on our VBS this week. Lord, show us how to move in unity as the body of Christ. Where there is any kind of disunity, I pray that You would bring peace and understanding. Unite all Christ followers in worship and prayer because, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (Revelation 4:11).

Pray that Satan would be bound in our communities and churches; that he will not be able to interfere with what God has planned for his followers; that all of Satan's plans for this week would fail.

Lord, help us to be strong in You and in Your mighty power. Help each and every one of us that will be involved in any way this week to put on the full armor of You, God, that we can take a stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We must, therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, we will be able to stand our ground, and after we have done everything, to stand. May all the plans of the evil one be thwarted! May You have great victory this week!

In Jesus' Name We Pray, Amen.

Your prayers are important and powerful!

First Church of God July 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship	3 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30pm Congregational prayer	4	5 8:30-9:30 walking group 6pm Bible study	6 9am Bible Study	7 8:30-9:30 walking group	8
9 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship 9:30-10:30 VBS decorating 4pm 4-H meeting	10 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30pm Council meeting	11 7-9pm VBS decorating and setup	12 8:30-9:30 walking group 6pm Bible study	13 9am Bible Study 7-9pm VBS decorating and setup	14 8:30-9:30 walking group	15 8:30 am Men's breakfast @ Tim's house 10-12 VBS decorating and setup
16 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship VBS 6-8:15	17 8:30-9:30 walking group VBS 6-8:15	18 VBS 6-8:15	19 VBS 6-8:15	20 VBS 6-8:15	21 8:30-9:30 walking group	22
23 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship	24 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30pm Congregational prayer	25	26 8:30-9:30 walking group 6pm Bible study	27 9am Bible Study	28 8:30-9:30 walking group	29
30 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship	31 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30pm Congregational prayer	S a f e t y				
					7-2 Brad & Chris	Mike & Sandy
					7-9 Tim J. & TJ	Adam & Randy
					7-16 Scott & Susan	Tracy & Alana
					7-23 Dean & Jim D.	Tim & Jeff
					7-30 Steve & Tim J	Pam & Sandy