



# First Church of God

## Our Mission: Bringing Lives Into Focus with Christ

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Pastor's Meditation
- One Service
- KFC
- Craft Show
- Congregational Meeting
- Lakota Football Tailgate
- Grief Seminars
- The Forge
- Safety Team
- Yacht Club
- Men's Retreat
- Trunk or Treat
- Women's Breakfast Club
- Men's Appreciation Tailgate
- Care Bags
- Youth Group
- Trusting God To Change our schools
- Yea, but
- September calendar

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](mailto:fcogrisingsun@gmail.com)

### Pastor's Meditation September 2025

A Happy September to everyone. School is back in session, county fairs are wrapping up, and fall is in the air with Friday Night Lights.

Inspiration for this month's mediation came from perusing my bookshelves, and I stumbled across the book "Exodus" by Leon Uris.

"Exodus" is a historical novel, about the founding of the State of Israel. The book begins with a compressed retelling of the voyages of the 1947 immigration ship Exodus and going through the histories of the 11 characters and the ties of their personal lives to the birth of the new Jewish state. The book was published in 1958 and was the biggest bestseller in the United since 1936 and "Gone with the Wind." "Exodus" is a great read, and I would recommend checking it out.

Otto Preminger directed the 1960 film based on the novel, featuring Paul Newman as main character Ari Ben Canaan. The film focuses mainly on the escape from Cyprus and events in Palestine.

The film was often characterized as a "Zionist epic." The reason is many political commentators of the time saw it as being very influential in getting American support for Israel and the Jewish people. The film also softened the anti-British and anti-Arab sentiment found in the novel, which was big during the time of the rebirth of Israel. Preminger is also charged with downplaying the Arab/Israeli conflict.

One of the biggest complaints and controversies with the film is the ending. The film concludes with the bodies of a young European-Jewish girl and an Arab man, both murder victims, buried in the same grave in what would soon be the nation of Israel. Preminger leaves the conclusion to us. Is this a metaphor for despair, a dream forever buried? Or is it a symbol of hope, as two peoples with a history of hatred and hostilities come together—in death and in life?

At the time I wrote this, I was on Psalm 87 in my yearly reading of the Bible. The sons of Korah, who are credited with writing Psalm 87, I think they would take the latter view of the final scene of "Exodus." They anticipated a peace we are still waiting for. In Psalm 87, they say this about Jerusalem, "Glorious things are said of you, city of God" (87:3). They sang of a day when nations, all with a history of warring against the Jewish people, will come together to acknowledge the one true God: Rahab (Egypt), Babylon, the Philistines, Tyre, Cush (87:4). All will be drawn to Jerusalem, and to God.

The conclusion of Psalm 87 is a celebration. People in Jerusalem will sing, "All my fountains [springs] are in you" (87:7). Who are they singing of? The One who is the Living Water, the Source of all life (John 4:14).

We are living in a time of increased anti-Semitism, along with lots of hostilities between all people. Jesus is the only one who can bring lasting peace and unity. Let us pray for the peace and unity of all people, as they are drawn to Jesus.

# ONE SERVICE

Sunday, September 21, 10 AM

Sunday School at 9am

After Worship  
enjoy a Birthday  
Theme Cookout!

GOOD FOOD, GAMES, AND FELLOWSHIP!



Please bring a covered dish or 2 to share. The Men's Group will be taking care of the meat, the Ladies Group will be handling the condiments. Signup sheets are on the clipboards.

## Kids For Christ

Begins September 10, 5:30-7pm

For Pre-K—12th grade. Please register on line—[risingsungfcog.org](http://risingsungfcog.org) We are in need of a helper for the Drivers and riders for the van are also needed for pick-ups and drop-offs. Please contact Justin Hunt if you would like help this year.



## Annual Congregational Meeting

Will be held on Sunday October 19th.

A light lunch will be served, and the meeting will begin right after the 2nd service.

Annual reports will need to be turned into Church Council Secretary, Becky Chalfin by October 5th for inclusion in the report's booklet.

This is a very important meeting for all to attend, hear and be a part of the business of the church. Election of Officers for 2026 will also take place.

## LAKOTA FOOTBALL TAILGATE

Friday, August 29, and October 3, 5-7pm

Visit The First Church Of God  
Tailgate Tent



SCORE - FREE FOOD,  
Drinks, Give Aways & Fun!

FREE FOOD MENU:

Walking Taco, Sloppy Joe, Pickles, Assorted  
Chips, Cookies, Sweets, Pop & Water

## FCOG Tailgate Partys at Lakota Football Games

By the time of the newsletter circulation the 1st tailgate will be over. Unless you heard otherwise, it went great!

The Second tailgate will be on October 3rd. This is the Homecoming game and again we are hoping for a big crowd like last year.

The menu will be the same as last year for both: Sloppy Joes, Walking Tacos, Assorted chips, Pickles, Assorted Individually wrapped sweet treats (Homemade &/or store bought) Pop & Water. We will also be giving away a gift bag again with candy, FCOG information and other items. We will need donations of the Sweet Treats either homemade (individually wrapped) or store bought, Pop and Water and Monetary donations are the most helpful, SEE CLIPBOARDS for details and donation envelopes.

We will need help manning the Tailgate Tent, serving the community and getting our message out. We are going to need some help loading up all of our stuff at the church and transporting it to and then set up at our tailgate area at the school. If you can help out this this part of the mission, please meet at the church at 3:30pm Friday, October 3rd. Just before kick-off we will break down our tailgate, load it back up and take everything back to the church. Many hands make light work.

During the event we will need help from any/all mission minded First Church of Godder's manning the Tailgate Tent, serving the community and getting our message out.

## Grief After Suicide: Let's Talk About It Because No One Else Wants To.

Seminar will be held on  
Thursday, September 25, 6:00pm - 7:30pm



At Herman-Karlovetz Funeral Homes, 900 North Street, Fremont, Ohio, Please RSVP by September 23. Call 419-332-7391 or use QR code.

## Struggling With Grief?



Grief 101 with Stein Hospice Free bereavement support group where you can find a safe space to explore your grief, engage in discussions, or simply listen to shared experiences related to the loss of an adult loved one.

At Herman-Karlovetz Funeral Homes, 900 North Street, Fremont, Ohio, On October 16, 4-6pm. Please RSVP by October 14. Call 419-332-7391 or use QR code.

## The Forge

We're excited to invite the men of Risingsun First Church of God to the 3rd annual Forge Men's Retreat, taking place September 19-20, 2025 at Camp Otyokwah!

The Forge is more than a getaway—it's a weekend of brotherhood, spiritual renewal, and growth. It's a time for men to unplug from the daily grind, dive into God's Word, and walk away refreshed, challenged, and inspired.

What to Expect:

- Powerful teaching and encouragement from our guest speaker, Mike Smith
- Time for rest, reflection, and adventure
- Meaningful fellowship with other men who are seeking to grow in faith
- A beautiful setting at Camp Otyokwah, designed to help you connect with God and others. Whether you're new to the church or a longtime member, this is a weekend you don't want to miss!

Date: September 19-20, 2025

Location: Camp Otyokwah

Speaker: Mike Smith

Register and find more details

at: [www.glccg.org](http://www.glccg.org)

Let's step into the forge together—to be sharpened, strengthened, and sent out with purpose.

## Safety Team

The Q4 schedule is out. It was sent via the team text threads and is posted in the team locker. If you have a conflict, please try to find a substitute/trade. If you can not please let Tim know.

The KFC Schedule has also been sent out for team members to sign up.

This is VERY important for us to fill. It only requires 1 team member from 5:15pm to 7:00pm on Wednesday nights. To monitor the lobby and make sure no one comes in that shouldn't be there. If all the team members that are available just take 2 or 3 dates it would all be covered.

Please let Tim know what dates you can fill. THANK YOU!

## Yacht Club

Next Men's Breakfast will be on Saturday, Sept. 20, at 8:30am at Tim's house.

## Men's Retreat

The Men's Retreat was awesome. There was great fellowship, fun, relaxing and food!

God's presence blessed us on this weekend and moved powerfully among us.

I think everyone had a great time.

Men mark your calendars, Next years retreat will be the weekend of Sept. 25-27.

Maybe it won't be so darn hot.



## Save the DATE!

Truck or Treat—October 25,  
Details will be coming soon.

## Women's Breakfast Club Dates!

September 13- breakfast @ church, 9am

October 18- Men's Appreciation Tailgate 3.0!

Time will be determined soon and invitations will be out by September 7!

### Care Bags, 2025!

The Women's Breakfast Club will once again prepare care bags for two domestic violence shelters, First Step and The Cocoon and one pregnancy center, Heartbeat Med! Your very generous donations have made this project possible over the last few years! Suggested items are listed on the clipboards, travel size as well as full sized items! A clear storage bin will be located in the overflow room for your donations! Thank you so much!!

## Youth Group

With KFC starting on September 10th, the regular Youth Group meetings will be going on hiatus (barring any special activities that may arise) as of 9/3. Youth Group meetings will resume following the conclusion of KFC next year.

However, since the time is similar and the age brackets are as well, I encourage all of the Youth Group attendees to be a part of KFC!

If you have any questions please contact Justin Hunt.

## Trusting God To Change Our Schools

Keep Watch Prayer is an organization that prays for students and staff each week inside the building, praying for students lockers and classroom doors. Keep Watch serves our school communities in multiple ways: Establishing prayer walks in schools where we are invited to do so Equipping parents and teachers to effectively pray for students Encouraging school personnel through personal prayer when requested engaging the faith community through community-wide events and developing church-school partnerships.

Our mission is to see every school covered in prayer so that the power and presence of God are experienced in our communities. When this happens, our vision will be realized: Our city transformed through winning the war in the spiritual. Lakota has done this for several years at 6:00 a.m. on M., W., & F They need more prayer warriors to lift up Lakota. If interested contact Jeff Adams, Jim or Judy Dieter

## “Yea, but ...”

When addressing questions about Christianity and the Bible, it is important to remember these two things:

Proverbs 18:17 tells us “The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.” It is easy for someone to disagree with and criticize Christianity. It is more difficult and takes time to provide answers to those criticisms. Since it takes time, wisdom, and knowledge to rebuke criticism, always be willing to seek and pursue truth.

The Bible contains descriptions of events that happened while also prescribing how God wants us to live. It is important to know the difference between description and prescription. A description is the telling of an account of something that happened. A prescription is a directive or recommendation of how something should be done. It is important to understand that man sins, which means the transgression of God's law, and the Bible contains many stories of man's transgression. Just because a story in the Bible tells of man's sin, that does not mean God approved that sin.

### Is it OK to celebrate birthdays?

The question of whether Christians should celebrate birthdays has sparked debates, especially on social media, where some videos or articles claim that biblical birthday celebrations were sinful. Let's look at examples of birthday celebrations from the Bible and if God told us not to celebrate them.

I can think of two birthdays celebrated in the Bible. The first being Herod Antipas, who ordered the death of John the Baptist during his birthday celebration [Mark 6:21-29]. The second is the birthday of Pharaoh, who hung the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted [Genesis 40:20-22]. Someone could read these two accounts and conclude birthdays are bad and therefore should not be celebrated. That would be a conclusion based on described events, not a prescription of how God wants us to live. Remember, Herod Antipas and Pharaoh were not Godly rulers, so their actions did not align with God's will. Just because there are ungodly people doing ungodly things, that does not mean God desired those things to happen in that way. God gives us free will, and if we argue that God does not want us to do something that is not addressed in scripture, such as celebrating birthdays, that is an Argument from Silence. An Argument from Silence is a fallacy where a conclusion is determined from the absence of evidence rather than on what the source says. In this case, I cannot find any scripture where God directly or indirectly condemns us celebrating birthdays. If a birthday is celebrated according to God's standards of morality with love and not done out of envy, greed, or pride, (e.g., celebrating with gratitude, avoiding excess consumption or prideful focus of attention, etc.), I do not see a biblical reason against that celebration.

To conclude, is it OK for Christians to celebrate birthdays? Yes, so long as they do so by giving thanks and love to God and loving others.

Robert Theis

# First Church of God September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> Labor Day	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 6pm Bible study 6pm Youth Group	<b>4</b> 9am Bible Study	<b>5</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship Safety Steve & Chris Randy & Alana	<b>8</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 6:30 Council meeting	<b>9</b> 10:30-12:30 LifeWise	<b>10</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 5:30-7pm KFC 7pm Bible study	<b>11</b> 9am Bible Study 10:30-12:30 LifeWise	<b>12</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship Safety Scott & Susan Adam & Jeff	<b>15</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 6:30 Congregational prayer	<b>16</b> 10:30-12:30 LifeWise	<b>17</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 5:30-7pm KFC 7pm Bible study	<b>18</b> 9am Bible Study 10:30-12:30 LifeWise	<b>19</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group Hall rental setup	<b>20</b> Hall rental 8:30 Men's break-fast @ Tim's house
<b>21 ONE SERVICE</b> <b>9AM Sunday School</b> <b>10AM Worship</b> <b>Cookout lunch and fellowship after service</b> Safety Jim D & Tim J	<b>22</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 6:30 Congregational prayer	<b>23</b> 10:30-12:30 LifeWise	<b>24</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 5:30-7pm KFC 7pm Bible study	<b>25</b> 9am Bible Study 10:30-12:30 LifeWise	<b>26</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group	<b>27</b> Hall Rental
<b>28</b> 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship Safety Kent & TJ Mike & Tim W	<b>29</b> 8:30-9:30 walking group 10:30-12:30 LifeWise 6:30 Congregational prayer	<b>30</b> 10:30-12:30 LifeWise				