FIRST CHURCH — OF GOD —

7968 US 23
RISINGSUN, OH

Our Mission:
Bringing Lives Into Focus with Christ

AUGUST 2026
NEWSLETTER

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

Pastor's Meditation

August 2026

Happy August to everyone. Summer vacation is winding down, county fairs are in full swing, school will soon be starting, and football is beginning to fill the air again.

Many of you know I'm a huge fan of college football. I follow Ohio State, Notre Dame, the University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, and plenty of other teams. I love the game itself, but I also love the pageantry, the energy, and the traditions that give each school its own personality.

Of all those traditions, I think the most heartwarming one in college football happens at the University of Iowa. The University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital sits next to Kinnick Stadium, and its upper floors have large windows that look directly over the field.

The "Hawkeye Wave" began in 2017 after Iowa fans shared the idea of taking a moment during each home game to wave to the children and families watching from the hospital. What started as a simple gesture quickly became one of the most meaningful traditions in sports.

On game days, children and their families gather by those windows to watch the game below. Then, at the end of the first quarter, the game pauses in a way that is bigger than football. Coaches, athletes, officials, and more than 70,000 fans turn away from the field and toward the hospital. They wave. For those few moments, the focus shifts from touchdowns and scoreboards to children who are fighting battles most of us cannot fully imagine.

That is what makes the Hawkeye Wave so powerful. A stadium full of people with strength, health, noise, and visibility turns its attention toward those who are vulnerable, hurting, and often hidden from view. In that simple act, we see a picture of what the Bible teaches again and again: those who have strength are called to notice, protect, and care for those who are weak.

The prophet Exekiel rebuked Israel's leaders because they had failed to do exactly that. In Ezekiel 34, God condemns the shepherds of Israel with these words: "You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost." Their sin was not only that they did wrong things; it was that they failed to turn toward the people who needed them most.

How often do personal priorities, leadership habits, or economic concerns keep us looking only at the "field" in front of us while people nearby are hurting? The Hawkeye Wave reminds us to turn our eyes. Ezekiel reminds us why we should do that. God's way is different: the weak are strengthened, the sick are tended, the injured are bound up, the straying are brought back, and the lost are sought. That is not just the work of leaders long ago; it is the calling of God's people today.

Safety Team

The Q3 Safety Team schedule was sent out via the text thread, and a copy has also been posted in our locker. Please remember that if you have a conflict, try to find someone to substitute or trade with you. If you are unable to do so, please let Tim know.

The **2026–2027 KFC Schedule Sign-Up Sheet** is now available on the clipboards. Please sign up for the dates you are able to serve.

Many of the dates have already been filled, but there are still several openings. This ministry season is approaching quickly, and if everyone signs up for just a couple of dates, the entire schedule will be covered in no time. Thank you for serving!

Men's Retreat

Men, mark your calendars! This year's Men's Retreat will be held **September 25–27**.

Details and sign-up sheets are available on the clipboards. This is always a great weekend and a wonderful opportunity to spend time with like-minded men while growing closer to Jesus Christ.

Please sign up by **August 22** so we can provide camp with an accurate attendance count and prepare our menu and supplies.

The cost is **$75 for the entire weekend**, plus one or two food items to share.

If you have any questions, please see Pastor Paul or Tim.

Youth Programs Safety Training

Our annual **Congregational & Youth Programs Safety Training** will be held on **Sunday, August 23**, during the Sunday School hour. The ladies will be hosting a **Pay-to-Eat Breakfast** that morning for everyone to enjoy during the training. This training is important for every member of our congregation so everyone knows what to expect in the event of an emergency during a worship service or church event. It is especially important for anyone who currently serves—or may serve in the future—in any of our children's or youth ministries. Policies, procedures, and expectations will be reviewed, and updated expectation forms will be signed and collected. We encourage everyone to attend.

Lakota Tailgate

The **FCOG Lakota Tailgate** will be held on **Friday, September 11**, during Lakota's first home football game following the start of the school year.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our church family to minister to our community while showing the love of Christ. Additional details will be shared as we get closer to this ministry opportunity.

Pop & Water Donations

A **huge thank you** to everyone who has donated pop and bottled water in the past!

We are once again asking for donations of pop and bottled water. Please bring your donations to the church and place them in the storage/food pantry room located in the south hallway between the lobby and the gym.

These donations were an incredible blessing last year and were used at nearly every ministry and event hosted by our church. From the Lakota Tailgate, Chili Cook-Off, Garage Sale, and Craft Show to many other activities throughout the year, having these beverages readily available was a tremendous help.

Thank you for helping us continue this ministry!

ONE Worship Service & Cook-Out

On **Sunday, September 20**, we will gather for **one combined worship service**, followed by a picnic-style lunch.

Sunday Schedule **Sunday School 9am**

Combined Worship Service at 10am

Hamburgers, hot dogs, bratwurst, and all the fixings will be provided. Pop, bottled water, and ice cream will also be provided. Sign-up sheets will be available on the clipboards for side dishes and desserts.

We hope everyone will plan to join us for a great day of worship, fellowship, and food!

Church Family Lunch Outing

As we prepare for the busy holiday season, we're planning a **Church Family Lunch Outing** so no one has to cook on **Sunday, November 15**.

Immediately following the second worship service, everyone is invited to join the church family for lunch at **Ole Zim's Wagon Shed**.

Sign-up sheets will be available on the clipboards soon. Please sign up so we can make an accurate reservation.

We look forward to enjoying a great meal and wonderful fellowship together!

Rainforest Falls VBS—recap

We praise God for a wonderful week of Rainforest Falls Vacation Bible School! We were blessed to average approximately 63 children each evening as they learned about God through worship, Bible Time, Sticky Scripture, games, Imagination Station science activities, and snacks.

Our daily lessons included:
Day 1: God Is Our Creator (Genesis 1),
Day 2: God Knows Everything (Psalm 139),
Day 3: God Is Our Safe Place (1 Samuel 23–24),
Day 4: God Is Love (Luke 22:39–24:12),
Day 5: God Is Forever (Revelation 7; 21–22)

Thank you to every child, family, and volunteer who helped make this an unforgettable week of growing in God's love. This year, we were blessed to have nearly 50 volunteers serving throughout the week!

We are also grateful for the $440.00 in generous donations received to help support VBS. As our mission project, we collected change to purchase food for the Free Blessing Box. Thanks to your generosity, we raised an additional $281.00! To God be the glory for a fantastic week at Rainforest Falls VBS!

Be sure to watch the daily Spotlight videos on our Facebook page and the VBS recap video on our YouTube channel.

Kids For Christ

Kids for Christ is beginning Wednesday, September 16! This exciting midweek ministry is open to children 4 years old through 12th grade. Dinner will be served for students and staff from 5:30–6:00 p.m., followed by classes from 6:00–7:00 p.m. where students will learn God's truth through engaging Bible lessons and discover practical ways to apply His Word to their everyday lives. Along the way, they'll build lasting friendships and grow in their faith in a fun, encouraging environment. We invite families to register their children on our church website and join us for another great year of learning, growing, and following Christ together!

Elder's Corner

It's been said; "Be an Encourager. The World has plenty of Critics already." That certainly is true. The world we live in, with all the pressures of immediate needs, to the news of each day, it can be enough to discourage anyone. GOD of course knew, that in this life, there would be struggles, that hearts and bones would break, but HE encourages us to remember HIS victory over death and HIS immense, unchanging and unconditional love for us.

Throughout scripture we are encouraged by GOD, as an example of HIS love, that we should also try, as best we can, to emulate and show towards others.

Two verses reveal just a fraction of GOD's steadfast love and encouragement for us.

~ Joshua 1:9~NIV
9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

And the favorite of many;

Philippians 4:13~NIV
13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

These are just two examples of GOD modeling the gift, privilege and responsibility we each have to encourage others. A book the Monday Night Prayer Gathering (Hey, You're ALWAYS invited to join us) is reading through is entitled;"Breakthrough Prayer". This week, we read about "The Gift of Encouraging"

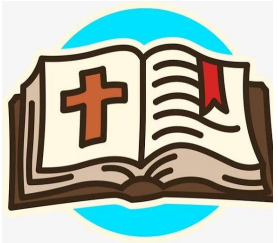
With numerous scripture references we see the many ways, (whether we have that specific gift or not), that we each, can be Genuine ENCOURAGERS of others. Certainly we can encourage others through our WORDS, but let's not neglect our encouragement through LISTENING and just being present. Of course as actions speak so much louder than words, an act of encouragement, might be expressed with as little as a smile, or as much as helping someone with a household chore or bringing a meal they can enjoy. There are a MYRIAD of possibilities! And finally, we are guided to MUTUALLY ENCOURAGE each other through our FAITH, through Intercessory PRAYER for others and through WORSHIPPING Together.

These ideas are not my own. Check out GOD's WORD!

1 Thessalonians 5:11~NIV
11 "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

Romans 1:12~NIV
12 ..."that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith."

YES, it's a Privilege and OUR Responsibility to ENCOURAGE others, through our WORDS, ACTIONS, PRAYERS and WORSHIP.



#keepthefaith

And just in case you don't want to take my words for it, here's more Encouragement from GOD's WORD.

Ephesians 4:29/ Hebrews 10:24-25/Galatians 6:2/ Titus 1:9/Romans 12:6-8/Proverbs 16:24

His/Hers by Robert & Tonya Theis

Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)
6 - Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

HIS

I love how scripture can be layered, and Proverbs 22:6 is a passage that can have a deeper meaning the more we dive into all of scripture. Here is my thought process as I dive into a passage like Proverbs 22:6 -
The mention of "in the way he should go" leaves me thinking of each child's personality. Each child learns differently, so we must be mindful of that and teach them in a way that allows them to learn.
"Even when he is old, he will not depart from it." This can bring security to a parent or teacher. When you raise up your child right, they will remain on the correct path!
Teach the child to be good, he will grow up to be good.
While all of this can sound good on the surface, is that what Proverbs 22:6 is telling us? The above could lead to a parent or child using the phrase, "follow your heart," but what does scripture tell us about our heart? Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" That gives a whole different meaning to the phrase, "follow your heart." With that context, we can see Proverbs 22:6 as a warning. Another way of translating "in the way" is "in his way," and if we allow children, or ourselves, to dictate the proper way, we will come up short every time.
Now, let's look at Isaiah. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." When reading Proverbs 22:6 in context of other scripture, I understand it as the following:
Caution – a child who is trained up in their own way will not depart from it, meaning "follow your heart" leads to wickedness.
With that warning of caution, we can see this passage pointing us to "in His way," or "in God's way" as a better way to raise our children. When we rely on our own hearts, our own thoughts, and our own ways, we see from scripture we will fall short.
Instead, rely on God's Word and God's way. Read Proverbs 22:6 as a warning not to raise your children up according to the world but raise them up according to God. Also, read the end as a reminder to remain faithful and go to God daily. "He will not depart from it" is in reference to living a life in our own sin, but God tells us to turn from our sin and go to Him daily. This serves as another reminder to not only raise our kids according to God, but we must also live our lives according to God. Do not be a hypocrite, telling kids to live one way while living your life the opposite. We all have free will and it is God who saves, but when it comes to your household and raising children, do so according to Joshua 24:15, "but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

HERS

Well, we made it to the start of another school year. You are probably searching for school supply bargains, finding the best clothes for your kids, and helping your children prepare for a new school year. I bet you are also preparing to celebrate the new quiet that will soon be around the house.
It is important, though, to make sure that the first voice your kids hear about morals and personal beliefs comes from home. It has become common for kids to learn about the world and manners from their teachers. While teachers are great resources who can supplement what children learn about morals and manners, kids spend most of their time at home.
It is also important to realize that everyone has different spiritual and moral beliefs. Proverbs 22:6 explains that it is a parent's responsibility to teach their children their beliefs and raise them to be good people. What you may think is common sense, or what your kids may have heard in church their whole lives, may not be supported in their classrooms.
It is important to have the conversations that help them bridge those differences. It can be very hard for kids to understand the differences in beliefs and know what to do with the controversies they will encounter outside of the home. So, it is important for parents to be there to guide them, prepare them, and talk them through these times.
Just remember, school is not a scary place to send your kids. We just need to make sure they are prepared to deal with different ideas and opinions. If you are able to guide them through this process, they will be better prepared to stay strong in their Christian faith while living in a diverse community.

God bless.

First Church of God

Bringing Lives Into Focus With Christ

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2 8:15am - Worship Service 9:30–9:45 Coffee/donut time 9:45am - Sunday School 10:45am - Worship service 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	3 8:30am - walking in the gym 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	4 12:30pm - speech therapy and	5 8:30am - Walking 5:30pm - Sign Language 6pm - Bible Study 6pm - Youth Group	6 9am - Bible Study	7 8:30am - Walking group	8 9am - Women's breakfast and decorating jars
9 8:15am - Worship Service 9:30–9:45 Coffee/donut time 9:45am - Sunday School 10:45am - Worship service 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	10 8:30am - walking in the gym 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	11 12:30pm - speech therapy and	12 8:30am - Walking 5:30pm - Sign Language 6pm - Bible Study 6pm - Youth Group	13 9am - Bible Study	14 8:30am - Walking group 6pm - Read through the Bible	15
16 8:15am - Worship Service 9:30–9:45 Coffee/donut time 9:45am - Sunday School 10:45am - Worship service 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	17 8:30am - walking in the gym 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	18 12:30pm - speech therapy and	19 8:30am - Walking 5:30pm - Sign Language 6pm - Bible Study 6pm - Youth Group	20 9am - Bible Study	21 8:30am - Walking group	22 2pm - Youth Group movie
23 8:15am - Worship Service 9:30–10:30 Pay to Eat / Safety Training 10:45am - Worship service 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	24 8:30am - walking in the gym 6:30pm - Congregational Prayer	25 12:30pm - speech therapy and	26 8:30am - Walking 5:30pm - Sign Language 6pm - Bible Study 6pm - Youth Group	27 9am - Bible Study	28 8:30am - Walking group	29
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