# FIRST CHURCH — OF GOD —

7968 US 23
RISINGSUN, OH

## JULY 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. Susie's email address is fcogrisingsun@gmail.com

# Pastor's Meditation

## *July 2026*

Randy Pausch, a Carnegie Mellon professor, learned in 2006 that he had pancreatic cancer. A year later, at just 47, he was told he had only "three to six months of good health left."

On September 18, 2007, Pausch returned to Carnegie Mellon to give what became known as "The Last Lecture: Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams." He expected a modest crowd; the auditorium was packed. For one hour, he spoke with humor, honesty, and hope—not so much about dying, but about how to live. That may be why his words touched so many people. When life becomes short, what matters most becomes clearer. We stop pretending we have forever, and we begin to see the gift of today.

The apostle Paul had that same clarity near the end of his life. In 2 Timothy 4:6-7, he writes, "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Paul writes to Timothy, a young leader in the church, but his words still speak to us. His confidence does not come from comfort or control, but from grace. He knows his life belongs to God. That kind of faith gives courage to the dying—and direction to the living.

My hope and prayer is that we will live with that same clear perspective. Being ready to die does not mean we are eager to leave this world; it means we are free to live faithfully in it. We can cherish what matters, release what does not, and give ourselves fully to the life God has placed before us.

**Our mission:**

*"Bringing Lives Into Focus With Christ"*

# RAINFOREST FALLS

EXPLORE THE NATURE OF GOD!

**July 19–23**

**• 6:00–8:15 PM •**

**Explore the Nature of God!**

**KIDS WILL ENJOY:**

- Hands-on science experiments
- Team-building games
- Unforgettable worship songs
- Delicious snacks
- Fun crafts and activities

At Rainforest Falls, kids will discover who God is through exciting Bible adventures! Every evening is filled with memorable Bible-learning experiences that children can see, hear, and touch.

**Most importantly, they'll learn how to recognize God's presence and love in everyday life.**

**REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN TODAY!**

Visit the church website for registration information.

F.C.O.G. Safety Team

## SAFETY TEAM UPDATES

### Quarterly Schedule

The 3rd Quarter Safety Team schedule has been sent via the text thread and is also posted in the Safety Team locker.

### If You Have a Scheduling Conflict

- Please arrange a substitute or trade shifts.
- If you are unable to find coverage, notify Tim as soon as possible.

### KFC Safety Schedule

The 2026–2027 KFC Safety Schedule will be available in July. Please sign up for the dates you are available.

### VBS Safety Team

Thank you to everyone who volunteered! All VBS Safety Team positions have been filled.

**If you cannot work your assigned shift, please find a replacement or notify Tim. Having two Safety Team members on duty each evening is essential to help ensure everyone's safety both inside and outside the building.**

## CHURCH WORKDAY

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Church/Yacht Club Workday!

Although we had fewer volunteers than usual, an incredible amount of work was completed.

Your willingness to serve helps keep our facilities beautiful, functional, and welcoming for every ministry that takes place here.

**WE APPRECIATE EACH OF YOU!**

## MEN'S RETREAT

**September 25–27**

**Men, mark your calendars!**

Additional information and registration sheets will be available in July.

# CONGREGATIONAL & YOUTH SAFETY TRAINING

## Sunday, August 23

Our annual Safety Training will take place during the Sunday School hour.

### PAY-TO-EAT BREAKFAST

The ladies will be serving a Pay-to-Eat Breakfast during the training.

This training is important for our entire church family and especially for everyone serving in youth ministries.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✔ Emergency procedures
- ✔ Church safety policies
- ✔ Ministry expectations
- ✔ Updated forms and signatures

Thank you for helping us provide a safe environment for everyone.

# LAKOTA FOOTBALL ★ TAILGATE ★

## Friday, September 11

Join us for our annual First Church of God Tailgate before Lakota's first home football game.

This ministry provides a wonderful opportunity to connect with our community while sharing food, fellowship, and the love of Christ.

***More information will be announced as the date approaches.***

# POP & WATER DONATIONS NEEDED

We are once again collecting:

- Bottled Water
- Pop

Please place donations in the Storage/Food Pantry Room located in the south hallway between the lobby and the gym.

**DONATIONS SUPPORT:**

- Tailgate
- Chili Cook-Off
- Garage Sale
- Craft Show
- VBS
- Many additional outreach events

*Your generosity helps us serve our community well.*

# CAMP OTYOKWAH 2026

Kids love receiving mail while they're away at camp!

### SEND MAIL TO:

Camp Otyokwah
(Child's Name)
3380 Tugend Road
Butler, OH 44822

### CAMPERS

| CAMPER | CAMP | DATES |
|---|---|---|
| Reese Sanchez Mortne | Junior 2 | July 5–10 |
| Kennedy Carter | Junior 2 | July 5–10 |
| Liam Wegman | Junior 2 | July 5–10 |
| Allison Harmon | Junior 2 | July 5–10 |
| Walker Wilson | Junior 2 | July 5–10 |
| Zeke Nusser | Junior 2 | July 5–10 |
| Hank Nusser | Jr. High 2 | July 12–17 |

# WOMEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

**July**
There will be NO Breakfast Club in July.

**August 8**
9:00 AM at the church

**August 23**
Pay-to-Eat Breakfast during the annual Safety Training.

Come enjoy breakfast while supporting our Safety Team and spending time together as a church family!

# CARE BAG COLLECTION

Beginning June 28, donation information will be available on the church clipboards.

Donations may be placed in the collection bin located in the overflow room.

The ladies will assemble the care bags this fall.
These gifts will bless people we may never meet—but God knows every recipient.

***Thank You For Helping Us Share Christ's Love!***

# MEN'S APPRECIATION EVENT

Please note that this year's Men's Appreciation Dinner will not be held in the fall.

A new date shortly after the first of the year will be announced in the August Newsletter.

***We Look Forward to Celebrating the Men of Our Church Then!***

## Scripture Reading:

Psalm 133:1 – "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"

Additional Scripture:

2 Chronicles 7:14 – "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

## HIS:

This month, my wife chose a passage from Psalm 133 and one from 2 Chronicles. With the upcoming holiday, July 4, Independence Day, I think she chose those passages to emphasize the importance of working together, serving God, and healing our nation. It leaves me wondering if she'll write a "feel good" devotion, or address issues from not having unity. Those two passages leave me thinking about both.

Psalm 133 starts off by addressing how good and important it is for a nation and its people to dwell in unity. It goes on to relate beard oil and dew to God's provision and presence, describing the blessings of coming together. The unity spoken about is only possible when we put God first. When we do not put God first, we do what is right in our own eyes, and that brings strife and division. Psalm 133 is a reminder that we live in a fallen world, but when we come together, dwell in unity with God and with one another, peace can be found.

Peace, true peace, can only be found in God.

The passage chosen from 2 Chronicles leaves me thinking about two things: God's grace is sufficient and when we humble ourselves, repent, and believe, He is faithful to forgive and heal us, but it also leaves me thinking, "Is God blessing our nation?" America! The USA is the greatest country in the world (IMO) and I love being a citizen of this country. I love seeing events like the White House UFC Freedom 250 event, I love seeing sports players pray and use Scripture to counter Pride, and I love seeing politicians humble themselves and give thanks to God. While all that can be good to see, it serves as a reminder to remain humble. We need to remember that God works all things according to His will and His glory, including the wicked things we do!

This does not mean God is the author of evil and sin, but it does mean that God is sovereign and He uses all things for His glory and His redemptive plan. When I see our nation and its people do something "good," it is easy to think God might be blessing our nation. I then remember the wicked things we do and permit, and how important it is to keep our focus on God. We can enjoy the blessings God provides, but we must do so with humility while fighting against sin and letting people know there is forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

## HER:

It has been amazing these last two weeks since the World Cup has come to America. People from countries all over the world have been making social media posts about how America is amazing and that they do not understand why Americans and the media are always talking bad about our country. One person even said that if we stop talking about the same political issues on social media the world could see the greatness our country has to offer.

This is what I found important to write about today. I am a proud American. I love this land. We have been given a great gift of religious freedom, constitutional rights, voting rights, and food/homes/education that only the best civilizations can boast. The protection and ability to prosper have been afforded to us because we have been founded on Christian principles and God's guidance and His blessings because of our dedication to keeping Him first.

However, we have fallen away from the principles that the founders intended for the country. This has helped create distrust and hate among our countrymen. Christians have always been persecuted, but lately, it has become evident in our country and other first-world countries. Even the MLB controversy where Christians who have written a verse about Genesis on their hat is a prime example. It doesn't matter if you agree with their actions or convictions. When other religions get privileges not afforded to Christians, a slippery slope is created. If we are not careful, we could end up in trouble politically like other countries around the world. Even in some other first-world countries, you are not allowed to post on social media about Christian perspectives, pray in public, or have religious signs on your property. These restrictions are not afforded to non-Christian beliefs.

However, according to the Scripture above, God is telling us that it is okay that we do not always agree with each other, but we need to respect each other and work together for the glory of God. This does not mean that we lay down and let people run over us; but rather, we show compassion and respect for all. This of course means that others who are not Christians need to respect us also. It is time for us to not let our country forget and marginalize us. If we want this country to continue to be "a nation under God," we need to make sure we put God first in a loving, unapologetic, purposeful way. Only if we make it a priority to work with others while prioritizing God, we can keep America as the best country in the world.

To conclude, as a country we need to come together and stop dividing the country. We need to keep God the focus and work together in a loving way. God asks us to put away our petty differences and work together for the good of all.

## Reflection Questions:

- Is there someone I need to forgive or reconcile with?
- How can I contribute to unity in my church, community, and nation?
- Am I seeking God's glory above my personal preferences and opinions?

God bless.

# FIRST CHURCH OF GOD

# JULY 2026

*"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord." Psalm 150:6*

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 29 | 30 | **1**<br>8:30am - Walking | **2** | **3**<br>8:30am - Walking group | **4** |
| **5**<br>8:15am - Worship Service<br>9:30am - 9:30-9:45<br>9:45am - Sunday School<br>10:45am - Worship service | **6**<br>8:30am - walking in the gym<br>6:30pm - Congregational | **7**<br>12:30pm - speech therapy and | **8**<br>8:30am - Walking<br>5:30pm - Sign Language<br>6pm - Bible Study<br>6pm - Youth Group | **9**<br>9am - Bible Study | **10**<br>8:30am - Walking group | **11**<br>Neeb Lobby rental |
| **12**<br>8:15am - Worship Service<br>9:30am - 9:30-9:45<br>9:45am - Sunday School<br>10:45am - Worship service<br>5pm - 4-H | **13**<br>8:30am - walking in the gym<br>6:30pm - Council Meeting | **14**<br>12:30pm - speech therapy and | **15**<br>8:30am - Walking<br>5:30pm - Sign Language<br>6pm - Bible Study<br>6pm - Youth Group | **16**<br>9am - Bible Study | **17**<br>8:30am - Walking group | **18** |
| **19**<br>8:15am - Worship Service<br>9:30am - 9:30-9:45<br>9:45am - Sunday School<br>10:45am - Worship service<br>6pm - VBS | **20**<br>8:30am - walking in the gym<br>6pm - VBS | **21**<br>12:30pm - speech therapy and<br>6pm - VBS | **22**<br>8:30am - Walking<br>6pm - VBS | **23**<br>9am - Bible Study<br>6pm - VBS | **24**<br>8:30am - Walking group<br>6pm - VBS | **25** |
| **26**<br>8:15am - Worship Service<br>9:30am - 9:30-9:45<br>9:45am - Sunday School<br>10:45am - Worship service | **27**<br>8:30am - walking in the gym<br>6:30pm - Congregational | **28**<br>12:30pm - speech therapy and | **29**<br>8:30am - Walking<br>5:30pm - Sign Language<br>6pm - Bible Study<br>6pm - Youth Group | **30**<br>9am - Bible Study | **31**<br>8:30am - Walking group | 1 |

VBS (Rainforest Falls) • July 19–23 • 6:00–8:15 PM

*"Bringing Lives Into Focus With Christ"*