First Church of God
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Pastor Paul J Rutledge

NOVEMBER 2024
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 November 2024

Happy November to everyone. Fall and Thanksgiving is in the air.

For this month's meditation, I want to write about James Ward. James Ward is a freelance writer, who first came to prominence in 2009 with a blog that talked about his fascination with "small unimportant things." The blog is titled, "I Like Boring Things," & that's exactly what it's about, boring things.

In 2010 Ward launched a conference called the "Boring Conference." It's a one-day celebration of the mundane, the ordinary, and the overlooked. In the past, speakers have addressed seemingly meaningless topics like sneezing, sounds that vending machines make, and inkjet printers of 1999. James Ward knows the topics may be boring, but the speakers can take a mundane subject and make it interesting, meaningful, and even joyful. Ward regularly gives talks on the minutiae of everyday life, the nature of boredom and the joys of stationery.

In 2010, Ward co-founded the Stationery Club, a regular gathering where people would meet in a pub to discuss which pen they were using at the moment.

Several millennia ago, King Solomon, the wisest king who ever lived, launched his own search for joy in the meaningless and mundane. He wrote about it in a blog called Ecclesiastes.

Solomon pursued work, bought flocks, built wealth, acquired singers, and constructed buildings (Ecclesiastes 2:4–9). Some of these pursuits were honorable and some were not. Ultimately, in his pursuit of meaning, Solomon found nothing but boredom (2:11). Solomon maintained a worldview that didn't press the human experience to include God. Ultimately, Solomon realized that he'd find joy in the mundane only when he remembered and worshiped God (12:1–7).

When we find ourselves in the whirlwind of monotony, let's launch our own daily Boring Conference, as we "remember our Creator" (12:1), the God who fills the mundane with meaning. As we remember and worship God, we'll find wonder in the ordinary, gratitude in the mundane, and joy in the seemingly meaningless things of life.

God, take the unremarkable moments of my life and infuse them with Your joy and wonder.

Trunk or Treat

Thank you to everyone who decorated a trunk and/or table, a fun time was had by all. We had a lot of children and adults come into our church for this event. God also blessed us with beautiful weather! Thank you to everyone who bought cider, milk, donuts and candy. And a special thank you to the kitchen help.

WOW! WOW! WOW!! THANK YOU, ALL!!

The Women's Breakfast Club assembled the "care bags" on 10/26 and they have been delivered! The breakdown is as follows:
46 bags and 5 packages of diapers to First Step, in Fostoria; 15 bags (9 for babies/kids, 6 for women) and 8 packages of diapers for Heartbeat Hope pregnancy center, also in Fostoria; 4 large boxes of diapers and 63 large size items (shampoos, conditioners, lotions, body washes, bar soaps, toothpastes, etc.) for the Cocoon in Bowling Green! That's about 25 more bags over last year and the first time we've given diapers! All of this was made possible by all of YOU and your amazing generosity in donations!
Thanks to each and every one of you and thanks to our good Lord!! Until next year…!

—> November 16! Men's Appreciation Lunch!

Please remember to turn in RSVP's by 11/3! You won't want to miss a fun day of food, fellowship and football! Lunch will be served at 12 noon! Hope to see all of you great guys!!

Women's Breakfast Club!

December 7- breakfast @ church, 9am!

Yacht Club

The next Men's Breakfast will be Saturday, November 23, at 8:30 am at Tim James' house.
Please come and join us for food and fellowship!

Safety Team

Please make sure you check the worship service and KFC schedule which is scheduled through the end of the year and has been posted in our locker and sent out via our text thread. If you have a conflicts for Sunday morning worship or Wednesday evening for KFC please try to find a replacement/trade with another team member and if you can't let Tim know.
If you haven't learned how to use the camera system yet, please get with Tim, Brad, TJ, Jeff, or Paul and they can show you how it works. It's easy and a great tool THANKS for all you do!

Christmas Decorating

Pre-decorating the church for Christmas will take place on Sunday November 24, during the Sunday School hour. This effort is to prep the church for the Hanging of the Greens service later that night and is headed up by the GAB (Tim's) Sunday School Class and assisted by Pastor Paul's class BUT everyone is invited and encouraged to help. *Many hands make light work,* if we have lots of help, we can get it all done in this 1 hour except for the decorations used as part of the service, and this includes the nativity out front of the church.

Hanging of the Greens:

Sunday, November 24, Carry in dinner at 5pm, service starts around 5:45ish. Please bring a dish to share & come and enjoy a great night of family fun.

Congregational Meeting

Thanks to everyone that attended and participated in the congregational meeting. The attendance was great, and we accomplished a lot. A HUGE thank you to all of those Council members who's term is expiring in January, your service was awesome and your church family appreciates it!
A HUGE thank you to all of those members that will be joining Council in January. Your service is much needed, and we appreciate your willingness to volunteer your time and talents! We are still in need of 1 or 2 Trustees and 1 Christian Education position. These are VERY important positions that really need to be filled. If the Lord is or has spoken to your heart about filling one of these positions, please see Tim James or Pastor Paul.
Your Church Council thanks you for your support in the not so glamorous "business" part of running the church.
Election Results: President: Tim James. Secretary: Becky Chalfin. Treasure: Brenda Creeger. Elders: Jim Dieter, Randy Endinger, Judy Dieter, Shirley Smith. Deacons: Amy Miller, Cindy Burnett, Marlene Graber, Kent Chalfin, Bobbi Edinger, and Heidi Miller. Christian Ed Director: Justin Hunt. Missions secretary: Susan Bloemer. Trustees: Sandy Stephenson, & Brad Bloemer.

Holiday Auction—November 10, 1pm-?

At St Mary Church Hall, 865 State Rt. 635, Helena, OH. Free refreshments, door prizes, 50/50 raffle. Proceeds go to St. Mary Rosary Altar Society.

Spaghetti Dinner— November 10, 11:30-1:30

At Gibsonburg Community Church, 795 W. Madison Street. Dine in or Carry Out. Meal includes: Homemade spaghetti sauce, with meatballs, vegetable, breadstick, and brownie. $10 adults, $8.00 for Seniors/children under 10.

Operation Christmas Child

Your shoebox represents more than smiles and laughter; they become Gospel opportunities to share the love of Jesus with children and their families around the world. You can help by filling an empty shoe box (standard size) or a small plastic container. We will also have the Operation Christmas Child boxes in the narthex. Determine whether your gift will be for a boy or a girl, and the child's age category: 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14. Fill the box with a variety of gifts that will bring joy to a child. Gift suggestions: pens, pencils and sharpeners, crayons or markers, stamps, and ink pad sets, writing pads or paper, coloring and picture books, small cars, balls, dolls, stuffed animals, yo-yo's, socks, sunglasses etc… Bring your filled shoe box into church by November 17th and fill out a shoe box envelope and tape the label to the box. (The shipping fee will be generosity donated by the funds that will be received from the Craft show lunch stand) If you have any questions please contact Dolly Harmon

Festival of Giving

On Sunday, November 24, our church will be celebrating the annual Festival of Giving. This is a celebration that has been going on for over 75 years at the First Church of God. It is a time of praising and thanking God for how he has blessed us this past year as a church and as individuals. We celebrate by giving to the church and helping those who are less fortunate. In reflecting on this past year, we can see that God has given us abundantly. Our church family has been greatly blessed with growth. As we look at our lives, we have been blessed with health, family, & stability. As we celebrate the Festival of Giving on November 24, please bring food items and/or a financial gift. The food items will be donated to the free food pantry box. The Board of Deacons will use your Festival of Giving monetary gifts towards the purchase of the new pew cushions, Camp Otyokwah fees, or fixing or replacing the church bus. If you would like your gift to go to another area of ministry within the church, or to the General Fund, please specify on your offering envelope. If your financial support is for God's Storehouse please make out your check to "God's Storehouse" and mail it to St. James Lutheran Church, 451 Caldwell St, Bradner, OH 43406

As Thanksgiving approaches, we hear the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 "In everything give thanks, because it is God's will in Christ Jesus that you do this." By participating in the Festival of Giving, in a small way as a church body, we are giving thanks to our God. The Deacons at the First Church of God thank you for your love and support of the church and its ministries, and May God richly bless you and yours this holiday season.
Yours in Christ, The Deacons

God's Storehouse

at St. James Lutheran Church, Bradner, OH
Is collecting food for the Christmas baskets. They expect to make 70 baskets. Food donations are needed by December 2, the recipients will pickup the food on December 16. Their needs are ketchup, mustard, tuna, elbow macaroni, canned pasta, noodles, instant potatoes, canned chicken, soup, hamburger helper, saltines, cake mix and frosting, cereal, peas, fruit, bar soap, toothpaste, body wash, liquid hand soap, dish soap, and Kleenex. Donations may be dropped off at St. James Lutheran Church, on the corner of Caldwell and Timmons Street in Bradner. Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. If you are interested in joining our organization, you may call 419-288-2114. Please continue to pray for this ministry.

Letter from Jessi

¡Hola!
We had another fantastic couple of weeks! Here is a brief recap of the things we did:
Continued working on the church by finishing the floor and adding blocks to build a wall.
After running out of materials at the church, we started helping out a young woman put a fence around her home. So much digging!
Took a spontaneous group trip to the pizzeria in Bribri.
A young man has been living with us because he was kicked out of his own home due to a drug/alcohol addiction. He has really turned things around and even came to church with us for the first time in years. We have had a few talks about it, and I'm excited to see how he continues to grow and change his life around.
Celebrated my host brother's 25th birthday.
Went to the river a few times to swim.
Had a fire, some s'mores and a dance competition! Such a fun night sharing stories around the fire and laughing at our dance moves.
Visited with my host mom from last year and she made me a banana smoothie.
The girls played soccer in a church activity. We sadly lost our first game, but it was so much fun!
Cooked hamburgers and French fries for dinner for the whole family and they loved it!
We have done some work at our family's farm outside of our service projects. We cut down dead trees to clear out an area to plant new ones. We cut down bushels of plátanos and carried them to the street for

our host brothers to sell. They are teaching us so much about plantain farming!

I'd love to share three life lessons that I have learned so far since leading this trip.

The first piece of advice I learned from Victor. One of the things he always stresses to me is that to him, it's not the mistakes that bother him. It's the way the mistakes get addressed and if there is any change after. It bothers him when people don't want to try and do better for themselves or others. That shows more of their character than the initial mistake does. In some ways, I can see the teachings of Jesus in this advice. It reminds me of Nicodemus asking how to get to heaven. And Jesus says you have to be born again. It's not that you have done everything right and followed every law to a T. He cares about our hearts being made new in Christ. That's how we get to heaven. So for me, I'm learning that it's ok when mistakes happen. Run to the father, ask him what you can do better, and then find it in your heart to make the change.

The second life lesson is that unity comes from sharing. Here in Costa Rica, the indigenous are very observant. They can tell even when our emotions are off by the slightest. And they have true genuine concern for each other. There was a day that our team went to work building the church and the whole atmosphere was different than in the weeks before. Nobody was joking and laughing together. One team member that normally dances a lot, was not dancing. There was a lot of grumbling with the tasks we had to do. And this is not the way we had been working together before. Well, it was very noticeable to Victor and his sons. So they asked us after we walked back to the house. "¿Que paso?" Which means "what happened?" And to us, we were like it was just another day of work. Some of us were feeling tired or burnt out but really it's no big deal to us. But to them it was. They were concerned for us. They wanted us to share with them what's going on inside too because it was affecting our outside. Nobody really wanted to share the honest truth. But that's the thing, they couldn't read our minds. They can read our actions and body language well but they can't read the way we feel inside. For the locals here, they are accustomed to sharing that kind of stuff with others. Just the same as sharing a Coca on a hot day. After we hashed that out, they brought up the point that we are a team. If one member has a negative attitude, it will bring down the attitude of the rest of the team. Or their version is one bad orange in a sack of oranges with ruin the whole sack. So the point of all this is to say that the only one that knows what goes inside your head and heart is you and God. While you can keep it that way, it's pretty clear that God designed humanity to function together.

"The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.""
Genesis 2:18

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:" Ecclesiastes 4:9

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had." Acts 4:32

That's where we are to come in and support one another. To pick up another when they fall or we walk through that hard stuff together. God can use each of us to help each other out and we can become more unified through that. And for these ticans, they seem to understand the importance of checking in on one another and having genuine concern for others around you. Sharing in the good and the bad together.

The last lesson I learned and would like to share is something I learned from my host mom. It's that everything we possess is a blessing. She told me once that everything in our house is a blessing in her eyes. That she is not worthy of any of it but yet God blessed them with it all. That at the end of the day they are just things and so when someone comes by and she can help them by giving one of the items in her house she has been blessed with, she does. She takes care of this house and stewards the blessings she has received so well. Because although we may not live here in what the world says is luxury, it's luxury when you see the simple things around you are blessings.

I thought to myself as she shared all this that wow, I can only imagine if we would look around ourselves and see the things we have as blessings. In all reality, we aren't taking any of this stuff with us when we die. But also, God sees how we treat things and the way we are with everything we have. Are we thanking God for it or cursing him? Are we stewarding our things as though they are gifted to us by our Heavenly Father or earned on our own strength? It's a lot to think about but I think it's worth a second to evaluate our own lives a bit. That's all I have for now. The team has been growing so much and learning so much. This community has become more and more like home each day.

Bendiciones, Jessica Davies

First Church of God November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Safety 11-3 Scott & Steve Adam & Mike 11-10 Brad & Kent Brittney & Sandy 11-17 Tim J. & Chris Alana & Nicole 11-24 TJ & Jim D. Pam & Justin					**1 Craft show setup**	**2** **9-4 Craft Show**
3 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship	**4** 8:30-9:30 walking group 9am Funeral 6:30 Congregational prayer	**5**	**6** 8:30-9:30 walking group 5:30-7 Kids For Christ 7pm Bible study Safety– Steve E.	**7**	**8** 8:30-9:30 walking group	**9 8:30 Davidson Hall rental**
10 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship	**11** 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30 Council meeting	**12**	**13** 8:30-9:30 walking group 5:30-7 Kids For Christ 7pm Bible study Safety– Kent C.	**14**	**15** 8:30-9:30 walking group	**16 Men' Appreciation lunch**
17 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship	**18** 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30 Congregational prayer	**19**	**20** 8:30-9:30 walking group 5:30-7 Kids For Christ 7pm Bible study Safety– Jim D.	**21**	**22** 8:30-9:30 walking group	**23**
24 8:15am Worship 9:30am donuts/coffee 9:45am Sunday school 10:45am Worship -Christmas decoration prep **5pm Hanging of the Greens**	**25** 8:30-9:30 walking group 6:30 Congregational prayer	**26**	**27** 8:30-9:30 walking group	**28** **Happy Thanksgiving**	**29** 8:30-9:30 walking group	**30**