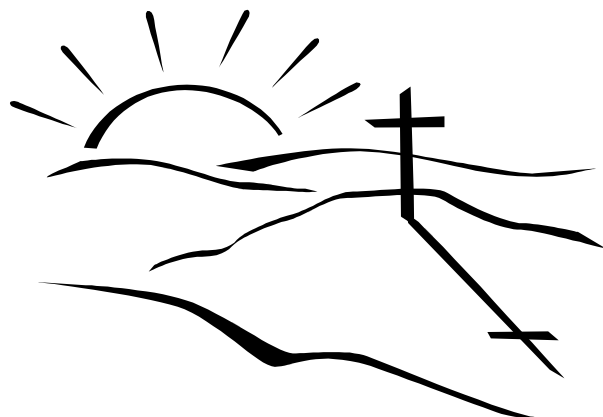




INFO



Words From The Path.

By Pastor Ben Murphy

Maundy
Thursday
Service
April 9th,
6:00 p.m.

Sunrise
Service
April 12th,
6:00 a.m.

Easter
Pageant
April 12th,
11 a.m.
(No PM Service)

I have to share a great little baseball story with you. A man walks into a bar with a dog. The bartender says, "You can't bring that dog in here." "You don't understand," says the man. "This is no regular dog, he can talk." "Listen, pal," says the bartender. "If that dog can talk, I'll give you a hundred bucks." The man puts the dog on a stool, and asks him, "What's on top of a house?" "Roof!" "Right. And what's on the outside of a tree?" "Bark!" "And who's the greatest baseball player of all time?" "Ruth!" "I guess you've heard enough," says the man. "I'll take the hundred in twenties." The bartender is furious. "Listen, pal," he says, "get out of here before I belt you." As soon as they're on the street, the dog turns to the man and says, "Maybe I should have said DiMaggio!"

The story reminds me that it's that time of year again. Spring is in the air, (even though I think it will snow at least one more time before May.) Spring means, robins singing, children playing out of doors, (at least, they did, *back in the day!*) lawns being mowed and baseball, the greatest sport of all time

(at least it was, *back in the day!*) returns to parks and our TV screens all over America.

My earliest remembrance of baseball was in 1950's. My family lived in a one room apartment in St. Louis, Missouri above a "Mom & Pop" grocery store. One day dad bought me a pack of baseball cards. I didn't really understand the meaning of these cards. I knew nothing about the characters whose faces were printed on, and actually painted on the little piece of cardboard. (*Back in the day* the picture was a painting, not an actual photograph.) This was a new experience for a small kid. But a new era was born in my life. Enjoying the game of baseball and collecting baseball cards has been a life-long passion for me, and it all began, *back in the day!*

Speaking of baseball, let me share a little baseball story with you. You ladies may not care much for baseball, but stick around for the "last inning" of this little story. If you read it though,

you won't be disappointed.

The Organic Produce Little League team was taking pre-game batting practice. A few stars were smacking the ball hard, but most of the kids were missing the ball continually. After a bit, an old man in brown suit pants put his fingers through the chain links of the backstop. He looked eighty, though his shoes looked only half that. "How many of you kids want to hit the ball better?" he asked. The better players laughed. What did an old man know about hitting? But a handful of the lesser players tentatively put their hands up. They were willing to try anything. "Listen up," the old man said. His hands trembled until they fastened around an aluminum bat. Suddenly they seemed strong. His eyes were red, and his complexion was mottled with a stubble of white whiskers on his chin. "You get three strikes," he said. "Each one's different. Each strike, will change who you are." The kids squinted. (1) "The first pitch is, we'll call it, your rookie pitch. The

"Words" cont'd on pg. 3

Newsletter

Articles or information to be published in the Newsletter are due by the third Sunday of the month. Please submit to the church office.

Singers and Musicians

If you are on the monthly music schedule to sing and find you cannot do so, it is your responsibility to find a replacement. Please notify the church office of such a change. Our thanks to each of you who serve.

—The Ministries & Programming Council

Don't Miss This. . .



Easter Party
And
Egg Hunt
April 11th
1:00 p.m.



Easter Pageant Rehearsal

Sat. April 11th
5:00 p.m.
Dress Rehearsal



April 12th
at
6:00 a.m.



The Easter Pageant will be presented on Easter Morning at 11 a.m.
Everyone Welcome!

And the Winner is...
The Sunday School winner for the month of February was Billy Kilgore .
Congratulations Billy!
(No Photo Available)

Bible Quiz

When There Is A Death In The Family
If there is a death in your immediate family, (Parent, Sibling, Spouse, Child,) or in the family of a church member, please notify a member of the Benevolence Committee (listed below) so the church may send flowers and for food preparation when applicable.

- The Benevolence Committee
- Mona Orr—Chair
- Phyllis Belcher
- Sue Ellen Fleming
- Diania Murphy
- Charlotte Rice

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”
Acts 2:32, NRSV

A New Testament book contains the following words spoken to a crowd: “This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.”

- A. Paul
- B. Peter
- C. John
- D. Luke

Who said those words?

Answer: (See Acts 2:32, NRSV.)

Perfect Attendance

Those with perfect attendance for the Winter Quarter (Dec. Jan. Feb) for Sunday School were:

- Carroll Dale
- Steve Dallman
- Betty Hall
- Ray Hall

- Billy Kilgore
- Jane Large
- Ron Large
- Alice Livesay
- Janet Mize
- Andrew Mullins
- Kim Mullins
- Dennis Orr
- Charlotte Rice

- Carl Snodgrass
- Jim Stewart
- Shirley Wolfe

Information provided by Betty Carter
(If I have missed anyone, I apologize and ask that you let me know.)

"Words" cont'd from page 1

pitcher doesn't know you. Anything can happen. Maybe you close your eyes and get lucky, and beat one back up the middle. But usually you don't. You miss, and all the weaknesses of the rookie come down on you. You're thinking about failing, and getting ready to fail. You're scared of the pitcher, scared of the ball. You get revved up. You forget what your coach's say and swing crazy, hoping to get lucky. Or you stand like a statue while the umpire calls a strike. Most young hitters give up now. They swing at the next two just to get it over with. They don't grow in the at-bat. The bat's a white flag, and they're waving it to surrender. To have a good rookie pitch, you have to be good inside. Good rookies go up to the plate respecting the pitcher, and are very humble about their odds. They respect the ball, and shut out everything else. You need courage on the first strike pitch, because you're a stranger in a strange land. You put yourself in harm's way, close to the ball, close to the plate. Maybe you'll get drilled. It'll hurt. But only a bit. You stand close anyway, because you know good things happen when you put yourself in a little danger. You need faith that if you do it in the right spirit, things will work out. That's the *rookie pitch*." The old man swallows, takes a breath, then continues. (2) "By the second pitch, you're in your prime. Now you know what the at-bat is

about. You've seen the pitch. You know what you have to do to turn on it. The first strike filled you with adrenaline. Now you're strong. You feel electrified. You feel good. You grip the bat a little tighter now. The prime pitch is when good things usually happen. You're ahead of the pitcher, even with the first strike. Because you know what he's got, and you feel good. If you fail on the prime pitch, it's maybe that you got to feeling *too* good. People in their prime get overconfident. They swing too hard. They miss. "That's the *prime pitch*." (Now, he has their attention.) (3) "Third pitch. Now you're a veteran. You're at the end of your rope. If you fail now, there won't be another pitch. It's life or death. You're like an old prizefighter, and you stand almost perfectly still, waiting for your moment. The bat's loose and tight at the same time. You're not relying on luck, like the first pitch. Or talent, like the second pitch. Now you're calling on your guts, and everything you've learned. You mess up on the *veteran pitch* when you're angry at the pitcher for making you miss the other two pitches. The bad veteran is always making excuses. He's making up excuses for missing before he misses. But the good veteran welcomes the battle. It's serious, but it also gives him joy. He knows that baseball means pain, and he welcomes the suffering. He may go down, but he's grateful he ever got

up. If he goes down, it will be swinging." "Sir, what if you strike out?" asked one kid, shielding the sun from his eyes with his glove. "You just hope there's another game, and you're in it." The old man scanned the horizon as if recalling another day and time when he was in the batters box. "I gotta go, kids. Good luck out there." And he turned and was gone. The kids mumbled as they got their equipment together. Did anyone know who that guy was? Maybe a retired sportswriter, someone suggested. Or an ex-player. Maybe even a Hall of Famer, one wishful thinker said. "No, it's just my dad," said a little fellow. "He played in the Sixties." The players nodded, then they took the field. In the game, the Organic Produce team skunked the Subway Sandwich team 14-3. And every one of the kids who listened to the old man, got a hit.

This sounds a lot like the path of a Christian. When one is first saved, there is that "rookie season" that we must go through. We make many mistakes and are given more tests and presented with more temptations that we ever knew could exist. We almost always begin to think about failing. We believe we can't do this. Then we get hurt, or we begin to swing wildly at things. We lose confidence. But if we remain true and battle on, we get to the second pitch of

life as a Christian. We have won a few victories. Our confidence level in Christ starts to adjust and get stronger. But again, like the first pitch, we may miss a few things and discouragement wants to creep back in. But we hold on for that third pitch. The old man called it the "veteran pitch." Can we become a veteran Christian? Certainly. But we use the word "mature!" And the mature Christian realizes that even if he strikes out at times, there will be another game. We have an advocate with the Father who is Jesus Christ the Lord. He revives us and we learn to prepare for the next battle and the next, all the while enjoying the riches of heaven while here on earth. Mature Christians realize that the Kingdom of God is here and now and that we are created to enjoy the great and marvelous blessings of God in this life. And, as the old coach mentored the kids, one of the rich blessings provided to the Christian is the fact that we too become mentors to younger Christians. We are gifted with wisdom and if used properly, we can help to guide "rookie" Christians along the way. We can share how it was for us *back in the day!*

Have a great month of April, and remember to *stay on the path with Jesus!*



First Church of God

P.O. Box 980

702 E. Main St.

Wise, VA 24293

Phone / Fax: (276) 328-8791

Parsonage: (276) 328-5749

Pastor's Cell: (276) 275-1171

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Email: bemurphy65@yahoo.com

Clara Lou Banks

525 Hagan Ave N.W.

Norton, VA 24273

We're on the web!

www.wisefirstchurchofgod.org

APRIL

First Church of God

Sunday:

Sunday School	10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship Service	11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship Service	6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Youth Meeting	6:30 p.m.
Adventure Club Choir Practice	6:30 p.m.
Mid-Week Bible Study	7:00 p.m.
Adventure Club	7:00 p.m.

This Month:

- 1 Ministry & Prog. Council
 - 5 Palm Sunday
 - 5 Brandie Jessee Baby Shower
 - 7 WCG
 - 8 No Regular Servs.
 - 9 Maundy Thurs. Servs. 6pm
 - 11 Men's Breakfast
 - 11 Easter Party and Egg Hunt, 1PM
 - 11 Pageant Dress Rehearsal, 5PM
 - 12 SUNRISE SERVICE
 - 12 EASTER PAGEANT
 - 12 No PM Service
 - 15 Finance Council Meeting
 - 19 Singspiration
 - 22 Christian Ed. Council Meeting
 - 26 Birthday / Anniversary Dinner
- May:
- 5 WCG Meeting
 - 6 Ministry & Programming
 - 9 Men's Breakfast
 - 10 MOTHER'S DAY