

Adventure Club  
will meet through  
June 10th.

Flag Day  
June 14th

Father's Day  
June 21st

1st day of  
summer  
June 21st



# INFO

## Words From The Path. . . . .

By Pastor Ben Murphy

I was reading recently about the church where the pastor was gunned down in his pulpit during a Sunday morning service. Of course there were two things that drew me to this episode. First, Fred Winters was a pastor. Second, this took place in Illinois, the 'Land of Lincoln' where I lived most of the first 40 years of my life.

Fred Winters never expected to do anything that morning but to present the message that he had prepared. However, a deranged young man from the Maryville community had different ideas. Completely un-provoked, the gunman walked down the aisle, to the platform, said a word, answered or acknowledged in some manner by Pastor Winter, then came the shot that took the pastor's life. The following Sunday, a pastor from a church in Texas came and filled the pulpit for the Maryville congregation. Naturally, most of the congregants were still in shock from what they had witnessed. The visiting pastor, Al Meredith, had been a part of a similar situation in his own church in Fort Worth. Just ten years earlier, a gunman shot and killed seven youth members during a worship service, then, the gunman took his own life. Pastor Meredith had this to say to the Illinois congregation who had just lost their beloved leader. First, he encouraged the

congregation to use this opportunity to share the gospel and to grow in spite of the attack and murder. Then he said, "We've been praying for these kinds of opportunities, and we didn't even have to budget for it. Fred (Pastor Winter, deceased) would like that." (It was then stated how thrifty the slain pastor had been in his ministry.)

I'm very sure that this pastor from Texas said nothing out of line when he made this statement. It seems almost . . . . . cold hearted, to say that a man so revered by his congregation had been killed, and the church did not have to pay for such an opportunity to share the message of Christ through this tragedy. I am sure that one would have had to know the pastor who died; his life and his sense of humor and the demeanor with which the Texas pastor spoke. But even though his words may sound cold and disregarding, still, there is a message in them. The message is that, "Yes, God still uses tragedies to open doors of opportunity for his Church."

Some years back, I had a dear friend in the ministry by the name of Bill Keefer. Bill came to Jasper and held a revival for me. Since my earli-

est days in pastoral ministry, Bill had been somewhat of a mentor to me. When God opened the door for me to leave Jasper, the folks there asked about Bill coming as pastor. I called him and queried him about the leading of God in his life. Bill said that he really did not sense at that time the Lord leading him to make a change. The door was truly opened, but almost as immediate, Bill sensed that the door had closed. A month later, Bill was dead of a massive heart attack. It is amazing how God knows when to open doors and when and how to perfectly close doors.

We as His children do not seem to have too difficult a time knowing when God has opened a door. Usually, we are waiting. When He opens a door out of the clear blue, it takes us to a different level of commitment and understanding. But when we feel we are awaiting a particular move from God, we can more clearly see the door being opened. The real test is to know when God *closes* a door!

I just this week read a story that made the national news several years ago. CNN announced, as a headline item,

"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

### 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

## *And the Winner is...*



The Sunday School winner for the month of April was

Jim Stewart.

Congratulations Jim!



## V. B. S.

July 5th—9th, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

July 10th—Pool Party!

*(See Insert)*

## *Hooray For Fathers*



A Houston newspaper asked readers to send in thoughts about their fathers. Letters flooded in, and what people wrote about their fathers is most inspiring.

A few comments:

Dad was always there for me. He sacrificed to make sure that we had what we needed.

When disappointment came my way, Dad said, "Son, real life ain't about getting what you want but more about doing something with what you get."

My dad was disabled, but he worked hard to make sure we children had a good education and lived moral lives. He would say, "I want you to succeed more than I did."

My dad wanted us to be Christians and took us regularly to church.

What would you write about your father?

*“Words” cont’d from page 1*

that a man had passed his bar exam. Of course, passing the bar doesn’t normally attract the attention of the national media. Yet this man’s case was unusual, for he had failed the test forty-seven previous times. Now, at age sixty, this tenacious soul had finally passed on his *forty-eighth try* (The reporter also mentioned that this man had announced his intentions for the future—that he would embark on a twenty-year career as an attorney. As proof of his earnestness, he had purchased a briefcase!)

Now I have to respect a person with that much determination and tenacity. Fortunately, God did not give such drive to me. I have no problem turning and running the other way when I fail a first time. (Hey, if God wants it for me, He can give it to me! That’s my philosophy!) But this man seems almost past determined. He has a stubborn streak in him. I think some refer to it as a “doggedness!” And before you judge me for what I just said, it is human nature for us to quit after a setback or two. In my case, I just don’t want to burden God any longer than I have to. But we all have a tendency to think reasonably. And if something is not working for us, we quit.

Yet for thoughtful Christians this raises a nagging question. Just when should you assume that a door has truly been divinely closed? At what point must you conclude that God wants you to let go of a longstanding desire and simply accept things as they are, and move on? To be honest, it takes little disappointment in any area for us to conclude that God is against our succeeding,

“Well, God ain’t in it so, I quit!” (We’ve all been there. Or does it just happen to pastors?) But then you read or hear of a character like our wannabe- attorney friend, and it makes you wonder, “Does God really have different time-tables for each of us? When does God close the door?”

The Bible gives some excellent examples in this arena of thought. The most profound to me is the case of Abraham and Sarah. This couple had waited a lifetime for a child, but it never happened for them. Then one day, well, you know what happened. Late, late, late in life; far beyond reasonable child-bearing years, God gave them a son. See, we may believe that doors have been closed when truly, they are just as opened as they always were. The problem is, when things don’t happen in our time table, WE close the door! As a pastor, I have had to walk up to many-a-door. Some are opened and I walk in and have a look around. There may be more doors. I will continue to go through them until they are closed. We must be a people of faith that God will make a closed door very visible and locked tight so that we cannot get in. Until that time comes, it has always been my belief that we are obligated to go in for a look-see.

O.K. I have to do it. Some of you may have heard it before, but I have to share my favorite “door” story!

As an impetuous teenager.....(does impetuous mean, “ignorant?”), I was trying to test my earthly father’s will. Why not? I was like all teenagers. I knew more than

my parents, so why not enlighten them to that fact? One evening at the dinner table, I had a verbal altercation with my father. I stated my case, and quickly leaped up from the table and exited (before dad could get the last word in) through the screen door that led to the back porch. I wanted to really “punctuate” my statement to my father in a very demonstrative way, so ..... I slammed the screen door. Well, dad was not about to let that end the conversation, so he said, “Don’t you think you can come back and slam it a little harder?” (He had to have the last word, you know.) Well, that wasn’t about to happen. I was 16 years old; six feet tall; 175 pounds and about to succeed in making it to my senior year in high school. How could I let him have the last word? So, I came back and said, “Well, I don’t know if I can slam it harder, ..... (here’s the “ignorant” part), but I will certainly try!” (Big mistake.) I took the handle in my hand, pulled the door open as wide as the little spring-thing would allow it to open, and with all the power of a 6.0, 175 lb Junior in high school, I let her rip. Springs and hinges and pieces of wood flew in all directions. I saw elephants and kangaroos and lightning bolts and dead presidents and movie stars fly by my head. An atomic bomb could not have broken that door into more pieces. This time, dad leapt up from the table and headed for the door. I stood there in shock looking at all those pieces and couldn’t move. When he reached me, God intervened in the form of – not the Holy Spirit or an angel

from heaven, but in the form of my mother. She calmly said to dad without ever lifting her head or ceasing from gnawing on a piece of fried chicken, “Sit down Harry. You told him to do it!” End of altercation. However, from that point on, I got shorter in stature and walked very carefully around my father, knowing that he would never forget that “he owed me one!”

Well, I believe that sometimes, that’s how God works with his children. We may walk through a door, but God told us to do it, or allowed us to do so. And until He has closed that door of opportunity, we will still enter in. But when God closes a door, it is closed tight, and we will know it for sure. There is one very important thing to know about God and doors. Someone once said, “When God closes a door, he opens a window.” That is so inspiring. That means that even though a door closes, God has another window of opportunity for us, and it is always better than the door that had been closed.

The thing we must do as Christians is to remain on the path with Jesus. Then as doors are opened and closed, He is right there with us. How can we make a mistake, if He is leading us? Stay on the path and follow him in and out of the doors! (“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”<sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Matthew 7:7 & 8)

# First Church of

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## Children's Summer Program begins

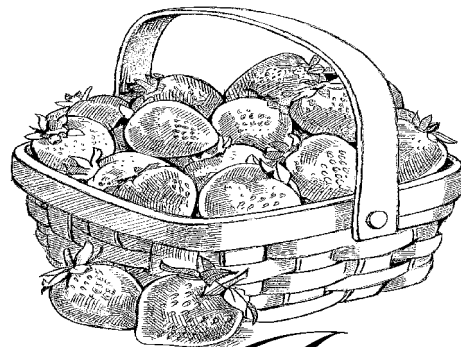
### June 17th at 7 p.m.

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We're on the web!

[www.wisefirstchurchofgod.org](http://www.wisefirstchurchofgod.org)

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# June

## 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:

Adventure Club Choir (thru 6/10)	6:30 p.m.
Mid-Week Bible Study	7:00 p.m.
Adventure Club (thru 6/10)	7:00 p.m.

\* Youth Meetings will begin in the fall.

### This Month:

- 1 Outreach Meeting
- 2 WCG Meeting
- 3 Ministry & Prog. Council
- 7 Baptismal Service
- 10 Finance Council
- 13 Men's Breakfast
- 17 Christian Ed. Council Meeting
- 21 Father's Day!
- 21 No PM Service
- 24 Quarterly Business Meeting
- 26 - 1st Anderson Camp Meeting
- 28 Bday/Anniversary Dinner

### July

- 1 Ministry & Prog. Council Meeting
- 4 Independence Day!
- 6 Outreach Meeting
- 7 W.C.G. Meeting
- 8 Finance Council Meeting
- 11 Men's Fellowship Breakfast

“A baby is God’s

opinion that

the world

should go on.”

—Carl Sandburg

