

# Generations

Together on God's Abundant Journey

## Returning to Your First Love

Sometimes in life, there's something that keeps coming up again and again. You can't help but notice it because the Holy Spirit keeps bringing it to your attention. Recently, the Holy Spirit keeps bringing the words "first love" to my attention.

We find these words in Revelation 2:4, "you have left your first love." This is written to the church in Ephesus. This church is surrounded by pagan worship. They fight diligently against this evil, but they are rebuked for leaving their first love.

This sounds familiar to me. I'm sure you can imagine a church placed in a culture of evil. The church is able to quickly recognize this evil but, they have forgotten the greatest command. In Matthew 22, we learn that the greatest commandment is to "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

What the book of Matthew isn't saying is to forget all sin like it never happened. It doesn't say to turn the other way and pretend sin doesn't exist. It says to love God and love others. The Bible gives very clear instruction as to what this looks like.

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"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

**Revelation 2:1-7**

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

**Matthew 22:36-40**

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

**Galatians 5:13-14**





The church should work hard to call it sin in a kind and loving way. We can't forget the Gospel truth calls for repentance. We must speak truth into the lives of those around us in a loving way.

But how do we remember our "first love?" One of my favorite images of this is found in Luke 10. Here, we get an image of two sisters, Mary and Martha. One is busy. I imagine her with an apron on, making a grand lunch for Jesus. She probably cleaned for days before he came. I imagine her saying, "The Savior is coming, there is much to be done!" I don't think Jesus was ever upset about a clean floor and a tasty meal.

Martha has an attitude problem, though. She's frustrated with her sister, Mary. Mary is found sitting at Jesus' feet, not focused on productivity but focused on the Savior. What does Jesus have to say about this? "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed - or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha is far too tied up in work and service to remember the most important thing to do is sit at Jesus' feet. However, our love for Jesus doesn't call us to neglect service. Martha wouldn't have been rebuked if she would simply have remembered to come and sit with the Lord.

We see this in John 12, Mary is found again at the feet of Jesus. This time, though, she is pouring oil on his feet. This oil was fragrant. The aftereffects of her worship would have been noticeable for days. Her love for him calls her to serve and sacrifice.

She keeps her first love in mind. We must do the same in our churches. We must operate out of our love for Christ. While our bodies move, our hearts must stay at his feet.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**Luke 10:38-42**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

**John 12:1-3**

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.

**1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.

Amen.

**1 Peter 4:8-11**



## Bible in a Year Plan

Check out Tara-Leigh Cobble's *The Bible Recap* for more info and reflection questions.

Date: Scripture:

June 1 2 Chronicles 1 + Psalm 72

June 2 Song of Solomon 1-8

June 3 Proverbs 1-3

June 4 Proverbs 4-6

June 5 Proverbs 7-9

June 6 Proverbs 10 - 12

June 7 Proverbs 13-15

June 8 Proverbs 16-18

June 9 Proverbs 19-21

June 10 Proverbs 22-24

June 11 1 Kings 5-6, 2 Chronicles 2-3

June 12 1 Kings 7, 2 Chronicles 4

June 13 1 Kings 8, 2 Chronicles 5

June 14 2 Chronicles 6-7, Psalm 136

June 15 Psalms 134, 146-150

Date: Scripture:

June 16 1 Kings 9, 2 Chronicles 8

June 17 Proverbs 25-26

June 18 Proverbs 27-29

June 19 Ecclesiastes 1-6

June 20 Ecclesiastes 7-12

June 21 1 Kings 10-11, 2 Chronicles 9

June 22 Proverbs 30-31

June 23 1 Kings 12-14

June 24 2 Chronicles 10-12

June 25 1 Kings 15, 2 Chronicles 13-16

June 26 1 Kings 16, 2 Chronicles 17

June 27 1 Kings 17-19

June 28 1 Kings 20-21

June 29 1 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 18

June 30 2 Chronicles 19-23

## The Importance of Young Adult Ministry

A Barna Research article published in September of 2025, notes a resurgence in church attendance among Millennials and Gen Z. The study states that, "For decades, older adults - Boomers and Elders - were the most reliable churchgoers. Today, the pattern shifted. Gen Z and Millennials, often labeled as disinterested in faith, show the highest levels of regular attendance."

What does this mean? The youth of our nation are hungry for the gospel. They need someone in their corner who is bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Young people need someone to display love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

My mentor invites a group of Gen Z to her house for dinner every week. Several people show up every week. Some come empty-handed, some come with a side dish or dessert. Some come with an open heart, and others come with deep needs. Regardless, she and her husband meet us each where we are.

Can we imagine a church where this happens? Someone walks through the door, and it's their first time in a church where he or she is treated the same way as a lifelong member. Each person is greeted with care and genuine concern for their well-being.

Community changes everything. Church is one of the few places younger generations can find healthy community. How can you show up for the youth in your congregation and support their growth and discipleship?

Support them. Invite young people to dinner. Open your home. Sing karaoke. Host a game night. Go bowling. Ask your church to host a worship night or community event.

Again, church is one of the only places in our society that promotes healthy community. We find in scripture that this is an act of worship. Millennials, Gen Z and Gen Alpha connect deeply with worship.

The Region is working to promote this. Several worship nights are being hosted around the Region to give younger generations the opportunity to build community and take part in individual and community worship.

Keep an eye out for more information to come about worship nights and a Gen Z in Ministry Retreat. This retreat will be hosted at Indian Creek Baptist Camp on October 9-10.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Special Projects Manager and Gen Z Intern Clara Thompson at [clarathompson@abc-indiana.org](mailto:clarathompson@abc-indiana.org).

## The Good Portion

### A Gen Z Ministry Retreat

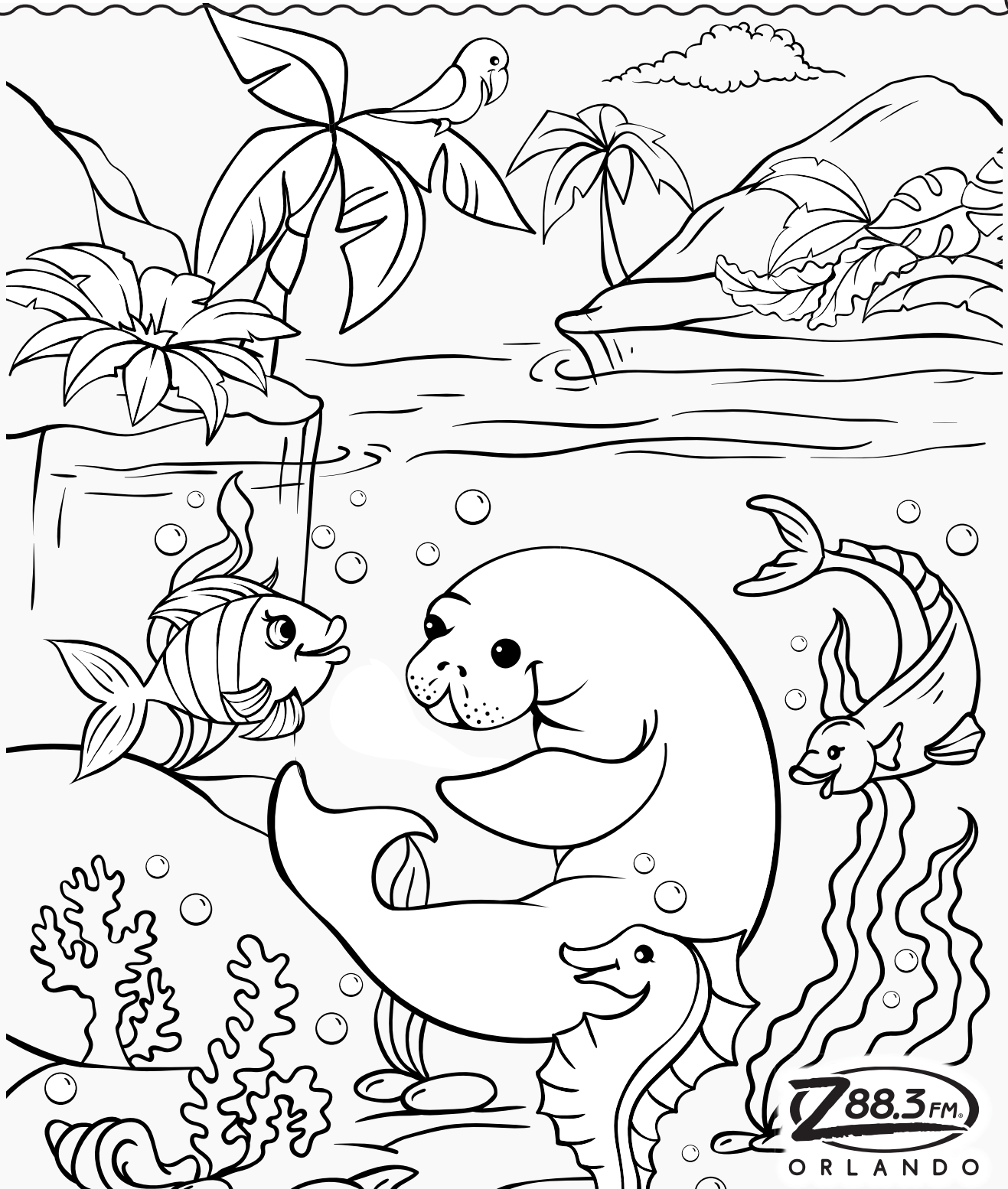
October 9-10  
Indian Creek Baptist Camp  
More info coming soon.

Email [clarathompson@abc-indiana.org](mailto:clarathompson@abc-indiana.org) for more info.  
Open to anyone 18-30 (regardless of denomination)  
who serves or is interested in serving in ministry  
voluntarily or vocationally.



# Generations

There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—  
living things both large and small. - Psalm 104:25



## Spiritual Disciplines: Prayer

### What is Prayer?

Prayer is the art and practice of our soul conversing with God. To tell the truth, I have put off summarizing this Spiritual Discipline because it's one of the most difficult for me. In the words of Ruth Haley Barton, "Prayer means letting God's creative love touch the most hidden places of our being and prayer means listening with attentive, undivided hearts to the inner moment of the Spirit of Jesus, even when that Spirit leads us to places we would rather not go." I think Barton is right. Effective prayer should mold our heart posture.

### Why Should You Practice Prayer?

There are hundreds of explanations to this age-old question. Why talk to God when He already knows what I think? God already knows the outcome of my circumstance and my attitude about it. Thankfully, prayer wasn't created to inform God. I will never tell God something he doesn't know.

However, I always seem to teach myself. Every moment spent in prayer is a moment I learn something new. God reveals part of His plan. Even if just for a moment, my soul is quiet enough to hear from God.

That doesn't mean I always like the answer. Sometimes the answer feels like silence. Silence is still an answer though. Silence is God instructing us to wait. I don't have to run from the silence.

Sometimes the answer to my prayer feels like silence because I don't like the answer God is actually giving. I invite you not to run from God's answer. The Father withholds no good thing.

### How Can You Practice Prayer?

Prayer is a learned and practiced language. I cannot tell you how to speak. We must each learn the intimate language that allows us to communicate with God and to listen for God's response.

When my brother and I were little, our mom would pray with us on the way to school. We took turns praying, and no two prayers were the same. My mom prayed for different things than I did, and my brother prayed for things neither of us did.

Now, I often find myself practicing somatic prayer. Taking deep breaths in, while meditating on a gospel truth, and then exhaling while letting go of whatever consuming thought I have that contradicts it.

When I was in college, I would go for prayer walks around campus and pray for the students inside each of the buildings.

However you pray, and whatever it looks like, God is present. You have the responsibility as a Christian to find and practice the intimate language that allows you to communicate with God.

### Scriptures to Study:

- **Matthew 6:5-15**
  - Jesus gives instruction and warning about prayer.
- **Romans 8:26-28**
  - The Holy Spirit plays an important part in prayer.
- **Ephesians 6:13-18**
  - Teaches the importance of prayer as a tool for daily life.



## June Events around the Region

Please note all times are listed in EST unless otherwise stated.

Date	Event	Location	Time
June 1	Northeast Central Pastors	Culver's 6386 S. Scatterfield Rd., Anderson	6:00 PM
June 2	Monticello & Tippecanoe Associations Pastors	Christo's Restaurant 1018 Sagamore Pkwy. W., West Lafayette	10:00 AM
June 4	Bethel Association Pastors	Mission BBQ 1213 Veterans Pkwy., Clarksville	11:30 AM
June 5	Young Adults in Ministry	Bear's Coffee and Roasting Co. 2112 S. 3 <sup>rd</sup> St., Terre Haute	10:00 AM
June 8	Laughery Association Pastors	Versailles Baptist Church 228 S. Washington St., Versailles	10:00 AM
June 8	Coffee Creek Association Pastors	Denny's 175 S. Honeyrun Pkwy., Scottsburg	1:00 PM
June 8-11	Coffee Creek Association Mission Trip to KY Email ppsshort@frontier.com for more info.		
June 10	ABC-IN/KY Region Staff Meeting	via Zoom	10:00 AM
June 11	Judson Association Pastors	Olive Garden 4015 S. LaFountain, Kokomo	12:00 PM
June 11	Long Run Association Pastors	Mo's Steakhouse 7 Ogle Industrial Park Dr., Vevay	6:00 PM
June 17	Logansport Association Pastors	Streamliner Restaurant 201 E 9 <sup>th</sup> St., Rochester	11:30 AM
June 18	Orleans Association Pastors Lunch	El Compadre Mexican Restaurant 300 E. Main St., Paoli	12:00 PM
June 19	Region Office Closed - Juneteenth		
June 20	Northwest Association Pastors	Brothers Restaurant 1800 W. 81 <sup>st</sup> St., Merrillville	7:30 AM CST
June 22 - 26	Gen Z and Preaching Conference Open to all Ages	Green Lake Conference Center W2511 SR 23, Green Lake, WI	
June 24	Madison Association Pastors	Hinkle's Sandwich Shop 204 W. Main St., Madison	8:30 AM
June 24	North Pastors Pastor Lester Jeffries, convener	Vinatelli's 615 Annette Dr., Markle	12:00 PM
June 26	Flat Rock and Decatur Associations Pastors	Lucabe Coffee Company 2531 Eastbrook Plaza, Columbus	2:00 PM
June 27	ABWM of IN/KY Summer Conference	Greenwood First Baptist Church 1589 Averitt Rd., Greenwood	8:30 AM
June 27 - July 1	Holy Spirit Renewal Ministries Conference	Green Lake Conference Center W2511 SR 23, Green Lake, WI	10:00 AM



## Looking Ahead

Save the date for these upcoming events!

### Gen Z and Preaching

June 22-26

Green Lake Conference Center  
(W2511 SR 23 Green Lake, WI)

### Holy Spirit Renewal Ministries Conference

June 27-July 1

Green Lake Conference Center  
(W2511 SR 23 Green Lake, WI)

### ABWM of IN/KY Summer Conference

June 27

First Baptist Church of Greenwood  
(1589 Averitt Rd. Greenwood, IN)

### FABM (Church Musicians) Conference

July 19-25

Green Lake Conference Center  
(W2511 SR 23 Green Lake, WI)

### IM World Missions Conference

July 29-31

Rosen Plaza Hotel  
(9700 International Dr. Orlando, FL)

### Youth Leader Zooms

August 4 and October 6 at 7:00 PM

Contact Kristi Jones for more info.

### Creativity in Preaching Lab

August 17-21

Green Lake Conference Center  
(W2511 SR 23 Green Lake, WI)

### Region Biennial

October 2-3

Greater Hope Christian Church  
1228 Lodge Ave. Evansville, IN



## Young Adults in Ministry

Open to anyone 18-30 who serves in ministry is welcome.

June 5, 2026 • 10 am • Bear's Coffee  
2112 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Terre Haute, IN



## Thank You to Our Supporters

We are grateful to these sister churches who have given to the Region Offering in the month of April to support the Ministry of the Region. (Please note that fiscal months do not follow a regular calendar.)

Avoca Missionary Baptist Church

Bear Creek Baptist Church

Calvary Baptist Church of Kokomo

Clearspring Baptist Church

Dabney Baptist Church

Deer Creek Baptist Church

Emmanuel Baptist Church

of Jeffersonville

First Baptist Church of Anderson

First Baptist Church of Bedford

First Baptist Church of Bicknell

First Baptist Church of Columbus

First Baptist Church of Decatur

First Baptist Church of Fort Wayne

First Baptist Church of Jeffersonville

First Baptist Church of Madison

First Baptist Church of Milan

First Baptist Church of Petersburg

First Baptist Church of Rochester

First Baptist Church of Seymour

First Baptist Church of Warren

Gosport Baptist Church

Graham Baptist Church

Greencastle First Baptist Church

Hayden Baptist Church

Iglesia Bautista de Lake Station

Lancaster Baptist Church

Lebanon Baptist Church

Oak Grove Baptist Church

Oakdale Baptist Church

Riverside Baptist Church

Sardinia Baptist Church

Tampico Baptist Church

Tanglewood Baptist Church

Tea Creek Baptist Church

Washington First Baptist Church