



FIRST FREE

CHRIST CENTERED + CHRIST SENT

AN EFCA CHURCH

**2020-2021
ANNUAL REPORT**

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CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2021

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.” Psalm 136:1

The past year has given us at First Free Church many opportunities to reflect upon God’s goodness and enduring, eternal love. One year ago, few of us expected what kind of year was in store for us as a church and for the rest of the world, as we learned to live with a pandemic unlike anything seen before. Through it all, God has been faithful. While we acknowledge the difficult impact that the pandemic has had on our world, nation, state, city, and church, and we mourn the loss of several church members over the past year, we can still continue to be encouraged as we see how He has been at work in the life of our church body.

I’d like to thank our hard-working staff for their faithful service over the past year. Please join me in giving a special thanks to Pastor Joel for his steady leadership of our church and staff through this difficult season. There are many demands on Pastor Joel’s attention and time and the Council is pleased that we can offer him the chance to take a sabbatical this summer to have a time of rest and renewal. It’s been wonderful to see how our staff have adapted their areas of ministry for adults, students, and children to meet online for a large portion of the year, and more recently as a hybrid of in-person and online gatherings. Being able to transition to livestreaming our worship services this fall when we resumed in-person services was a huge step forward and one that will provide us a new “front door” experience for visitors for years to come.

I urge you to continue to pray for our ministry and support staff, and I hope you will tell them how much you appreciate each and every one of them. Thank you, Pastor Jay, Pastor Paul, Pastor Jason, and Carrie Boyum, for leading their respective areas of ministry. Thank you to our Faith Community Nurses Maureen Juarez and Jeanine Bruen for their encouraging ministry, and for your invaluable wisdom as we sought to follow the best practices for dealing with the pandemic. And our wonderful support staff: Scott Beckett, JoAnn Burns, Dan Fergus, Sarah Olson, Stacey Urbanz, and Jodi Wiken—your work may not always be seen, but it is absolutely critical to the ministry of the church.

I’d like to also acknowledge our council members for giving their time and dedication to serve the church in this important spiritual leadership and oversight role. Thank you to Tim Audette, Vice Chair, and Pete McWilliams, Secretary, and the other council members: Jon Boyum, Hong Gu, Tim Lund, Darlene Swanson, John Symington, and Jason Taylor. And a very special thanks goes to Julie Danielson as she finishes six excellent years of service as our Treasurer. Her wise and careful oversight is leaving us in a very strong financial position as we welcome our new Treasurer, Jonathan Sannes. Thanks also go to David Kriesel-Koll who served most recently as our Business Administrator and prior to that as our Treasurer. His attention to detail and financial skills helped keep us on track and allowed Jodi Wiken to seamlessly step into that role.

Finally, thanks to all of you in the church body who continue to serve and give faithfully to help us continue our mission: to help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together.

May we all continue to be encouraged by our Lord’s faithfulness to us.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Olson
Council Chair

SENIOR PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2021

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Psalm 91:1-2

This year, Psalm 91, has been my go-to Psalm.

It has been a hard year. Starting with the pandemic. Then the killing of George Floyd and the Minneapolis riots. In the fall, we had the Presidential elections followed by the riot at the national capital in January. The tension and stress in our city, for our church, and in each of our lives has been extremely high. This year reminds us that we are people of faith. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” Paul tells the Corinthian believers. We cling to the Lord Jesus Christ, who gives us faith to trust him in uncertain times.

This year reminds us that we are the church. Jesus tells Peter, “I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Think of that promise. Nothing will crush, defeat, overthrow, conquer or eliminate the church. Nothing. Not plagues. Not riots. Not viruses. Not unrest. The church will remain, even into eternity. And, let me remind you, the church is you, people who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. The church bands together, lives together, loves together, face challenges together. Whether we are in the same room or online, our connection is Christ. He holds us together.

With those reminders, I look back and I see God’s fingerprints all over the place this past year. He has answered prayers. People have found us online and worshipped with us from across the world. Hurting families and lonely individuals have been cared for and loved through our benevolent fund. Ministry, small groups, youth group and children’s ministry have continued virtually. We have remained a light to our neighbors and city as we have served them. We have held steadfast to our mission of being Christ-centered and Christ-sent, inviting others into a life transforming relationship with Christ. God is still at work.

Finally, let me say, I am very proud of our team here at First Free and how each one has adapted to this year’s events. Pastor Jay has stepped in and covered multiple areas of ministry. His focus continues to be on helping people get connected. Pastor Paul, Dan Fergus and their teams have put together outstanding worship services each week, both in-person and online. Pastor Jason and Carrie Boyum have teamed up so that our Velocity and Creekside Friends students have been able to continue to meet and be taught the Word of God—both virtually and in-person. Stacey Urbanz has stepped in as our Nursery Director. Our Faith Community Nurses, Maureen Juarez and Jeanine Bruen lovingly and tirelessly cared for our church family. JoAnn Burns joined Sarah Olson in our office to keep us all organized. With less activity in the building, Scott Beckett has been busy improving our facility. We have an outstanding staff.

I also want to say “Thank You” to Jeff Olson, who is the Chairman of the Council. Jeff has been a great sounding board and has been a strong leader during this most challenging year. I look forward to working with him in the years to come.

As we move ahead, might we all remember that God is sovereign. He is the Most High, the Almighty. We can rest in His arms.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Sutton
Senior Pastor

ASSOCIATE PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2021

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.” Acts 16:25

As I have been thinking back over the past year, the above passage about Paul and Silas' imprisonment (Acts 16.16-40) came to mind. While spreading the gospel in Philippi, they encounter a female slave who, “had a spirit by which she predicted the future.” In this way, she made money for her owners. And so, when Paul later casts out this spirit, her owners are none too pleased. They rile up a crowd and, pressing some misleading charges, get Paul and Silas thrown into prison.

I imagine that at this point, the opponents of Paul and Silas think they have shut them down quite effectively. I imagine that the principalities and powers, which are always working against the kingdom, thought they had silenced them and put an end to their ministry. After all, what could they possibly do from prison? How could the gospel go forward with Paul and Silas behind bars?

Well, as it turned out, the joke was on them. Paul and Silas chose to view their imprisonment not as a setback, but simply as a change of venue. They may have been behind bars, but they still had a voice and they still had an audience. Even after being beaten, even after being locked away, they took their opportunity to praise God and to share the gospel. What the other prisoners made of it, we are not told (though we know that they did listen!), but we do know that by the following morning the jailor and his whole household had given their allegiance to Jesus as Lord and had been baptized. What looked like a dead end had turned out to be just another opportunity.

God at Work in New Ways

We have all encountered our own challenges to ministry this past year. Much of the ministry that we took for granted, simply as part of our routine and our calling, was made impossible for months at a time. Members of our church who had not missed gathering for Sunday worship two weeks in a row for their entire lives were unable to attend for months at a time. Small groups, community groups and bible studies that have met like clockwork for years were all of the sudden forced to make new and different arrangements. But as I look back over the past year, I find that just like Paul and Silas, our challenges have often given way to new opportunities. Here are a few examples:

Once it was clear that our Sunday Community Groups would not be able to meet in person for a long time, leaders and groups figured out new ways to keep in touch and to learn together. During the Summer, Living Life met at a Park following the service. Agape and Faith Builders went hybrid, meeting via Zoom and at church following the service. Seekers met online, nearly every week the whole way through. And other groups have found still other ways.

Like Community Groups, different small groups have found different ways to meet and share life. Some have chosen to do that primarily online and through frequent communication. Others have found ways to gather outside, distanced at the church, etc. They have still found ways to encourage each other, lift one another up in prayer and to learn, grow and worship together. Our MOPS group was quick to re-imagine what it would look like to be a help and support moms and families in these new circumstances. They came up with a hybrid model that has provided prayer, support and some much-needed community. Men United and Women's Neighborhood Bible Study have both used different models at different times in order to minister to as many as they could.

Finally, though in some ways it is still hard for me to believe, we have seen so many examples of the ways in which God has used these new developments to reach more people. We have heard from several people in different parts of the country who simply found us online one day and have been regularly joining us in worship ever since. Several new families started attending our church during this past year, some at times when we had no in-person programming beyond a single Sunday service. One couple's first in-person experience at our church was at a park, after they watched the service online.

Things have looked very different over the past year, and while I am personally more than excited to return to a full and normal schedule, I have also been humbled and amazed by what God has done. As is so often the case, when everything goes according to our plans, we are tempted to believe that we are responsible for the results—or at least for a lot of them. This past year not only did things not go to plan; we essentially lost the ability to plan. But what we have gained is a powerful lesson that God is at work in all circumstances, and that his power is more important than our plans. Most of us I think also gained a renewed appreciation for the blessing that it is to be part of our church family, and to share life with others. I do hope and pray that we will be able to resume all of our ministries this fall, but I hope that we will do so with the added benefit of the lessons we have learned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay Pound
Associate Pastor

CREEKSIDE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2021

What a great year of ministry at Creekside Kids, which involved a lot of changes, creativity, and flexibility! Despite all of the oddities of the year, ministry continued, and kids have heard about the love and hope of Jesus Christ. Here are a few highlights of 2020-2021.

STAYcation Bible Camp

With COVID-19 and First Free not being open for public gatherings, we pivoted and held our first ever STAYcation Bible Camp. We had 202 kids participate in an at-home video and packet-based Vacation Bible Camp. Families came to church to pick up their weekly materials and then did activities, crafts, Bible adventure, songs, and video lessons all from home for five days. The theme was Rocky Railway, and we had a fun time discovering that Jesus' Power Pulls us Through!

Bible Time AT CHURCH and AT HOME

With so many families not coming to in-person church and with the uncertainty of not being able to have in-person Bible Time every week, we decided to provide Bible Time both AT HOME and AT CHURCH. We incorporated a new curriculum this fall for all kids in nursery through grade 5. We are studying the Bible using The Gospel Project. Every lesson brings kids back to the Gospel message, which is wonderful! We have focused on Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Servant, and Jesus the Savior. Each age level is learning the same Bible story each week, which is geared for their age group. Kids who are doing Bible Time AT HOME can watch a video with a Bible story, song, and a little lesson with Carrie. They can also print activity pages that help emphasize the lesson. If kids participate in Bible Time AT CHURCH, they are learning the same lesson with a group of peers and a committed and loving teacher.

Creekside Clubs

It's been thrilling to be able to offer in-person Creekside Clubs this year. We moved from an every week model to every other Wednesday night. This has allowed Creekside to have the entire first floor of the church building just for kids. Velocity student ministries meets at church the opposite weeks of Clubs. We have had four vibrant groups of kids attending, averaging about 50 kids a week. The leaders have been creative with gym games, activities, crafts, and Bible lessons that have allowed kids to be with their peers and with leaders who care about them.

Card Campaign

In order to stay connected and for kids to know that they are not forgotten, I launched a card campaign this year. I have been busy sending cards to all Creekside kids for Birthdays, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. We also mailed packets with an Advent Calendar in late November and a Lent and Palm Sunday packet this spring. It's important that kids know that they are important and thought about, even if they can't come to our church building on a regular basis right now.

Weekly Emails

Having consistent communication with parents and guardians has been a top priority this year. With so many changes happening around us, I wanted to be able to give clear communication regarding Creekside and what was happening at First Free as it relates to kids and families. Every Friday I email the Bible Time AT HOME lesson along with any other announcements that are important for families to know about.

Camp Shamineau

Despite a pandemic, we had 50 kids from First Free attend Camp Shamineau last summer. This spring, 25 kids and leaders went to Camp Shamineau's Retreat46, with a group of kids in grades 4-5. Camp continues to be a blessing to many. It's a wonderful place to be in nature, to be away from home and the normal routine, to have many new experiences, and to grow in our relationships with Jesus Christ.

Special Events

We squeaked out a few Creekside Special events this year including a Creekside Family Hike in the Fall and Ice Fishing in the winter. Both were a big hit with kids and parents!

Nursery

Stacey Urbanz, the Nursery Director, has kept the nursery a clean and welcoming place this year. There have been many improvements and upgrades in the nursery space, including the addition of a new dishwasher and new rocking chairs. Though the attendance numbers of kids 0-2 years have been low, we've had great volunteers who love the kids who do attend. Even these little ones are hearing about the gospel every week and seeing Bible story pictures.

I look forward to another year of ministry in Creekside at First Free.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Boyum
Children's Ministry Director

VELOCITY STUDENT MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2021

This year youth group has looked different than either Doug or I imagined it would back when we talked about launching a middle school program two years ago. Because our Church has such robust mid-week kids and youth programs, we couldn't cram both kids and students into the building and maintain proper social distancing. This past year our Velocity Student Ministries went "hybrid" on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. We decided to go with a model that allowed alternating weeks between being online and in-person. We even offered an online component on the "in-person" weeks for anyone who couldn't be with us in-person. On weeks when Creekside Clubs were in the building the entire youth group met online using YouTube and Zoom.

Decentralized Small Groups

It is always my hope that a small-group-centric ministry will help propel each student closer to Jesus. We have such awesome small group leaders who navigated the challenges of meeting online or having to be creative when the weather was warmer outside to find ways to meet socially distanced outside. By empowering small group leaders to find methods to connect with their small group on their own and in ways that highlight their strengths and interests, I think we've taken some significant steps toward the goal of being small-group-centered.

Velocity Sundays

This year we've spent time in the Gospels exploring how Jesus is our Messiah and a Servant, whether students joined us in-person or online. We've also provided tools for parents to help center student's discipleship in the home. Regardless of whether a student joined our Velocity Sundays at home or in-person, we hope that they have come away with a deeper understanding of the Scripture, and that each family will be equipped to continue the conversation and application in the home.

Summer 2021

This summer we are offering two Adventure Trips at Rock Ridge, one for our High School students and one for our Middle School students. We pray these trips will be a great opportunity for students to connect with one another and be outdoors in nature to consider all the wonderful things the Lord has done for them. We're looking into more possibilities for this summer so that we can continue to disciple students and propel them toward Jesus.

Conclusion

This has been a really tough year for everyone. We have the unique challenge that we have a relatively small building for such a large kids and student programs. I am so grateful for our small group leaders who have stuck it out throughout the entire year. My heart goes out to students who are isolated, hurting and lacking connection with Jesus. So, I remind you what I have had to remind myself from the words of Jeremiah, "I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him.' The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him..." (Lamentations 3:24-25). May Christ increase your hope in Him, and may we all seek Him more in this upcoming season than we have before.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Pensa
Student Pastor

WORSHIP ARTS MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2021

In over 20 years of being involved in worship ministry, there's no doubt that 2020 was the oddest year for the life of worship in the church that I have ever seen; but even in the face of these unique challenges we do what the people of God have always done throughout history— adapt and persevere. In August of 2020, we returned to gathering together for in-person worship for the first time in six months. Using wise health practices like mask-wearing, social distancing, disinfecting common surfaces, and shortening the duration of our singing, we have been able to safely gather together without a COVID outbreak in our community since that time. I want to celebrate the wisdom and maturity of our church community and all of our staff for putting the safety and physical well-being of others above their personal preferences.

Realizing that we had a significant number of people in our church community unable to attend in-person worship for a variety of reasons, our worship arts ministry (which includes our tech team led by Dan Fergus) worked extremely hard on developing a way to broadcast our services live on YouTube and Facebook so that people could participate in worship from home. Considering the size and budget of our church and given the short time-table necessary to develop a livestream solution, what our ministry has been able to accomplish and produce has been nothing short of remarkable. I'm so proud of our team.

The use of livestreaming, video, and social media throughout the pandemic has not only been a necessary adaptation to accommodate the strangeness of our times, but it has also set us up to effectively reach and minister to people who may never set foot in our building. I think of the senior living facility that Julie Fergus works at. Julie also serves on our tech team and has shared how the residents have weekly church using our livestream. Recently a woman in New York stumbled across our weekly sermon podcast, surrendered her life to Christ, and then got plugged in with a local church community in her area. In some ways, inviting a friend to our church has never been easier— all you have to do is share the livestream link with them.

I'm also incredibly proud of the flexibility of our musicians and singers who have continued to dedicate themselves to their musical craft, come to rehearsals, and prepare themselves spiritually each week for the task of leading our community in songs of praise and adoration while carrying the additional responsibilities like homeschooling, caring for an at-risk family member, or just dealing with the uncertainty of our world over the past ministry year. They, along with all of our worship arts ministry team, have had to lead our church in worship being mindful of two tasks at the same time— leading the people in the room and the people online in a meaningful time of communion with God and increasing conformity to Christ-likeness.

Finally, I'm excited by the ways that these new challenges have actually created new opportunities to serve. We have such a tremendous willingness to serve and learn new equipment and technologies demonstrated by so many people in our ministry team over the past year. These opportunities to serve have also fostered opportunities for meaningful connection and community in a time where face-to-face connection (or at least partial-face-to-partial-face!) is at a premium. It's been a unique and challenging year, but God has been faithful to lead us through.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Anleitner
Worship Pastor

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*“The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.” Psalm 28:7*

The Faith Community Nurses (FCNs) have continued to support, encourage, and assist congregants spiritually, emotionally and tangibly in this year of COVID-19.

Visitation was mainly done by phone. Dorothy Young and others faithfully called seniors every ten days reporting anything of concern. We compiled a list of 180+ families to pray for weekly and attempted to contact them monthly. The FCNs provided contact information to groups and individuals in the congregation so they could send cards and call. Occasional visits were made in person by the FCNs and other volunteers to help with transportation and other needs of those in the congregation. Meal programs were organized for families in transition. The Expressions group for those with chronic illnesses also made contact by phone.

Zoom became an effective means for maintaining programs and communication in the church. The FCNs helped to organize and support Zoom meetings for the Senior and Agape Community Groups as well as the Women’s Bible Study (WBS) groups. They helped to organize WBS groups during the summer for the first time. WBS meetings continued throughout the school year on two days at different times in-person and on Zoom. Seven women, who could not meet online or in-person, were able to participate in Bible studies over the phone. MOPS meetings alternated between meeting in-person and on Zoom in the fall and moved to in-person meetings this spring.

Due to COVID-19 only one class of CPR was offered with social distancing or Zoom used for the checkoffs. Seven Faith Community Nurses from around the state were able to do most of the class online.

The FCNs supported church leadership in making decisions about COVID-19 protocols. We are thankful that there have not been any COVID-19 outbreaks related to church activities. We oversaw disinfecting the church sanctuary and overflow room between services. We served on the Caring Commission and helped distribute funds and COVID-19 bags when needed. Beautiful prayer shawls made by members of the congregation were distributed to many who were ill.

GriefShare, a 13-week program for persons who have lost a loved one, was offered on Zoom; facilitated by Sandra Ogren, Dee Huanca and Maureen Juarez. There were ten people registered.

We supported the women in the church who sewed masks for all who could use them.

The Wellness Advisory Team met during the past year and provided much helpful advice to the FCNs. We are so thankful to those who participated: John Lande, Gail Marchand, Doug Erickson and Katie Klenk.

Home-goings since the last report: Doug Beckett, Mary Kay Brown, Donna Butterworth, Bruce Chapman, John Clinton Sr., Grace Elasky, Mark Holman, Robert Johnson, Yvette Pierre-Louis, Junius Stenseth, Al Swanson, and Christian Vatsaas.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanine Bruen and Maureen Juarez
Staff FCNs

Dee Huanca
Volunteer FCN

CARING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2021

This year, with COVID-19 affecting our lives in so many aspects, it has been a unique and opportune time to support our congregation during this difficult time. The Caring Commission currently has eight members: Carrie Boyum, Apryl Hultstrand, Allie Danielson, John Symington, Darlene Swanson, Maureen Juarez, Jeanine Bruen, and Kim Foss. We work together to learn of and bring needs to the Commission and pray for wisdom and guidance on how to best love and support others.

The Benevolent Fund is one of our primary areas of service. The fund continues to grow, even during this COVID-19 time, thanks to the generosity of those contributors in our church family. The funds are primarily given to families and individuals in our church who are in need of help. Funds have been used to provide for items such as, but not limited to; rent support, groceries, memorial gifts, funeral expenses, and practical items.

At Christmas about \$5,000 in gift cards was gifted to those in our church family who could use an extra blessing and to bless the widows in our congregation.

In November, we coordinated a food and personal hygiene drive at church to support Community Emergency Services (CES), a local ministry and resource where we direct those in need. In addition to people dropping hygiene supplies off at church, we also offered curbside drop off (items brought in the building by members of the youth group) for those that wanted to drive their items to church but not enter the building due to COVID-19.

Maureen Juarez and Jeanine Bruen as the Faith Community Nurses are part of the Caring Commission and a wonderful asset! They are very aware of needs in our church community and give great counsel on how we can best support those needs. We are thankful for their love, care, and prayer with and for our church body!

This year we had a chance to support the healthcare workers and educators in our church body and recognize their ongoing efforts during COVID-19. We sent to approximately 120 people a card of encouragement and a coffee gift card to let them know our gratefulness for them and our continued prayers for strength, perseverance, and grace during this time.

We had coffee and donuts the first two months of 2020 before the shutdown in March 2020. We have continued to not have food items eaten by groups of people in the church. We had one Sunday in February 2021 where we offered "donuts to go" by handing them out in individual bags outside the front door as folks left the church service. This was a welcomed surprise to the congregation and a great way to support the local Mel-O-Glaze bakery.

We did not host the Thanksgiving Eve Pie Social this year, participate in the Twin Cities Marathon, Minnehaha Falls Park service, nor have our baptism and church family picnic at Triangle Park. Hopefully we can resume some of these things as we move further into 2021!

We pray that God will continue to bless First Free Church and those in our church body and community as we continue to be Christ-centered and Christ-sent, Together.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Foss
Caring Commission Vice Chair

OUTREACH COMMISSION 2021

“Rejoice in the Lord, Always. Again, I say Rejoice.”

The Outreach/Missions Commission members are so very thankful for your generosity in giving to, and your faithfulness in praying for, our Missionaries/Cross-Cultural workers.

This year we have not had much opportunity to interact personally with those we support because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Winter Outreach Weekends, normally held in March, were cancelled in 2020 and 2021. Our Fall Outreach Weekend was cancelled for October 2020. However, we were glad that Andy and Lorna Gilbert with ReachGlobal were able to spend time with us in September and October. Andy gave a challenging message one Sunday morning, and we hope you saw that online. We also hope you have taken advantage of our missionaries' offers to meet with them on Zoom or some other internet platform.

Each week's Wednesday Prayer Guide, put out by First Free's church office, contains summaries of praise and prayer items gleaned from newsletters that our missionaries' email to us. You have an opportunity to familiarize yourselves with those praise and prayer items by accessing the Prayer Guide via email. Let the church office know if you'd like to be added to the list. Our missionaries would also be happy to add you to their email lists. Contact the church office with your requests.

The Commission members have held their meetings via Zoom since the fall of 2020. We have also communicated with a few of our missionaries via Zoom, during our meetings, to become better acquainted. Several of our missionaries have offered to meet with your small group or community group via Zoom. Let the church office know of your interest.

Three of the missionary units we have supported for close to 50 years have informed us of their desire that their financial support be directed to younger missionaries. Accordingly, John and Lori Robb are no longer supported financially. The financial support for Dave and Jan Harthan, and for G.P. and Nancy Foote, will cease as of June 30, 2021.

We are thrilled that Jessica Holliday, who grew up at First Free, has been in training with Youth With a Mission, YWAM, since January 2021. She is on her first assignment in Paraguay, South America, as of April 2021. Please pray with us, for her, that God would direct her future steps. We have had requests from other younger missionaries for financial support. Please pray for the Commission members to make wise decisions. This is my sixth year on the commission, so I am stepping down per First Free policy. Please include the new Chair and the commission members in your prayers.

Please pray for our missionaries. Many of them are on First Free's website with information there about how to contact them directly.

Our missionaries/cross-cultural workers rely on God, and on us, as a supporting church, to meet their financial needs. Our prayer support is vital to their ministries.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Poston
Outreach Commission Chair

FINANCE & PROPERTY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Our Lord has been busy this last fiscal year directing our board in making many much-needed improvements and changes. I am forever blessed working with our dedicated members of the Finance & Property Board: Pete Lehner, Jeremy Kobiush, K.J. Cao, Frank Cupersmith, Tim Lund and Julie Danielson.

This year we embarked on a general plan covering several projects as part of a capital improvements campaign.

The tired old fellowship hall floor (gym) in our north activity building had seen a lot of abuse over more than a half century of use. During the summer we took advantage of the low traffic of the pandemic and replaced it. We utilized a pad and pour polyurethane system that promised to be the most versatile and most long lasting of all the options presented to us. We also took the opportunity to repaint all the walls and install a new drinking fountain to update the space. We even have a setup allowing the court to be used for pickle-ball.

Over the fall, we had the 37 half-century old windows in the activity building also removed and replaced. Due to age, condition and inefficiency, the windows were long overdue for an update. We explored several styles and construction types and settled on an all-aluminum commercial grade version. A company in Rodgers, MN was contracted for the fabrication and installation. After our unfortunate garage break-in last month, we are presently investigating options for more facility security. We have ordered new garage doors and a stronger side entry door.

We negotiated an agreement with Heather's for their use of the south parking lot effective until June 30th—renewed automatically every six months unless terminated. The parking will be on a first come, first serve basis—we reserve the right to close it when needed with notice. They are responsible for snow plowing and we are responsible for its maintenance & signage.

As a result of a major water main leak to the main, the replacement of the valve and a copper pipe was required by a private contractor to expedite time. A sidewalk repair also had to be made to cover over the repairs. For security purposes and to give the south parking lot an unobstructed view, we removed the large over-growth of shrubs on the boulevard. New cabinets were installed in the two nursery rooms. A dishwasher was also added. An appraisal by our insurance company of our roofs: the church, the house, and garage were made. It is presently under consideration by our roofer, we are awaiting their conclusions from the report.

In the next year I would like the board to focus on a few projects as the budget will allow...

- The stain glass window over the main door is in need of renewal. It is in need of a specialty contractor up to the task.
- The brickwork around the building, the most critical concern being the south façade where there is a major outbreak of efflorescence, white stains and spalling. There are also sporadic areas around the building that have similar water damage that should be attended to.
- The landscaping around the building needs some consistent professional caretaking.

I pray along with the rest of the board that our work is in agreement with God's blueprints in the continued improvements and maintenance of First Free properties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Sawyer
Finance & Property Board Chair

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT

**July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021
as of March 31, 2021**

Looking back over the past very challenging year we as a church body should be incredibly thankful—for the faithful and tireless service of our wonderful staff and volunteers and the generosity of our church family! Some patterns in giving right now are different than our historic numbers; the online option has increased from approximately 50% of our giving on a monthly basis to 70+%. December remains our biggest month for contributions, however, this difference is less dramatic than in past years.

As a reminder, the current budget year we had increased our budget by 3.58% over the prior year. The pandemic really changed so much about ministry this past year. Giving so far is 5% lower or \$39,000 less than we had planned, which is amazing considering the stress families have been under this year. Similarly, spending is down, because so much ministry happened online vs. in-person, by \$59,000 therefore we would be approximately \$20,000 in the black without considering PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) Funds. The federal government enabled non-profits to apply for loans which if used as the program outlined, largely to maintain staffing levels, could be converted to a grant. We did apply for these funds and did receive \$111,600 to help sustain us during the pandemic shutdown. Our loan was approved and converted to a grant. These funds help us to be in a strong cash position at this point in the fiscal year.

The numbers:

- We are ahead of our budget projection by \$131,852 including the PPP funds; \$20,252 without PPP funds as of 3/31/21.
- The average weekly income is \$21,877 which is **(\$1,115)** below the budgeted weekly income of \$22,992.
- The cash balance on hand for operations was \$240,394 as of 3/31.

A few other key notes

Personnel Expenses were under budget by \$13,558. We saved some money with the office manager and Children's Ministry Director transitions. We also restructured the Children's Ministry Director position into two positions with a part-time nursery director included—with meeting online we weren't scheduling nursery workers.

One of the larger projects that was completed around the church property this year was having new windows installed on the north addition of the building—in all the classrooms and church offices. Property Reserves were used for this project. You will notice fresh paint in many rooms and our mission statement painted on the gym walls. The only outstanding debt we have is the church van loan with an outstanding balance of \$8,878 with MyCreditUnion. As many of you know, the garage was broken into recently and the van stolen. The van was recovered in a state of disrepair. F&P is in the process of getting the garage doors replaced and the van fixed and ready for use. We are using the current year's capital improvements budget to cover these expenses. F&P is also adding new partitions to the men's bathroom across from the gym downstairs.

The budget being presented for the new fiscal year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 is a 0.6% increase from the current fiscal year budget. We built in a 2% increase in staff salaries. Even with this increase the total salaries expense is less than last year's budget—the restructuring of children's ministry staff playing a part. We added \$8,000 into the Worship budget to enhance our livestream/video abilities. We are building in reserves for future building maintenance and capital improvements of \$18,000 this year. Our budget assumes resuming in-person ministry in the fall of 2021. We were also able to add one new missionary and increase support for several of our missionaries with the retirements of a few while keeping the budget flat for the year.

If there are any specific questions that you have about the church finances, please contact me or Jodi Wiken, Business Administrator. It has been a privilege to serve alongside our church staff and to serve our church body in the role of treasurer these past six years. I am thankful to pass the baton to Jonathan Sannes who is uniquely qualified to assume this role on May 31.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Danielson
Treasurer

FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
PROPOSED BUDGET 2021-2022
July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022
as of April 7, 2021

First Evangelical Free Church
2021-2022 Budget Proposal
4/7/2021

	2021-22 Proposed	2020-21 Forecast	2020-21 Budget	2019-2020 Actual	Higher (Lower) vs.					
					20-21 Fcst		20-21 Budget		19-20 Actual	
					\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
Income										
General	869,751	870,358	863,121	911,528	(607)	-0.1%	6,630	0.8%	(41,777)	-4.6%
Missions/Outreach	168,850	114,759	168,800	102,436	54,091	47.1%	50	0.0%	66,414	64.8%
PPP	-	111,600	0		(111,600)	NM	-	NM	-	
Total Income	1,038,601	1,097,283	1,031,921	1,013,964	(58,682)	-5.3%	6,680	0.6%	24,637	2.4%
<i>Income ex PPP</i>	<i>1,038,601</i>	<i>985,683</i>	<i>1,031,921</i>	<i>1,013,964</i>	<i>52,918</i>	<i>5.4%</i>	<i>6,680</i>	<i>0.6%</i>	<i>24,637</i>	<i>2.4%</i>
Expense										
Personnel/Admin	622,951	563,599	632,180	623,952	59,352	10.5%	(9,229)	-1.5%	(1,001)	-0.2%
Commissions	98,650	31,469	92,697	80,386	67,181	213.5%	5,953	6.4%	18,264	22.7%
Finance & Property	148,150	120,225	138,244	129,404	27,925	23.2%	9,906	7.2%	18,746	14.5%
Outreach	168,850	148,012	168,800	164,244	20,838	14.1%	50	0.0%	4,606	2.8%
Total Expense	1,038,601	863,304	1,031,921	997,987	175,297	20.3%	6,680	0.6%	40,614	4.1%
Net Reserve Build (Release)	-	233,979	0	15,977	(233,979)	NM	-	NM	(15,977)	NM
<i>ex PPP</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>122,379</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>15,977</i>	<i>(122,379)</i>	<i>NM</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>NM</i>	<i>(15,977)</i>	<i>NM</i>