



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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Happy Eastertide BY PAUL ANLEITNER

While we have just made our way through the journey of the Lenten season, the commemoration of Good Friday, and the celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, Christians have historically designated Easter Sunday as the start of a 50-day period of celebration called Eastertide. While there are a number of important implications for what Christ's resurrection means for us, here is just one I want to invite you to ruminate on this Eastertide.

The Gospel authors and the early church witnesses go to great lengths to make it abundantly clear that the resurrected Christ was not just some spiritual ghost floating around. He was bodily raised. He ate meals with people (Luke 24:36-43). He invited people to touch him (John 20:24-29). While they wouldn't have used a term quite like this, the resurrected body of Jesus was made of matter.

For the earliest followers of Jesus, Christ's bodily resurrection meant that God is not calling us to escape our material

bodies and the material world we live in because God is restoring and redeeming his creation, including our flesh and blood bodies. What we do here in the world and who we are right here and now have value that is not going to be discarded but transformed. You are not biding your time waiting for a disembodied afterlife while the world falls apart. In fact, if you go through the entire book of Acts (which takes place after the Resurrection) and look at every public sermon given by the apostles, you'll notice how the apostles do not focus on what happens to you when you die. Instead, their preaching is centered on how the Resurrection brings the rule of heaven to earth.

What these apostles consistently celebrate is that in raising Jesus from the dead, God has vindicated The Way of Jesus as the way that leads to life, demonstrating Jesus is Lord and not Caesar. They boldly announce that a new era of renewal in creation has begun in Christ. Even if our bodies break down before that work of renewal is completed

in creation, we will be raised to life like Christ in a fully redeemed creation to receive the reward for co-laboring with Him in this world. Because Christ, as fully God and fully human, is the only "forever person," we become "forever people" too through the union of our nature to his by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Everything you and I do in this world matters because God is not abandoning or destroying the world just to beam us out of here. "Behold, I make all things new" is the promise of God to us and the whole of creation (Revelation 21:5).

Happy Eastertide.

BAPTISM

BAPTISM CLASS SUNDAY, April 6 @ 9 A.M.

On Easter Sunday, we will be celebrating baptism!
If you would like to be baptized or to learn more about
baptism, please visit firstfreechurch.org/events

Would you like to receive the newsletter via email?
Contact the office at info@firstfreechurch.org

Palm Sunday

APRIL 13

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9:00 a.m. Community Hour

10:30 a.m. Worship Service



Good Friday

APRIL 18

.....

7:00 p.m. Friday Service



Easter Sunday

APRIL 20

.....

9:00 a.m. Worship & Baptism

10:30 a.m. Worship & Baptism



Our Mission:

TO HELP
INDIVIDUALS BECOME
CHRIST-CENTERED &
CHRIST-SENT TOGETHER

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Child Dedication

SUNDAY, MAY 11

Contact the church office if interested



SAVE THE DATE
VBC
JUNE 16-20, 2025

Interested in learning about First Free? Want to become a member? Check out

DISCOVERING FIRST FREE

APR 27 & MAY 4 @ 9 a.m.

Sign up at firstfreechurch.org/events or contact the church office

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Our condolences to the family of Mae Olson who passed away at the age of 94 on March 16.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US AT Terrace on Chicago

By Jake Weikel

Student Pastor

This year's Terrace on Chicago was a tremendous success; I and the rest of the team had a great time putting the whole event together! Throughout the night, I had the privilege of going around to all of the tables and talking to each guest about their experience. Each person I talked to had great things to say. There were many different parts of the night that people pointed out as being particularly impressive. Of course, many people rightfully praised the wonderful food, but people also praised other aspects of the night as well. From the decor, to the servers, to the trip presentation, to the overall scale of the night and amount of work put in, I heard guests give praise to each aspect of the night and remark on how much they were enjoying it.

A funny thing about the night was the amount of praise I was given. I'll be the first to admit that I was not all that crucial to the planning or execution of the event this year. Many of the leaders who have been doing this for years came together and did a lot of the work and allowed me to watch it all happen, see how it all comes together, and then take note for what to do next year. I think this highlights part of what makes Terrace on Chicago such an amazing event: the church engagement.

One of my reflections about TOC this year is amazement at how much buy-in there is from the church for this event. We had over 130 volunteers. We had over 170 attendees. We raised over \$25,000. I hope that those numbers give you the same encouragement that they give me. That is a lot of engagement, a lot of support, and a lot of grace.

Thank you to each of you who volunteered and helped the vision for this year's Terrace on Chicago come to life. Thank you to the leaders and sub-leaders who oversaw each aspect of the night and helped it all to run smoothly. Thank you to those who supported the night and our students with prayer. And finally, thank you to everybody who gave financial support. Through your giving we were able to reach our goal of \$25,000 and dramatically cut the costs of trips for students.

Blessings,

Jake Weikel

