

# FIRST FREE CHURCH

Minneapolis

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# FIRST WORD

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

## "Easter Identity" by: Pastor Joel

At Easter, Christ gave us a new identity. Paul writes, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." (Galatians 2:20).

Our new identity involves two realities. First, through faith in Jesus Christ, we have been united with Christ in his death. Which means I am dead. If I am dead, my achievements no longer distinguish me. After all, dead people don't get good report cards, or sports trophies or gold watches. Being crucified with Christ is a remedy to spiritual pride.

It is also a remedy to spiritual despair. Dead people don't get traffic tickets or get in trouble. Just as our good works do not distinguish us, our failures do not destroy us.

But that's not the end of the story. The second half of this reality is that someone lives. Who lives? Christ lives. Where does he live? In me. I'm not just united to the death of Christ, I am at the same moment united to the life of Christ. Paul is actually saying I have a new identity. Jesus' identity is now mine.

One of the great things about having a teenage daughter who can drive is that I can send her to the gas station. But at today's gas prices when she goes to pay, she can't pay for it. So what does she take? She takes my credit card. She takes my identity. She takes my riches (such as they are) and they become hers. What is mine is put into her account. The credit is hers. Not because she earned it. But because what is mine has been given to her in that moment for that purpose.

Paul tells us that because we're dead and the identity of Christ has become ours, what is true of him has been accounted to you and to me. And that should profoundly change how we think and act.

Ravi Zacharias in his book, "Why Jesus?", tells a story about a little boy who had a rare brain malfunction and lived in an orphanage. One by one, couples kept adopting his housemates. Finally, he asked, "Why doesn't anybody choose me?"

Then a couple from Texas decided to adopt him. His actual name was quite hard to pronounce, so his adoptive parents sent him the name they wanted to give him – Anson Josiah, the initials of which are A.J. As he waited for his new parents to come for him, this little boy kept telling everybody as he pointed to his chest, "You can call me A.J. My name is A.J." Even with the debilitation of disconnected thoughts, this little boy was able to pick up the redeeming power of his new name. He knew he was profoundly loved.

Because of Easter, I am united to the death of Christ and united to the life of Christ. Christ's identity is mine and I know, therefore, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that I am profoundly loved.



**GOOD FRIDAY**  
FRIDAY, APRIL 18TH @ 7:00 P.M.

**&**

**EASTER SUNDAY**  
SUNDAY, APRIL 20TH @ 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.



Group  
**WEIRD ANIMALS**  
Where Jesus' Love Is One-of-a-Kind



**MORE INFO**  
[www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)



**KIDS LOVE WEIRD ANIMALS!**  
**KIDS NEED UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!**  
At this VBC, they'll get both!

Registration begins Sunday, April 27  
VBC is June 16-20.

### VBC IS:

- for Kids entering Grades K-6
- for Volunteers entering Grade 7 to age 99
- for Infants & Preschoolers who have a Parent Volunteering

Contact Beth with any questions at: [beth.brown@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:beth.brown@firstfreechurch.org)

# UPCOMING @ First Free

OUR MISSION  
IS TO HELP  
INDIVIDUALS  
BECOME  
CHRIST-CENTERED  
& CHRIST-SENT  
TOGETHER

Check out our website!

Visit at [www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)

Visit our Facebook page!  
First Free is now on twitter  
@ FEFCMpls

## FIRST FREE STAFF

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"ASSESSMENT RESOURCES" — APRIL 5TH @ 9:00 A.M.  
Elim Faith Community Nursing Spring Networking is hosting a "Assessment Resources event at First Free from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on April 5th. The cost is free (1.8 CEU's). RSVP to Mary Van Der Werf at [mvanderw@elimcare.org](mailto:mvanderw@elimcare.org) or call 952-259-4461.

EXPRESSIONS — APRIL 7TH & 21ST @ 7:00 P.M.  
For those struggling with chronic or devastating disease, join us at 7:00 P.M. in room 103.

MEN'S MARCH MADNESS — MONDAY, APRIL 7TH @ 7:00 P.M.  
Join the men for a guys night out at 7:00 p.m. for games, junk food, and the NCAA finals. NCAA finals begin at 8:00 p.m. Contact Ross Olson for more information.

WOMEN'S GUILD — TUESDAY, APRIL 8TH @ 1:00 P.M.  
Last Women's Guild meeting to break for the year. Contact Phyllis Nordin at 612-724-6251 if you have any questions.

MEN'S SOULSHARE — SATURDAY, APRIL 19TH @ 9:00 A.M.  
Men of all ages are welcome to join us every 3rd Saturday for breakfast and fellowship from now until May 2014. Contact Ross Olson with any questions: 612-824-7691.



**THE DEEP**  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23RD @ 6:30 P.M.  
Come join us for a time of rest, enjoyment, and encounter God through worship and prayer. Childcare will be provided.

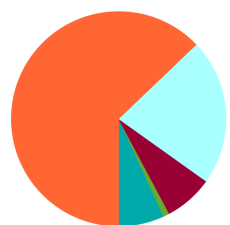
PINEWOOD DERBY — APRIL 26TH  
Start your engines! Get ready for the Pinewood Derby races on April 26th! There will be a potluck and then the derby races shortly after. Contact Doug Nelson or Beth Brown for more info.

ATTENTION 2014 GRADUATES!  
Do you know a soon-to-be graduate of high school, college, or grad school at First Free? Call or email the office and let us know!

## Survey Results Are In!

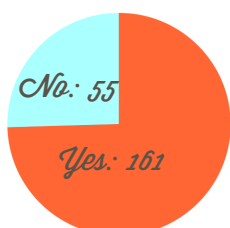
Our results are in! Thank you to all who participated! Sunday morning attendees were given the opportunity to fill out a brief survey in early March as we evaluate how we at First Free are aligning with our new vision and mission. Here is a snap-shot of the responses.

How often on average do you attend a worship service at First Free a month?



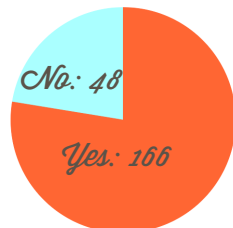
4 Times a Month: 137  
3 Times a Month: 48  
2 Times a Month: 16  
1 Time a Month: 2  
Unanswered: 15

Are you involved in a community group through First Free?



Those who identify themselves as serving in the church: 143  
Those who identify themselves as serving outside the church: 92

Do you currently have a friend/family member that is an unbeliever that you are praying for on a regular basis?



## Church Family News *by: Jeff Dutton, Youth Pastor Search Committee Chair*

The Search is on for our new Youth Pastor..

We are ready. We are set. Let's go! At the Congregational Celebration on February 24th the church body gave our committee the green light to get started on this journey. Once we had approval of the at-large representatives from the congregation the team was set. For the record.. here's the team:

- Alan Peterson, Chair of Church Council
- Tim Audette, Church Council representative appointed by the Council
- Frank Cupersmith, Church Council representative appointed by the Council
- Julie Danielson, Congregational representative at Large
- Johanna Holliday, Congregation representative at Large
- Heather Stacey, Congregational representative at Large
- Jeff Dutton, Chair of Church Council elect (term begins in June)

It's exciting for all of us to see the way God has used Student Ministries to impact our young people. This ministry is a vital part of the work of our church and shapes not only the life of those students, but impacts the greater church body as well. No example is better than the Terrace on Chicago event held last month.

The Search Committee recognizes the importance of this work. Bringing in the right leader for our Student Ministry is critical to continue the growth and success of the youth group. We also need to find the right fit for our church and current ministry leadership/pastoral staff.

At this point we are just beginning to collect candidate resumes. In the weeks ahead we look forward to God's guidance and direction as we seek to fill this role. Please pray for the team as we work together in the coming months and feel free to contact any of the search committee members if you have questions. We will provide an update on our work at the Congregational Celebration in May.

All qualified candidates can be directed to the church website for more information.

<http://www.firstfreechurch.org/employment-opportunities>  
Resumes can be directed to [youthpastorsearch@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:youthpastorsearch@firstfreechurch.org)

## Value #2: Scripture Centered - Treasuring God's Word as our standard for life and faith.

*Editor's Note: Below is the continuation of our discussion of our values and how that drives our mission here at First Free. Be sure to be on the look out for these values to be discussed further in future editions of First Word.*

Seeing our first value - "Intimacy with Jesus," a natural response might be to ask, "How?" Christians are after all far from alone in their pursuit of a relationship with God; what sets Christianity - and our Church - apart is the belief that God has revealed himself to us uniquely and authoritatively in the Bible. In Scripture, God has made himself known to us and invited us to enter into relationship with him. All creation declares the majesty and glory of God, but it is through His Word that we know him and enter into relationship with him.

The Bible is not only tells us who God is, it also tells us who we are. In Scripture we learn that to be truly, fully human is to bear the image of our creator, and in Scripture we are called to reclaim our lost humanity through a transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible is also therefore the authoritative instruction for human living, authored by none other than the designer and creator of human beings. Scripture informs, but is also invites us - to relationship with God and to a fully human existence.

Therefore as a Church, we at First Free strive to put the word of God at the center of our individual lives and our life together. God's Word is the standard by which we judge all claims about God. His Word shapes our life together as the local church, informing our faith and our worship. And Scripture also shapes our individual lives, instructing and transforming us. The Bible, as God's unique and inspired Word, is in other words our final authority, our standard for life and faith.

## CURRENT SERMON SERIES: 24 – TWENTY-FOUR HOURS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

April 6: The Torture and Humiliation of the King  
April 20: V is for Victorious

April 13: A Personal Encounter with Christ  
April 27: V is for Victorious II

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