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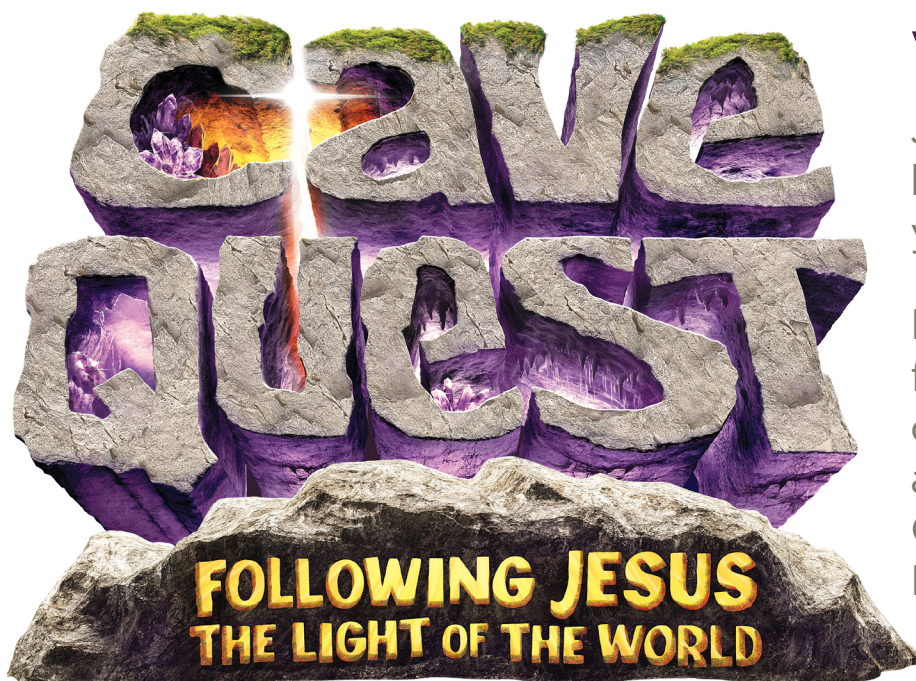
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

APRIL 2016

VBC 2016: JUNE 20-24



VBC KICKOFF!

Join us Sunday, May 1st as we kickoff registration for this year's Vacation Bible Camp!

Be sure to check the website for up to date information on how you can get involved and discover with us the Cave Quest—following Jesus, the Light of the world!

Questions? Contact Beth Brown

They Matter To God BY PASTOR JOEL

Take a look around your neighborhood. Or around your office. Or school. Or park. Do you see them?

They live in the houses next door, they get up every Sunday morning, have a cup of coffee, and read the Star Tribune. But they don't go to church and they don't know Christ and they probably don't even have a relationship with a Christian they respect.

If you believe what the Bible says about the afterlife, you know they are headed for hell. It is like they are in a little world of their own. There are churches on every corner, and yet these people are sitting in their living rooms alone on Sunday mornings. They matter to God. So how are we going to reach them?

Let me give you a two-step strategy. First, invest. Invest in a relationship with someone who is not a believer. On a regular basis, leave the huddle of close Christian fellowship, take some risks and get to know and spend time with non-churched people. This will mean reaching out in the neighborhood, inviting a neighbor over for dinner, golfing with those at work who don't know Christ. We have to build relational bridges over to these people.

I don't know about you, but when strangers approach me, my walls go up. I say, "What's your angle? What do you want"? But when a friend wants to talk to me about something that is important, my walls go down and I say, "Talk to me". I'm open to it, because I know and trust them.

Jesus modeled this type of relational investment.

He sees Zacchaeus up in a tree, stops what He is doing and arranges to have a dinner get-together. And it is in the context of a relationship that Jesus presents the transformational truth of the gospel and Zacchaeus' life changes.

Second, invite. In Romans 10:14 Paul writes, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" They have to hear. Someone has to invite them to take the next step towards Jesus.

Scripture tells us to always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks us what our faith is all about. Do you know how to explain the gospel in a crisp and compelling way?

Invite them to an appropriate program here at First Free—MOPS, or VBC, or Streetfest. We want to partner with you to lead your friends to Christ.

Our mission here at First Free is to help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. It is a mission that is externally focused, pointing us to the lost around us. It is our redemptive heartbeat. Inside this month's First Word, you will read Mordechai's story of investing and inviting. Would you commit to doing the same?

After all, Jesus Christ is the one who has sent us out on mission—to proclaim the gospel everywhere we can, anytime we can, because the stakes are so very, very high.



OUR CURRENT SERMON SERIES: **NO WONDER THEY CRUCIFIED HIM**

Apr. 3 *When Jesus Won't Just Do Brunch*
Apr. 10 *When Jesus Won't Accept Neutrality*
Apr. 17 *When Jesus Won't Look The Other Way*

**OUR MISSION:
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CHRIST-CENTERED
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TOGETHER**

WANT MORE INFO?

Visit www.firstfreechurch.org

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SEE MORE INFO AT:
www.firstfreechurch.org

Living on Mission Investing in Others

Great Tips at Great Clips by Mordechai Hershstein



When getting my hair cut by a young woman who is not a believer on a regular basis we usually have a light conversation about what's going on in our lives. Family, the weather, restaurants, politics, work, holidays, etc. Never too personal. Just light fun conversation.

On one occasion recently we talked about our holiday weekend with family and friends. She began to tell me about the terrible experiences she has had with her boyfriend's family and how much they seemed not to like her. She has a ring in her nose so in my snarky sarcastic tone I said it's probably because of the ring in your nose. We laughed.

Needless to say and obviously it wasn't the ring in her nose as she began to explain that her boyfriend's family were always quite rude to her and ignored her most of the holiday weekend. Especially his mother. So, after she finished cutting my hair G-D came to me and said to pray for her. *Pray that we should have mercy and grace on his mother and family. That they would come to get to know her, accept, understand how sweet and kind she really is and through G-D's mercy and grace comes mercy and grace. That G-D willing, they will see HIS ways through her mercy and grace on them.* So, I asked her if I could pray for her and she accepted.

Well, the next time I got my haircut, I was informed by another stylist that my prayers were heard and answered. The young woman tells her co-workers that it was because of the man that prayed. He prayed and G-D answered. She now talks about having a positive, civil relationship with her boyfriend's family. Especially his mother. I haven't talked to my stylist yet, but next time I see her, together we will let G-D know how much we appreciate HIM and thank HIM. Explaining that thanking G-D for answering our prayers is much more important than when HE answers them.

G-D willing, a seed has been planted as she plants more seeds by excitedly telling others.

BARUCH HASHEM (THANK G-D) through our Savior JESUS the CHRIST.

Church Family News

Congratulations to Matt and Erin Beckett on the birth of their daughter Violet Gwendolyn Beckett! Violet was born on February 28 weighing 9lbs, 1oz, and 21in!

We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Genevieve Anderson. Her funeral was held on Monday, March 21 here at First Free.

This Month @ FIRST FREE

CES Spring Food Drive — Sundays, April 10 & 17

First Free is collecting donations for Community Emergency Services from April 10th through April 17th. Last November, we collected over 1,000 pounds of food and hope to overflow our foyer again. Please pick up a bag and a list of needed items in the foyer. Thank you for helping First Free build a more loving and caring community!

Class 101: April 10 @ 4:00 p.m.

Interested in becoming a member at First Free? Check out our Class 101, Sunday, April 10th at 4:00 p.m. to learn more about what it means to be a member. Contact the church office at info@firstfreechurch.org to sign up.

The DEEP: April 20 @ 6:30 p.m.

Worship. Pray. Refresh. Together. Join us for a time of worship and prayer together at The DEEP on Wednesday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided.

Coming Soon — Annual Celebration, Sunday May 1 @ 11:00 a.m. !

Prior to our Annual Celebration, we will be holding a **Town-hall meeting on Saturday, April 30 at 9:00 a.m.** The Town-hall meeting is for the purpose of answering any questions about our budget or any other matter regarding the church's vision.

On Sunday, May 1, we will have a **single worship gathering at 9:15 am** with our fellowship time to follow and then come together in the sanctuary at **11:00 am for our Annual Celebration.** Nursery, preschool, and K-6 classes meet as normal.

Salem Church Short Term Missions Trip Opportunity

New Salem Church in South Minneapolis, our Spanish language sister congregation, is planning a short term mission trip to Venezuela the first two weeks of June. Contact Salem Church at 612-724-5552 for more details or to sign up.

GOD OF THIS CITY CHILDREN'S MUSICAL

Thank you to all who came and watched the "God of This City" children's musical! We asked some of the kids who participated in the musical what they thought. Here are some of their responses:

What was your favorite part about participating in the musical?

Ava B: Being the raccoon

Vincent G: Singing "Live Out Loud"

Tanner J: Everything-everything that we did was tied to me it was awesome

What do you think was the most important message of the musical?

Abby H: You don't have to go really far to tell someone about Jesus. If you're going to do something you should put time into it and devote yourself to it.

Did anyone that normally doesn't come to First Free come to see you in the musical?

Yes—a lot of people: stepsisters and some friends and their friends might come to First Free and to Camp Shamineau.



TERRACE ON CHICAGO 2016

275 MEALS SERVED
80LBS OF TURKEY
150LBS OF PORK
12HRS SMOKING MEAT
80LBS GREEN VEGGIES
70 IN CHILDCARE
48 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED
1,925 PLATES & CUPS WASHED
\$16,000 + RAISED FOR STUDENT TRIPS

