



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

AUGUST 2020

Re-Gathering BY JOEL SUTTON

Great News!

We will be Re-Gathering for in-person worship on Sunday, August 16th. We will also offer our online worship service for those who are not yet ready to return to the church building.

A week ago, I sent out a short survey concerning our re-gathering as a church for worship. Here are a couple of highlights from those surveys that have been filled out:

•51% of you said you were ready to return at the first opportunity (31% at first opportunity; 20% first opportunity with some concerns and precautions).

•45% said you will wait several weeks or it may be quite a while before you return.

•71% said you feel okay to attend in person wearing a mask.

•22% said you would prefer to worship mask-free at home.

•40% of you who responded were not aware of any risk factor in your household, while another 40% have one risk factor, and the other 20% have two or more risk factors.

First Free is committed to the health and safety of our church family and our community. From the survey above we recognize that everyone has different concerns and we want to honor the decisions each person makes with regard to their health and well-being. Our church family is at different places when it comes to responding to the

pandemic. Nobody should feel pressured to participate in-person until they are comfortable doing so.

Let me remind you of our guiding principle during this Coronavirus pandemic: LOVE—to love one another and to love our neighbors.

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7

We want to continue—especially in these uncertain times—to fulfill our mission of helping individuals become Christ-Centered and Christ-Sent together. So we urge each person to give and receive grace from one another.

Another couple of responses from our survey:

•71% of you stated that you strongly agree you have people in your life that you can count on in a crisis. That is a very good. However, as a church, we want it to become normal for each person, 100% of you, to develop relationships in the church that feel like family.

How do you do that? By recognizing the spiritual importance of being connected to other believers. By finding a small group or community group in the church to be part of and doing life with. This Fall, get connected!

•100% of you stated that you “strongly agree” or “agree” that when you are in crisis, you find your hope in God. Praise God!

Like you, I am thankful for my hope in God. As we continue to live in these uncertain times, might each of us be able to sing with the Psalmist, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.” (Psalm 46:1-2a).

As I am writing this, this is what we know in regards to Phase 4, our Re-Gathering for in-person worship on August 16th:

•We will have one worship service at 10:00 a.m.

•There will be social distancing while in the building.

•No nursery, children’s, student’s or adult classes will be held.

•Masks will be required while in the building. We will have masks available at the door for those who do not have masks.

•There will be no coffee and donut fellowship time.

•Our greeters and hospitality team will not initiate a physical greeting - ie handshakes, hugs, etc. They are not intending to be unfriendly, but to reduce the possibility of transmission.

•There will be a family friendly option for worship in the gym around round tables, so younger elementary age children can draw or color and they can also move around.

Velocity Student Ministries Summer Events



This summer Velocity Students attended a Virtual Challenge conference.

And Middle School Students enjoyed the great outdoors at Rock Ridge!

Stay up to date with these links:

Velocity Students:
firstfreechurch.org/students

Creekside Friends:
firstfreechurch.org/children

Watch Sunday Sermons:
firstfreechurch.org/sermons
OR [firstfreetv](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) on YouTube

NEED PRAYER?

Submit a prayer request online at
Firstfreechurch.org

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

WANT MORE INFO?

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SEE MORE INFO AT:
www.firstfreechurch.org



STAYcation Bible Camp



Vacation Bible Camp certainly looked different at First Free this year! We got creative and had STAYcation Bible Camp and 235 kids participated.

We had families come to church to pick up packets, which contained crafts, Bible stories, activities, snacks, Bible buddies, and VBC music. We also provided five days of VBC videos which had a brief time of teaching, music videos, stories of kids learning God's truths, and announcements. We were thrilled that so many kids could hear that through God's power, He can pull us through! Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped to make this year possible. And for those of you who normally volunteer, we missed you and hope to see you again for next year's VBC!



Over \$1300 given to support African American churches in Minneapolis.

Immediately following the killing of George Floyd and the riots in Minneapolis, First Free set up a fund to support African American churches and ministries in Minneapolis. Those monies are going to the One Fund, a fund that offers grants to local black churches as they proclaim the truth of the Gospel and demonstrate the love of God to the vulnerable communities they serve.

You can learn more about the One Fund at bethechurchmn.com/onefund

ROADMAP TO IN-PERSON GATHERING UPDATE:

Phase 4

Starting on August 16th!

Phase 4: In-Person Sunday Worship

In this phase, we will once again re-gather for Sunday morning worship along with an online service for those who feel more comfortable worshipping from home.

Some differences you will notice about Sunday mornings...

- Social distancing will be required in the building.
- We will not have our coffee & donut fellowship time in the gym.
- Services may be shortened so that people are not in one room too long.
- We will not be passing the plate for giving. There will be an offering box in the back of the sanctuary where donations can be received. Online giving is encouraged.
- Our practice of Communion will be modified to promote the health of our community.
- Masks will be required to be worn. We will provide complimentary masks at the entrance.
- Our greeters and hospitality team will not initiate physical greetings such as handshakes, hugs, etc. They are not intending to be unfriendly or cold, but to reduce the possibility of transmission. All in the community are encouraged to consider alternate greetings in large gatherings besides handshakes.
- There will be no nursery, children's ministry, or student ministry.
- For 10 days after the start of a fever and for 48 hours after symptoms are resolved, a person is asked to worship at home for the care and well being of the community.

Our Church isn't closed. Our Church is deployed



Photos from some of our small groups and community groups meeting together, socially distant, and being the Body of Christ.

Church Family News

- Congratulations to Keri and David Graden on the birth of their daughter Polly James Graden!
- Our condolences to the family of Robert Johnson, who passed away at the age of 82.
- Our condolences to the family of Mary Kay Brown, who passed away at the age of 74.

From the Caring Commission:

Thank you for your gifts!

Thank you to all who have contributed to First Free's Benevolent Fund. The Caring Commission has been able to assist and bless people within our church community because of your generosity. It is so beautiful to be able to share our God-given resources with our community of believers. Thank you.

Correction from June/July Issue of First Word:

Stacey Urbanz; our new Nursery Director has been attending First Free Church since 2008, not 2018.