



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
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# First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

AUGUST 2023

## Seeking God's Face BY JOEL SUTTON

What if God were on Facebook? What would his profile page look like?

If he approached Facebook the way most of us do, John Ortberg suggests it might look like this:

### THE DEITY

**Relationship status:** Triune and serenely blissful

**Number of friends:** I only know

**Unfriended:** List currently blocked

**Photos:** None available (see second commandment)

**Timeline:** From the beginning—Created the world, didn't I?

**What's on your mind?:** What isn't?

**Recent posts:** My book is still the all-time bestseller and the bestseller every year. Now have billions of worshipers. What ever happened to Zeus?

Isn't it good that God is not on Facebook? Praise God that we are called to seek His face, not His facebook.

David in Psalm 27 yearning for intimate communion with God writes, "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord . . . . You have said, "Seek my face"; My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." (vs. 4, 8).

The Hebrew word for "face" in the Old Testament is often translated "presence." When we seek the face of God, we are seeking His presence. We are seeking to really know Him.

What comes to your mind when you think about God?

In his book *Soul Searching*, Christian Smith summarizing perceptions about God that are prevalent in the church and in contemporary culture today says that most young evangelicals believe in what could best be described as "moral, therapeutic deism".

*Moral* implying that God wants us to be nice. He rewards the good and withholds from the naughty.

*Therapeutic* meaning that God just wants us to be happy.

*Deism* meaning that God is distant and not involved in our daily lives. God may get involved occasionally, but on the whole, God functions like an idea not a personal being actively present in our world.

According to Smith, this is the version of God that's prevalent in our culture and in our churches. But we can't grow in our relationship with God when we insist on relating to God as we think he should be.

A.W. Tozer wrote, "Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer the question, "What comes into your mind when you think about God?" we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. . . . Without a doubt the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God."

In another place Tozer wrote, "To be right, we must think worthily of God. It is morally imperative that we purge from our minds all ignoble concepts of the Deity and let Him be the God in our minds that He is in His universe."

In other words, the best thing we do, as Christ-followers is to encounter God and re-discover God-as-he-is, God as revealed in the Bible. We need to seek His face.

This August, each Sunday morning we are going to attempt to do just that—we are going to seek the face of God. We are going to look in Scripture to focus, not primarily on our needs, but on God's nature. We are going to think worthily about God, who He is—His majesty, holiness, sufficiency and goodness.

During the Israelites stay at Mt. Sinai, there was one Israelite who from personal experience knew about God's radiant face—Moses. Whenever Moses met with God he would emerge from that divine encounter with the divine glory reflected on his own face.

That is what happens after encountering God. You return changed.

*"Without doubt, the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God and the weightiest word in any language is its word for God."*  
A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

## FALL KICKOFF DATES

Welcome Home Sunday | September 10th  
Community Hour @ 9 a.m. Worship @ 10:30 a.m.

Velocity Kickoff | September 13th  
6:30-8:30 p.m.

Women's Neighborhood Bible Study | September 13th  
Wednesdays @ 9:30 a.m.

MOPS & MomsNext | September 15th  
Thursdays @ 9:30 a.m.

Creekside Clubs Begins | September 20th  
6:30-8:30 p.m.

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

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**MOPS & MOMSNEXT**

**What:** A moms group complete with fellowship, food, coffee, and childcare. We believe Better Moms Make a Better World. We are an open, accepting place for all mothers of school-age kids to experience authentic community, personal growth, practical help, and spiritual hope.

**When:** Starting September 15th, 2 Fridays a month during the school year. From 9:30-11:30 a.m.

**Where:** First Evangelical Free Church, Minneapolis, MN

**Who:** All Mothers, Pregnancy through School Age

Join via [firstfreechurch.org/mops](http://firstfreechurch.org/mops)  
Questions: [mops@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:mops@firstfreechurch.org)

**STAFF UPDATE: JASON PENSA, STUDENT PASTOR**

This fall, Pastor Jason Pensa will start his classwork towards a Masters in Counseling at Bethel University. Over the past few years Jason has experienced an increasing burden to help those who are hurting and struggling. His goal, following his graduation, will be to help individuals on a deeper level process through the stuff of life and is excited to see what doors God opens.

What does that mean for our church and our student ministries? Because this program allows students to pursue their degree while working, Jason will be cutting back to three-quarters time. He will remain on staff. He will continue to lead our student ministry. And thankfully, because Jason has equipped the adult volunteer leaders and students to do the work of the ministry, we are confident that our Velocity Student Ministry will continue to propel students toward Jesus Christ.



**NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY**

At the end of June we held our annual Neighborhood Block Party. We invited our neighbors to join us for food, activities and fellowship. Thank you to Apex for their help with this event!



**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

- Happy 75th wedding anniversary to Margaret and Norbert Jensen!
- Baptisms at Lake Nokomis: Liliana Ogren, Christina Boyum, Garrett Boyum, Oliver Morrison, Sasha Morrison, Lev Morrison, and Brad Manos.

**VACATION BIBLE CAMP RECAP**

We had an amazing week of Vacation Bible Camp in June this year! We had **106 campers** join us for the week and we had the help of over **103 volunteers** help to make VBC possible. During the week we learned five Bible Points:

When life feels dark...shine Jesus' light!

When people don't get along...shine Jesus' light!

When good things happen...shine Jesus' light!

When people are sad...shine Jesus' light!

When people need help...shine Jesus' light!

Kids moved around stations, getting the opportunity to learn about shining Jesus's light by making crafts, playing outside games, hearing Bible stories from various Biblical characters, watching videos of real kids navigating the world, and by having Stellar snacks! Skits, songs, and experiments helped kids learn about God while having lots of fun!

The space theme of STELLAR was all around the church with decorations everywhere. And kids had the opportunity to daily write out their God sightings on stars and add them to the starry sky wall.

Our mission project was to raise money to provide chickens to families in poverty through Compassion International. The kids and leaders raised a total of **\$1754.79**, which was enough money to buy around **877 chickens!**

I love seeing the kids at First Free SHINE JESUS' LIGHT! Praise God for such an amazing week of VBC.

Carrie Boyum | Children's Ministry Director



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