



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
5150 CHICAGO AVE S.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55417

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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

AUGUST 2016

Ordinary Missionaries BY PASTOR JAY

Like its counterpart Luke, the book of Acts is a carefully organized volume. We moved geographically from Jerusalem in Acts 1 to Rome in Acts 28, just as the gospel has been "sent to the gentiles" (Acts 28:28). The result is that in the 28 chapters of the book we get to watch as Jesus' great commission to his followers reaches its fulfillment (1:8). We watch as they witness to him first in Jerusalem (Acts 2) and eventually work their way out to the "ends of the earth" where Paul witnesses boldly to Jesus among Jews and gentiles alike in Rome (Acts 28). It is an exciting and well crafted journey that reveals the startling growth and reach of the Kingdom after only a few decades.

To tell that story, Acts understandably follows some of the key leaders of the early church: Peter, Paul, James, John, etc. But what is almost more startling to me than the sudden growth and spread of the church or even than the incredible work of the apostles is the work done by the "ordinary" believers that went ahead of them. They are easy to miss, but they are all over the New Testament, working quietly but effectively all over the world.

One of the places you see them is in Paul's letter to the church in Rome. In

Romans 1:11-12, in the introduction to his letter, Paul explains that he longs to come and visit the church in Rome, so that they may encourage one another. What is interesting to me is that Paul - who we often think of as this dynamic, trailblazing missionary (which he is), is writing ahead to the church in Rome. Paul has not yet been to Rome, and yet here already is an assembly of believers loyal to Jesus. And in fact, this is often the case. No matter where he goes, Paul finds that the gospel has gone there ahead of him. How does it get there?

The answer is that "ordinary" missionaries beat Paul (and Peter and John) to the punch. If we look, we can easily find two groups of people who heard and believed and took the gospel with them. In Acts 2, Peter preaches to a crowd of Jewish pilgrims "from every nation under heaven" (2:8). These people believed, but then eventually, *they went home*. They took the gospel with them, and apparently shared it with friends and neighbors. Later, in Acts 8, we read that following the death of Stephen (where Paul was an approving spectator, 8:1), a severe persecution of the church in Jerusalem scattered the believers. And what did those scattered believers do?

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went (8:4)."

The church needs Pauls and Peters, but it also needs Priscillas and Aquillas - and arguably, it needs more of the latter. The apostles did amazing things, performed signs and wrote great works of theology that still engage the most brilliant minds of our day. But most of the work was done by people like you and me: "ordinary" people who heard and believed and shared that good news with the people in their lives.

Our church-wide goal this next year is that 50% of our congregation would have one meal a month with someone far from God for the purpose of being friends. That goal is modeled on the "ordinary missionaries" of the New Testament as much as it is on anyone. Yes, God raises up certain people for certain times, but most of the time most of the work is done by people like us, people who hear, believe and then share that good news with the people in our lives. And if you don't believe that can change communities, cities and the world, just ask Paul - who traveled to the ends of the earth only to find that the gospel had already beat him there.

First Free Blood Drive

Thank you to everyone who donated blood on June 27th. There were 22 units of blood donated at the First Free Blood Drive. That amount of blood has the potential to save 62 lives! It was 81% of the goal set by the Memorial Blood Center.

This year 10 people who signed up to donate blood were deferred from doing so. The major reason for this was that their hemoglobins were lower than what was acceptable to donate. With a low hemoglobin one can feel tired and listless. One way to improve hemoglobin is to increase the intake of iron rich foods and protein.

At the Welcome Desk in the back of the sanctuary is a list of Iron rich foods. Please feel free to take one. We desire that everyone at First Free be more healthy and energetic.

-Dee Huanca and Maureen Juárez

FALL KICK-OFF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Join us as we kickoff the Fall season here at First Free! We'll be returning to our two Worship Gatherings at 9:15 & 11:00 a.m. with our community groups, K-12 classes, and Sunday schools starting up.

YOUTH GROUP KICK-OFF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Welcome to another great start of the school year with Youth Group resuming September 14th at 6:30 p.m.! We are looking forward to growing in Christ together this school year.

CREEKSIDE CLUBS KICK-OFF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Creekside Clubs for grades 1-6 resume September 21st at 6:30 pm. See you there!



OUR CURRENT SERMON SERIES: CHARACTERS OF FAITH

JULY 31	Troy Holliday preaching	AUGUST 21	Jonah
AUGUST 7	Teen Challenge	AUGUST 28	Rahab
AUGUST 14	Jephthah	SEPT. 4	Elisha

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

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Cave Quest VBC 2016

BY BETH BROWN

During the week of VBC the hallways of First Free were transformed into caves inspired by different caves from around the world. We were amazed by the record number of boys and girls who came to VBC this year. Thank you to our church family for your prayers and donations that made VBC happen. Here are a few facts from the week:

A record 363 boys and girls attended (the last two years we had 300): 317 K-6th graders, 23 preschoolers, and 23 in the nursery.

Only 122 of the 363 children were from First Free. Two-thirds of the children were from outside First Free!

During the week \$2500 was raised to help 4 refugee families get homes started in Minnesota through Arrive Ministries.

150 volunteers served during the week of VBC ; nearly 30 of them wanted to help out even though they don't go to First Free!

The volunteers consumed 38 gallons of iced coffee from the "Bat Cave".

The Lord blessed us with absolutely beautiful weather.

Most importantly, each person was encouraged to Follow Jesus, the Light of the World!

THANK YOU to our amazing VBC team who worked hard to make it run smoothly:

JoAnn Burns, Kari Taylor, Pam Owen, Katie Bormes, Erika Garcia, Katie Goodman, Jan Nyholm, Mary Chantland, Becki Koblielush, Vanessa Beckett, Paulette Goodman, Cheryl Conrad, Mallory Hueckman, Amy Anun, Courtney Hunter, Katie Klenk, Jessica McWilliams, Rachel Olson, Mike Graff, and Jason Pensa. And thank you to our entire staff who all gave time & energy to VBC!

Caving Director,
Beth Brown



363
boys & girls
2/3
outside First Free
150
volunteers
\$2500
raised for refugee
families



Challenge 2016

BY JASON PENSA

Hey First Free! Wow, what a great week we had in Louisville, KY for Challenge 2016! Thank you so much for your support and your prayers. We had a blast! Students were challenged to "live sent", to understand who God is, and to understand who they are and why they're here on Earth. They got to hear about God the Father which makes us a Family, God the Son who came to Serve which makes us Servants, and God the Holy Spirit who empowers us to be missionaries. If you put that together, that means we are a family of servant missionaries. What a great way to think about who we are in Christ! Here's what some of our students had to say about Challenge:

"One of the most influential parts of my week at Challenge was the worship. The worship throughout the week ranged from singing with Seventh Hour in an auditorium with thousands of other Christians to singing in hotel lobbies with ten other people. Praising God and surrounding myself with other believers really helped me realize God works through the big and the small."

- Emma Burns

"I learned that God and the Holy Spirit are just as active today as they were in the days of Jesus. If we are to witness its work in our everyday lives, we truly need to put all of our faith in the Lord above."

- Gabe Hansen

"Since Jesus restored my life, and I have new life in Him, I want to choose to live sent. I am no longer going to be afraid or worried about the direction of my life, but instead, give it up to God, because my life isn't about me but about what God can do through me within my life."

- Maria Sorenson



Church Family News

We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Doris Poot, who recently passed away. Her funeral was held on Tuesday, July 5 here at First Free.

We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Jan Rinke, who recently passed away. Her funeral was held on Saturday, July 16th here at First Free.

Congratulations to Erin & Rigoberto Hernandez on the birth of their daughter, Emmalea, who was born on June 24th!

This Month @ FIRST FREE

Teen Challenge Choir: August 7

Join us for our single worship gathering on Sunday, Aug. 7 at 9:15 a.m. and hear the Teen Challenge Choir.

Baptism & Picnic at Lake Nokomis: August 7

After our worship gathering on Sunday, Aug. 7, join us at Lake Nokomis to celebrate those being baptized with a picnic to follow. The church will provide sandwiches, drinks, and dessert. If you plan to come to the picnic, please bring your own chairs or picnic blanket, and something to share according to last name: A-F chips; G-K vegetable tray; L-S salads; T-Z fruit.

Expressions: August 7

Expressions is a support group for those dealing with chronic illness or pain. Join us from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in room 103.

Quarterly Celebration: August 15

Join us as we celebrate all that God has done and is doing at First Free at our Quarterly Celebration, Monday, Aug. 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Health Care Directives: August 21 & 28

Come to a meeting with First Free Church's Faith Community Nurses to learn about filling out a Health Care Directive. A Health Care Directive gives your designated health care agent the ability to carry out your personal care choices in the event of injury or illness that leaves you unable to make your own medical decisions. Aug. 21 or 28 at 11:00 a.m. in Room 104.

Serve Minneapolis Together: August 21-27

This year, we are encouraging you to find a place to serve together with your small group during the week of August 21-27. If your group needs help finding a location, or if you would like to find a group to serve with, contact Pastor Jay at Jay.Pound@firstfreechurch.org.

Summer Student Ministries Celebration: August 28

Did you support and/or pray for our students that attended Challenge and/or Speed BUMP? Join us during the Fellowship Time on Sunday, Aug. 28th after church at 10:30 a.m. to hear what students learned and experienced.

Summer Worship Schedule: Sundays, July 3-Sept. 4 @ 9:15 a.m. only

We will have one worship gathering at 9:15 a.m. through September 4. There will be no adult community groups or K-12 classes.

SEE MORE INFO AT:
www.firstfreechurch.org