



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

AUGUST 2017

FALL KICK-OFF
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Join us as we kick off the fall season here at First Free! We'll return to our two Worship Gatherings with community groups and K-12 classes starting up.

YOUTH GROUP KICK-OFF

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Welcome to another great start of the school year with Youth Group resuming September 14th at 6:30 p.m.!

CREEKSIDE CLUBS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Creekside Clubs start September 21st at 6:30 p.m. for kids grades 1-6. See you there!

WOMEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDY:

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Join us Wednesday, September 13th, 9:30-11 a.m. at the church as we start a new study. Free childcare provided for kids ages infant to 5 years. Questions? Contact Patty Mellema.

You Are What You Celebrate BY JAY POUND

As I prepared to "be" Gideon for VBC, and then to preach about Gideon, my initial response to the story was the same as it has been for years: I was staggered by the foolishness of the Israelites, by their capacity to forget and abandon God. When you think about their history from Egypt up until the time of the Judges, it seems almost impossible to comprehend. Surely they remembered what God had done to rescue them from Egypt? Surely they could not have forgotten how God had miraculously given them victory, first over Pharaoh and then over the Canaanites? How could people who had seen such things possibly turn from their God? And yet they did. Repeatedly.

But why? Why did Israel turn from God in the near-immediate aftermath of those displays of God's power and grace? Then I realized, the answer was simple: Israel had what they wanted. The pattern, repeated throughout the entirety of Judges and really all of Israel's history goes like this:

1. Israel abandons God and worships other gods.
2. Having abandoned their source of victory (God), Israel is defeated by

- her neighbors.
3. In their distress, Israel turns back to God and cries for help.
4. God, in his grace, hears and delivers them by raising up a Judge.
5. See Step 1

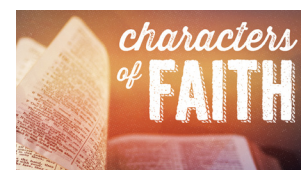
In fact, the author of Judges articulates this pattern right at the beginning of the book, in Judges 2:11-19, so that we might better understand what is to come. And so the pattern goes with each of the Judges: Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson and so on.

As I looked at this pattern again, it struck me that it may be that Israel turns from God not in spite of getting what they want, but perhaps because of it. After all, when they are in distress, in need, they turn to God. They pray frequently and fervently for aid. They remember to turn to him in trouble, the problem is that they stop when they have what they want, what they need. Perhaps they stop praying, stop worshipping and obeying not because they have "forgotten," but rather because they simply don't want anything more from God at the moment.

But as soon as I made that connection, I realized that I recognize that pattern

from somewhere else: my own life. Looking back over my own life, I realized I often follow a similar pattern. I give God far more time, far more energy, far more attention when I am in need - or in a crisis. And yet when God faithfully, even miraculously answers my prayers, all of those things tend to drop off. I haven't forgotten what God did, I just have what I needed.

This, it seems to me (and apparently the author of Judges), is human nature, or we might say fallen nature. But rather than feeling guilty about the past, perhaps what we need to do is change our pattern for the future. In some ways it is natural to turn to God in times of trouble, and natural to relax when things are good. So if we are to break the pattern and forge a new one, we need to need to take celebration seriously. We need to pour the kind of passion and energy into giving thanks that we naturally pour into making urgent petitions. Whether we are talking individuals, churches or cultures, you are what you celebrate. Let's learn from Israel's past (and our own), and make a point to turn to God both in need and in celebration. Let's forge a new pattern.



CURRENT SERIES: CHARACTERS OF FAITH

AUG. 6	Teen Challenge Choir	AUG. 27	Student Missions Celebration
AUG. 13	Habakkuk	SEPT. 3	Nehemiah
AUG. 20	Samuel		

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

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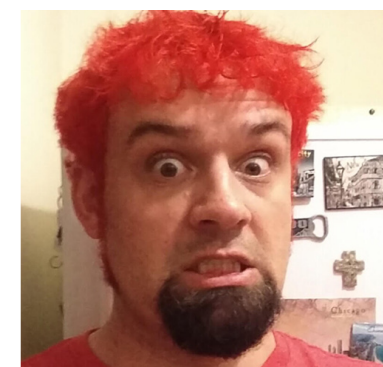
VBC Maker Fun Factory

Vacation Bible Camp is always a fun and very busy week! Over 300 kids came to Maker Fun Factory and learned about how God created them for a purpose. With Beth Brown on sabbatical, volunteers stepped up and took on the task of leading VBC this year. JoAnn Burns and Kari Taylor served as the VBC Directors and we had 153 other volunteers making everything run smoothly.

Almost \$4,000 was raised for Nicaragua. The team going on the youth ministry mission trip will be able to give their partnering church in Nicaragua funds to finish their church building and classrooms. The team will also use the money to distribute food baskets in the community and fund a kids' club program. As a reward for meeting their goal, student ministry pastor Jason Pensa agreed to dye his hair!

Thank you to all our volunteers and to our church family for your prayers and donations! And a huge thank you to the VBC leadership team for all your hard work:

JoAnn Burns, Kari Taylor, Carrie Boyum, Kim Sorensen, Rick Olson, Katie Bormes, Emily McCoy, Amy Anan, Courtney Hunter, Paulette Goodman, Vanessa Becket, Rachel Olson, Becki Kobiellush, Jessica McWilliams, Ari Owens, Katie Klenk, Katie Goodman, Erika Garcia, Rachel Olson, Mike Graff, and Jason Pensa.



Church Family News

Congratulations to Tina and Zechariah Putney on the birth of their son, Joshua Samuel Putney, who was born on May 21st.

Congratulations to David and Keri Graden on the birth of their daughter, Nellie Ann Graden, who was born on July 2nd.

Happy birthday to Betty Carlson turned 90 on June 9th and to Bernice Hultstrand who turned 94 in July!

Meet Jeanine Bruen

With Dee Huanca retiring from her role as a Faith Community Nurse, we are excited to welcome Jeanine to the team!



Jeanine received her BS In Nursing from Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe, Louisiana. She worked in her hometown hospital in Sulphur, Louisiana as a staff nurse and nurse supervisor before heading overseas to Kazakhstan as a missionary nurse from 1997-2004. After returning to the states to marry her husband Charles Bruen, Jeanine worked in several clinics as a staff nurse and supervisor in Dallas and Minneapolis.

Charles and Jeanine moved to Minneapolis in 2008 and have attended First

Free since then. Jeanine, Charles and their son live in South Minneapolis. She has served on the worship team and taught children's Sunday school. She is on leadership for MOPS and attends the Women's Wednesday bible study. Jeanine is excited to attend the Faith Nursing Class this fall.

Thank you to Dee Huanca for her years of serving and caring for our community! Dee has been on staff at First Free for 12 years and has been involved with the church even longer. Dee will still help out with the Faith Community Nurses from time to time, but is looking forward to the extra room in her schedule that retirement will bring.

The Faith Community Nurses have a lot going on this fall! They are offering a health care directives workshop on August 13th and 20th, an Alzheimer's and dementia class on Tuesdays in September, CPR/AED/Epi Pen training on September 17th, and Stepping On (a fall prevention workshop) in October.

Check out firstfreechurch.org/nursing for more information. Email nurses@firstfreechurch.org with any questions.

This Month @ FIRST FREE

Lake Nokomis Baptism & Picnic: August 6

After the worship gathering on Sunday, August 6th, join us at Lake Nokomis to celebrate those being baptized with a picnic to follow. Contact the church office or talk to a pastor if interested in being baptized. The church will provide sandwiches, drinks, and chips. 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-I fresh fruit or vegetable tray, J-Q salads, R-Z desserts.

Health Care Directives Class: August 13, 20

Learn about filling out a health care directive, which 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. August 13th and 20th at 11:30 a.m.

Serve Minneapolis: August 16

Serve Minneapolis 2017! Join us this year as serve our neighborhood together on Wednesday evening, August 16th. Save the date and check the website for more details. Sign up through the website, at the Welcome Desk, or by contacting the church office.

Student Missions Celebration: August 27

Join us as we celebrate our students and the awesome experiences they had this summer at Lead the Cause and in Nicaragua! Hear students share about what they learned and how God worked during the worship gathering at 10:00 a.m. and stick around to talk to them more during fellowship time.

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