



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

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## Name Above All Names BY JOEL SUTTON

Families and children around the world have grown to love a special retelling of the biblical story line from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* written by Sally Lloyd-Jones. In her introduction to the big story of the Bible, Jones writes:

“There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them. It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. And at the center of the Story there is a baby. Every story in the Bible whispers his name. He is like the missing piece in a puzzle—the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together, and suddenly, you can see a beautiful picture.”

God’s plan, from the very beginning was to glorify himself in the salvation of the human race. And the center of that plan, the missing puzzle piece throughout the Old Testament, was his Son, Jesus Christ, born on Christmas morning.

So who is Jesus?

Philip Yancey in his book, *The Jesus I Never Knew* relates a story about how Richard Nixon, back in 1969 got carried

away with excitement when the Apollo astronauts first landed on the moon. “It is the greatest day since Creation!” crowed the president, until Billy Graham corrected him by reminding him of Christmas and Easter.

We all need to be reminded about who Jesus is? In his first two years of His ministry Jesus taught the disciples who He was. In Mark 8:27 Jesus asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They gave the responses of the crowds, “John the Baptist...Elijah...one of the prophets”. Jesus then asks, “Who do you say I am?” And Peter responds, “You are the Christ.”

Richard Baxter wrote, “The heart of the gospel is to know God.” The problem is that so many times our picture of God is warped. It is inaccurate. It is wrong.

And when our concept of who Christ is and what He has done for us is wrong, our response to Him is also mistaken. It is very difficult to yield your life to someone who you do not know properly!

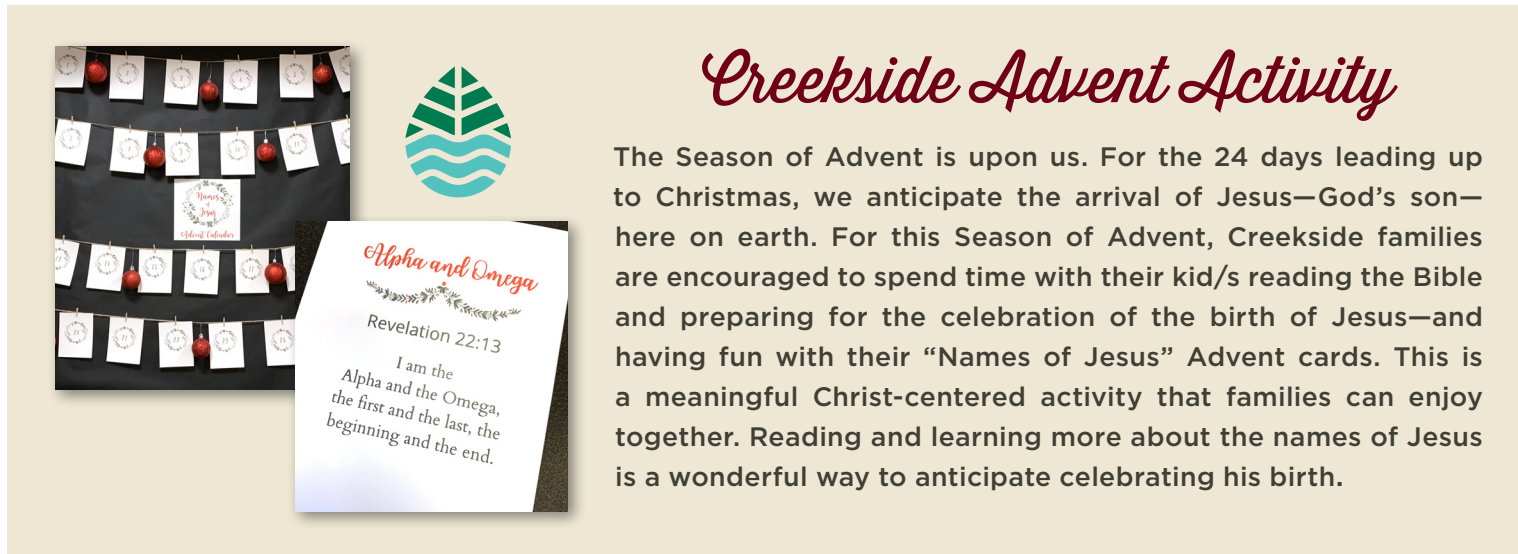
As we come into this Christmas season, we need to be reminded who Jesus is. There are many names for Christ in Scripture. In fact, according to *Cruden’s*

*Concordance*, there are 198 different names and titles of Jesus in the Bible. So during this Advent season we are going to look at five of them: the Word, Chief Cornerstone, Our Bridegroom, the Morning Star, and the Lamb of God. Each of these names carries with it a significant meaning; a unique understanding of who Christ—the one whose birth we celebrate on Christmas morning—really is.

This Christmas season, I invite you to join us, not only to celebrate, but to get to know Christ all over again. As the Apostle Paul says, “God...gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.” Philippians 2:9-11.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM FIRST FREE!**

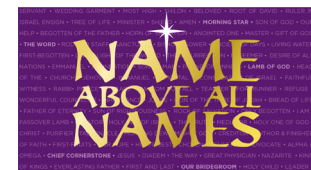


### Creekside Advent Activity

The Season of Advent is upon us. For the 24 days leading up to Christmas, we anticipate the arrival of Jesus—God’s son—here on earth. For this Season of Advent, Creekside families are encouraged to spend time with their kid/s reading the Bible and preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus—and having fun with their “Names of Jesus” Advent cards. This is a meaningful Christ-centered activity that families can enjoy together. Reading and learning more about the names of Jesus is a wonderful way to anticipate celebrating his birth.

## Community Emergency Service Food and Hygiene Drive

Community Emergency Service is a Minneapolis nonprofit that provides high-quality direct service to people in need. Through direct aid relief, advocacy, referral, guidance and prayer support, CES seeks to strengthen families and individuals. This past November our food and hygiene products drive collected **70 bags** of donations—approximately **500 pounds!** Thank you to everyone who contributed!



### ADVENT SERMON SERIES: NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

- |         |   |         |                                     |
|---------|---|---------|-------------------------------------|
| NOV. 28 | <i>The Word</i> (John 1)                | DEC. 19 | <i>Morning Star</i> (Rev. 22:12-16) |
| DEC. 5  | <i>Chief Cornerstone</i> (Eph. 2:19-22) | DEC. 24 | <i>Lamb of God</i> (John 1:29-34)   |
| DEC. 12 | <i>Our Bridegroom</i> (Matthew 25:1-13) |         |                                     |

*Our Mission:*

TO HELP  
INDIVIDUALS  
BECOME  
CHRIST-CENTERED  
& CHRIST-SENT  
TOGETHER

## FIRST FREE STAFF

JOEL SUTTON  
SENIOR PASTOR  
joel.sutton@firstfreechurch.org

JAY POUND  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org

PAUL ANLEITNER  
WORSHIP PASTOR  
paul.anleitner@firstfreechurch.org

JASON PENZA  
STUDENT PASTOR  
jason.penza@firstfreechurch.org

CARRIE BOYUM  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR  
carrie.boyum@firstfreechurch.org

STACEY URBANZ  
NURSERY DIRECTOR  
stacey.urbanz@firstfreechurch.org

MAUREEN JUAREZ &  
JEANINE BRUEN  
FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES  
nurses@firstfreechurch.org

SCOTT BECKETT  
FACILITIES TECHNICIAN  
scott.beckett@firstfreechurch.org

JOANN BURNS  
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR  
joann.burns@firstfreechurch.org

DAN FERGUS  
TECH DIRECTOR/COMMUNICATIONS  
dan.fergus@firstfreechurch.org

SARAH OLSON  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
sarah.olson@firstfreechurch.org

JODI WIKEN  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR  
jodi.wiken@firstfreechurch.org

EMMA BURNS  
WORSHIP INTERN  
emma.burns@firstfreechurch.org

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# Loving Our Neighbors

By David McCoy

In Matthew 22:36-40 we are given a glimpse into God's priorities, when Jesus is asked a blunt question:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."**

***So then, what does it mean to love your neighbor?***

Jesus is asked this in Luke 10, and responds with the famous parable of the Good Samaritan. In the conclusion of that one, Jesus asks a question of His own:

**"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"** The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, **"Go and do likewise."**

So our instructions are clear: God wants us to love our neighbors, and He is clear about who our neighbors are and what loving them looks like. And he says the only commandment more important than that is loving God Himself.

Wow. We should probably take that one pretty seriously then.

One of the ways we are doing that at First Free is through our support of Arrive Ministries. This is a Christian nonprofit that assists refugees with resettlement in America—specifically here in Minnesota. Quite literally, to show the love of Christ to our new neighbors. We've been financial supporters of Arrive for many years, and in recent years we've been more involved tangibly as well, providing housing in two properties we own at a discounted rate, and forming a Good Neighbor team to walk alongside these families during their first year in Minneapolis.

In the past several weeks, that team has been preparing to welcome a new family from Afghanistan. People from all across First Free have reached out and offered items to this family—from bedding to furniture to clothes to toys to TVs. The response has been remarkable. We are excited to welcome these new neighbors and love them as ourselves—and as we do so, to reflect the love of Jesus.

*Anyone interested in learning more about Arrive Ministries and our Good Neighbor team should contact David McCoy (mccoy.david.william@gmail.com).*



*Our property at 5151 Chicago will soon be home to a family from Afghanistan.*

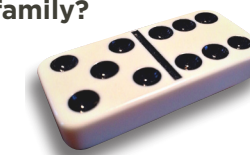
# Meet Our Missionaries Beth and Jack Thompson



Beth Thompson works with the EFCA / ReachGlobal ESL Ministry Resource Team. The team provides online training and resources for those interested in using teaching English as a ministry outreach in the USA and overseas. Jack, although officially retired, continues to help ReachGlobal with various projects related to mission finances.

**What is your favorite game to play with family?**

Dominoes



**What is your favorite food?**

Roast turkey

**How have you seen God use you in the last year?**

**Beth:** I have been able to help train many individuals who want to teach English as an outreach. I have also been able to help a local immigrant woman from Bangladesh with English.

**Jack:** I have worked on details for the ReachGlobal missionary support schedule to keep them up to date with current policies and information.

# Christmas Eve Services

DECEMBER 24, 4:00 & 5:30 PM

*Nursery & pre-k childcare available during the 4:00 service*

*The 4:00 service will be livestreamed on YouTube & Facebook*

# This Month @FIRST FREE

## ONE SERVICE—DEC 26 & JAN 2

There will be one worship service at 10:00 a.m. on both December 26 and January 2. Nursery and preschool childcare will be available. There will be no Children's Church on December 26, but it will return on January 2.

## CALL FOR ART

This December we are once again inviting artists of all skill levels and ages to submit photos, paintings, drawings, graphic designs, or other expressions of art to be shared with our church community in our 4th annual Advent and Christmas art exhibit. Pieces can be dropped-off at the church office during the week. For more information, contact Worship Pastor Paul Anleitner (paul.anleitner@firstfreechurch.org)

## CPR TRAINING

Interested in a CPR class? Contact Jeanine Bruen for registration. The online portion will start January 6. The check-offs can be scheduled with Jeanine for either January 13 or 20. She is available both afternoons and evenings. If these dates do not work for you contact Jeanine to arrange a different check-off time. Price \$35.

## WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Women's Bible Study returns in January with a new 8-week series: "Anxiety—Finding Comfort and Reassurance from God." Join us Wednesdays beginning January 5, 9:30-11 a.m. in-person or via Zoom, or on Thursdays beginning January 6, 6:30-8 p.m. via Zoom.

## MOPS

MOPS returns Friday, January 6 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. You can register online at firstfreechurch.org.mops.