



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
5150 CHICAGO AVE S.
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Community Emergency Service Food 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. The goal of CES is to move them beyond crisis to financial stability, as well as emotional health, personal growth and spiritual depth.

CES has a strong food relief program and provides a neighborhood food shelf, grocery and hot meal delivery to homebound clients, and a free distribution of fresh produce and meat on Fridays.

Thank you to everyone who donated to our



drive this year! We collected about 890 pounds of food and personal hygiene items.

Want to volunteer at CES or make a donation? Visit communityemergencyservice.org for more information. Prayer is also an integral part of CES's mission and is always appreciated as well! Pray for the needs of the community and individuals and for the CES volunteers, employees, donors, and partners.

First Word

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Invasion of Another Kind BY JOEL SUTTON

On June 6, 1944, the largest seaborne invasion in history took place on the beaches of Normandy. It was called "D-Day". More than 150,000 US troops were committed to the initial invasion, employing 6,900 vessels, 4,100 landing craft and 12,000 airplanes. Within two weeks the British deployed an additional 314,547 men, 54,000 vehicles and 102,000 tons of supplies, while the Americans put ashore an additional 314,547 men, 41,000 vehicles and 116,000 tons of supplies at Omaha.

Despite the Allies' air superiority and hours of heavy bombardment against the beach defenses, the Germans remained intact as thousands of brave men came ashore on that summer morning. Nothing stood between these troops and the German guns. The only chance the Allied troops had were to run, swim and crawl up the beaches to the sea walls.

In the first hours at Omaha Beach alone, more than 2,400 died. Over the next few weeks, as the battle progressed inland, the U.S. would eventually lose 29,000 men and more than 100,000 wounded and

missing, while the British gave up 11,000 of its finest, and Canada 5,000. And all this was just the initial set of invasions. Yet as the invasion progressed, the outcome became more and more clear. The evils of Hitler would be conquered.

On another morning, some hundreds of years earlier, another great invasion took place. It too was an invasion with the purpose of dealing with and conquering evil. God, on Christmas, invaded.

It was a quiet invasion. Few people understood what was happening. Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew that she was with child, but she also knew that she had never been with a man, not even Joseph, to whom she was engaged. She had learned of her pregnancy and what was to be a virgin birth when an angel told her that she was pregnant with the Son of God.

For Joseph, the soon-to-be-father, Mary's pregnancy was also hard to accept. Yet in obedience to God, he took Mary to be his wife and her new born baby to be his son.

Neither the scribes, the chief priests,

or King Herod were aware of this new King's arrival. They had to be told by some wise men from the east.

The people in Bethlehem didn't see it coming. The innkeeper sent the parents to the stable. The local townspeople had to be informed by some unclean, untrustworthy shepherds.

Most of the people in Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth were expecting a Messianic invasion like we saw at D-day—conquerors in armor bringing a sword to set the people free from oppression. But God had other ideas. God's invasion came not with massive logistical support and huge armies, but rather in a way that confounded and perplexed the wisdom of humanity. God's invasion came through a baby born to non-descript, peasant parents. And announced to the world by wise men from the east, shepherds from the fields, and angels from the heavens.

Join us this Christmas season as we hear their stories and celebrate God's invasion into our world to rescue us in the person of Jesus Christ!



ADVENT SERIES: I WAS THERE

NOV. 26 The Once Wise Man
DEC. 3 A Shepherd's Story
DEC. 10 The Angel's Song

DEC. 17 Forgotten Joseph Davidson
DEC. 24 Christmas Eve services at 3:00 & 4:30 p.m.

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

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SEE MORE INFO AT:
www.firstfreechurch.org

Men United:

To Be the Men God Created Us to Be



Men United exists to train men to be who God designed them to be in their homes, workplaces and neighborhoods through Biblical teaching, accountability and a closer connection to Christ and each other. Men United meets on Fridays at 6:15 a.m. for coffee, teaching, discussion, and community. We asked a few guys about their experiences with Men United.

What brought you to Men United? As I grew older, my close relationships with other men dwindled. Most of my relationships were work related and not Christ-centered. When I decided to try Men United, I was seeking a group of close friends that I could confide in.

What parts of Men United have you found to be valuable? MU is targeted to the struggles I face everyday. Every session has been relevant and helpful. MU has helped me set some easy to achieve goals in my life to help me as a father, husband and leader.

How have you benefited from the multi-generational makeup? It's been great meeting a broad age range of men at Men United. Some of the younger men give me the chance to develop mentorship skills and those older than me I can look up to for advice. As men, husbands, and fathers we all go through these same trials and it's foolish to try to face these struggles alone.

- Allan Peters

What brought you to Men United? I was drawn to attend Men United because I had never been in this type of group and I also knew that it would help me get to know the guys in our church better. And since I really don't have a viable schedule conflict at 6:30 on Friday mornings it has become a regular part of my week now.

What parts of Men United have you found to be valuable? I have found the curriculum to be a practical resource for almost every aspect of my life. Even though much of it is basic common sense from a biblical perspective, it is explained and reinforced in a way I've never seen or heard before.

How have you benefited from the multi-generational makeup? There have been sessions where my table has had 3 generations of men and it is very valuable to listen to guys who are 10, 20, or 30 years ahead of me in their journey and can offer a broad perspective on life, and also to both learn from and offer my experiences to guys who are 10-20 years behind me.

- Kyle Bragg

What brought you to Men United? My family and I started attending First Free in April of this year. I wanted to get to know some of the other guys in the church and I noticed some info about it in the bulletin. I was excited to check it out and have not been disappointed.

How has Men United helped you to become a better man at work or at home? The 33 Series has spurred me on to be more encouraging in my workplace. God has been working on my heart to be more of a light toward my co-workers. At home I've been looking for ways to become a better husband and father. The Men United time has provided a weekly shot in the arm that I have needed to keep pursuing those goals.

- Casey Foss

Learn more at firstfreechurch.org/menunited

Meet our new council member:

Johanna Holliday



Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Johanna Holliday. I was raised in Northern Wisconsin on a beef farm and attended a little Swedish Baptist Church (with an outhouse) before I married Troy and moved to the big city. We have been married for 26 years and have 8 kids. I enjoy walks around the lake, spending time on the farm and a quiet cup of coffee.

What is your history with First Free?

We first came to First Free in 2003 when I served on the Worship Team and Troy taught in an adult Bible fellowship. At that time, we had young children who were greatly ministered to, both in the nursery and in the children's programs. As our kids grew up, we became more involved with the Youth Group, where we currently serve together.

What made you decide to become a council member? What excites you about where First Free is going?

I was approached about serving on council and wrestled with my decision for about a week. I accepted, with Troy's blessing. For me, being a part of the council has been tremendously humbling.

The most exciting part for me is serving along side those with such godly wisdom, being encouraged by the faithfulness of those who work so hard 'behind the scenes', and praying for our church body. I am continually challenged to trust the Lord as First Free moves forward. I look forward to the ways we can equip families and individuals to proclaim Christ's love to others in such culturally dark days. I am also excited about Velocity Student Ministries as it equips and grows the next generation to know and follow Jesus.

Church Family News

Welcome to our new members: Catherine Wright, Maurine Garratt, Yadong Huang, Yunhua Fan, and Barbara Parker.

We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Olive Nyholm, who passed away on November 10th at the age of 99.

This Month @ FIRST FREE

Advent Invitations

Who are you investing in? Invite them to one of our Advent services. Cards with service info are available at the welcome desk.

Poinsettias Available

If you would like to honor or remember loved ones by purchasing a poinsettia to be displayed in our church sanctuary this Christmas season, please fill out the form at the welcome desk and return it to the church office by Thursday, December 21st. Quantities are limited. Plants may be taken home after our worship gatherings on Sunday, December 24th.

Men's Soul Search: December 16

Men: join us for breakfast and discussion at 9:00 a.m. in room 105. Contact Ross Olson (ross@rossolson.org) for more information or to get on the email list.

Children's Christmas Choir and Live Nativity: December 17th

First Free's Preschool-6th graders will be participating in the Children's Christmas Choir and Live Nativity on Sunday, December 17th during both worship gatherings. Rehearsals take place Wednesday evenings (5:30-6:10, K-6 only) & Sunday mornings. We need parent volunteers! Sign up and find more info on the children's ministry page of our website (firstfreechurch.org/children) or talk to Beth Brown.

Blue Christmas Service: December 17th, 7:00 p.m.

A contemplative service of remembrance and hope for those who are experiencing loss this Christmas Season. Presented by Venite Ministries.

Christmas Eve

Join us in celebrating God coming to earth and dwelling among us at our annual Christmas Eve Gathering on Sunday, December 24th at 3:00 and 4:30 pm.

No Christmas Day Service

Enjoy the day with your loved ones!