



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2018

A Passion for the Lost BY JOEL SUTTON

There are a lot of titles that Jesus uses to describe himself: Bridegroom, Bread of Life, Cornerstone, Good Shepherd. But there is another one that stands out as completely different than all the rest: "friend of sinners" (Luke 7:34).

Jesus loved lost people. He loved spending time with them. He went to their parties and enjoyed their company. From the Gospels it appears that, in fact, Jesus enjoyed being with seekers far more than being with religious leaders (ouch!). Jesus loved being with people and they felt it. Even little children wanted to be around Jesus, which speaks volumes about what kind of person he was. Jesus had a passion for the lost.

I wonder how many people would say that First Free is a church that loves unbelievers. The command to love is the most repeated command in the New Testament. It appears at least 44 times. What is the Great Commandment? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart

and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Love God and love people. If we don't love people, nothing else matters.

I like to ask the new people who come to First Free, "What attracted you to our church family?" Out of all the people that I've asked this question, I've never had one person say, "it's because of your theology." No one has ever said "it was your stained glass windows" or "it was your full calendar of activities." Instead, the most common response I receive is: "I felt an incredible spirit of love toward me that drew me in."

Did you catch the focus of the love in that sentence? Many churches are full of members who love each other but still the church is dying. They have a wonderful fellowship among the members but they don't have a love for the unbeliever. The reason some churches don't grow is because they don't love. People want to go where love is.

Love draws people in like a powerful magnet. The opposite is also true: a lack of love drives people away. We must love unbelievers the way Jesus did. After all, we are Christ-sent disciples. Without His passion for the lost, we will be unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to reach them.

During the weekend of February 24-25th, we will be holding our winter Outreach Weekend. We will be exposed to several ministries we support that God is using in our city of Minneapolis: New Salem Church in the Powderhorn-Phillips neighborhood, China Outreach Ministries on the U of M campus, and Community Emergency Services in Ventura Village. In our pulpit that Sunday morning will be Alejandro Mandes, the EFCA All People and Immigrant Mission Leader. He will challenge us to open our eyes and see those that God has brought into our lives, especially the immigrant population. He will challenge us to love our neighbors and to be a "friend of sinners." Won't you join us?



Parenting Matters

FEBRUARY 10, 9:00 AM - NOON

Every year your child is getting older, and their emotional and developmental changes mean you need to be equipped to think about parenting differently at each stage of life. How do you help your kids own their faith? With how fast technology is changing, how do you help your teen make wise decisions about the technology in their life?

We'd like to invite you to Parenting Matters, a seminar filled with TED-style talks from 9:00 until noon on February 10th, 2018. We will be covering topics to help you as you play a vital role in your child or grandchild's life. In addition to hearing and interacting with our speakers, enjoy some snacks and receive a book to take home. The cost is \$15.

Register online at firstfreechurch.org/parentingmatters



CURRENT SERIES: COURAGEOUS DISCIPLESHIP

JANUARY 28	Courageous Obedience	FEBRUARY 18	Courageous Grace
FEBRUARY 4	Courageous Loyalty	FEBRUARY 25	Outreach Weekend
FEBRUARY 11	Courageous Faith	MARCH 4	Courageous Witness

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

Outreach Weekend:

February 24-25

Theme: "Who is My Neighbor?"

Keynote Speaker: Alejandro Mandes

Dr. Alejandro Mandes is executive director of the EFCA All People Initiative. The EFCA is considered one of the most diverse denominations in the United States, and this ministry is one way the EFCA is working towards reversing division, multiplying Kingdom growth and developing transformational churches among all people. Dr. Mandes and his wife, Julie, attend Northwest Community Church (EFCA) in San Antonio, Texas.



Ministries Represented

Tom Lindstrom from China Outreach Ministry
Providing community, practical help, and spiritual resources to Chinese students and scholars. More at www.comumn.org.

**China Outreach
MINISTRIES**

Mark Anderson and others from New Salem Church
New Salem Church/Iglesia Nueva Salem became a bilingual church in 2008, aiming to reach the growing Latino population in their community. The church holds Sunday morning worship service in both English and Spanish. New Salem also has weekly Bible studies and discipleship groups in both languages, a clothing ministry, kid's club, youth group and homework help.



Mike Lloyd from Community Emergency Services
Food shelf and other support services in the Phillips Neighborhood. Through direct aid relief, advocacy, referral, guidance and prayer support, if desired, 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. Learn more at www.cesmn.org.



Schedule

Saturday, February 24, 10:30 am - noon:

Brunch and Outreach Panel

Want to know what God is doing in our city? Join us for a brunch and panel discussion from various ministries in Minneapolis. Each missionary will give an overview of their work and answer questions. Child care provided. We encourage you to come to the brunch on Saturday and get an overview to help you decide who you want to hear in more detail on Sunday!

Sunday, February 25, 9:15 and 11:00 am:

Our keynote speaker will share in the worship gatherings and missionaries will give elective-style presentations at 9:15 and 11:00 (schedule and rooms will be posted). Everyone is welcome to come and hear the speaker of your choice.

Display tables will be up both Saturday and Sunday with material on the ministries. Pick up the brochure on local ministries that use volunteers.

Minnehaha Senior Living Hymn Sing

At First Free we value being connected. Often when members and friends of our church need to change their place of residence due to a variety of issues, they are no longer able to attend our worship services regularly or at all. When this happens, many feel disconnected from those they have related to for many years.



Carolyn Berg. Carolyn is a long-time member of First Free and has served in a variety of ways over the years.

Three of those members are people who now live at Minnehaha Senior Living in Minneapolis. They have expressed in different ways their desire to have a regular connection with First Free. Mike Graff and Dee Huanca worked with Carolyn Berg, a resident at Minnehaha Senior Living, to form a group that could meet for a time of devotions, singing and fellowship. They first met in November with 8 people from the senior facility attending. Then Mike and Dee were asked by the staff if they could have a weekly hymn sing starting in January. Attendance at each of these has been 13 to 15 residents.

Mike and Dee continue to share a devotional and sing and now offer each attendee a verse card to ponder for the week. The participation is very enthusiastic. It is exciting to see these friends connecting to each other and God and maintaining a connection with First Free, plus wanting to share their faith with others in their neighborhood.

The Hymn Sing at Minnehaha is one way we work to support and connect our members. Our faith community nurses also train and organize volunteers to visit people who are homebound, ill, have limited mobility, or otherwise have trouble making it to church. Visitors offer both social and spiritual care. Want to get involved? Contact Maureen Juarez (maureen.juarez@firstfreechurch.org) or Jeanine Bruen (jeanine.bruen@firstfreechurch.org).

This Month @ FIRST FREE

Parenting Matters: February 10

This February, we're hosting a parenting seminar filled with TED-style 20 minute talks on topics that matter to parents and caregivers. Join us from 9:00 until noon on February 10th, 2018. In addition to hearing and interacting with our speakers, enjoy some snacks and receive a book to take home. The cost is \$15. Register online at firstfreechurch.org/parentingmatters.

Stepping On Booster Session: February 15

For those who attended the Fall 2017 Stepping On program, join us at 1:00 p.m. for a review of the skills learned and progress made.

Men's Soul Share: February 17

Men: join us for breakfast, fellowship 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.

Quarterly Celebration (Business Meeting): February 19

Join us as we celebrate God's faithfulness and discuss church business on Monday, February 19th at 7:00 p.m.

Outreach Weekend: February 24-25

Outreach Weekend is February 24-25 with the theme "Who is My Neighbor?". On Saturday, February 24th, join us for a free brunch and panel discussion at 10:30 a.m. The keynote speaker on Sunday is Dr. Alejandro Mandes and ministry representatives will share during both hours.

The DEEP: February 28

Join us for a time of worship and prayer at The Deep on Wednesday, February 28th at 6:30 p.m. Childcare provided.



WANT MORE INFO?

Visit www.firstfreechurch.org
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@ FEFCMpls

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SEE MORE INFO AT:
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