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FIRST WORD

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

"Everyday Mission" by: Pastor Joel

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Ah, the Great Commission! Jesus' monumental proclamation to his disciples and to us! We are all familiar with these words.

But our familiarity with these verses has also lead to some confusion over them. Sometimes we think this commission is directed at just missionaries. We read the phrase, "Go and make disciples of all nations" and immediately we think that this is only for those who are going out to all the nations. Sometimes we are confused over the Great Commission because we have used the label "great" in front of it. And so we think that this applies to only those who are "super-Christians" or the "Billy Grahams" among us.

But in reality, neither one of these perspective is correct. Jesus is giving all of us who are believers, all of us who claim to be Christ-followers, our mission. Jesus here is talking to the normal, everyday believer. And what he is giving us is an "Everyday Mission".

Jesus is commissioning his followers to make disciples. He tells them to make fully devoted followers of Jesus by "going" and "baptizing" and "teaching". Our assignment is to invite people to Christ, help them grow in their salvation, and equip them to live out their faith as Christ-followers in the world. This mission covers the entire process of what it takes to make a "disciple".

Our words for this everyday mission at First Evangelical Free church is simply, "... to help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together."

And this mission is for each of us. It calls us to become Christ-centered and Christ-sent. It calls us to develop Christ's character in our lives and to follow Christ's priorities. It isn't for someone else. It starts in me!

If you are a teenager, this call is for you to reach teenagers. If you are a young adult, this call is for you to reach your neighbors and work associates. If you are a senior citizen, this is a call for you to make disciples in your community. It is an Everyday Mission for Everyone of Us.

This month in First Word you will read stories of people working on living out this Everyday Mission of Jesus in their real world. They are Christ-sent into their community. Might their example call you and I to do the same.



MORE INFO

www.firstfreechurch.org



OUTREACH WEEKEND: FEBRUARY 22 & 23

What does it look like to be Christ-sent in Minneapolis? How do we get involved? What are some of the ways we can be unleashed into our community as Christ-followers? This weekend at First Free will be hearing stories from some of our very own Christ-sent disciples. Join us Saturday morning and/or Sunday morning to hear what God is doing and prepare to be challenged to find your place in our city to serve others.

The Specifics of Outreach Weekend:

– **Outreach Brunch–Saturday, February 22nd, 10:30 A.M. -12:00 P.M.**, Enjoy a wonderful breakfast and hear from several of our own people what it means to be Christ-sent in our community. Learn about different opportunities to invest and serve. Childcare will be provided.

– **Sunday, February 23rd, 9:15 A.M. & 11:00 A.M.** Pastor Joel will be preaching on the mission measure: I am serving others cheerfully. During the Adult Community Groups there will also be some from our within the First Free church family who will be sharing about their experiences in serving others within the community.

First Free's Mission – To help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together.

UPCOMING @ First Free

VISION SERMON SERIES: CHRIST-CENTERED; CHRIST-SENT

February 2: Connected to Community
February 16: Giving Biblically
March 2: The Math of Multiplication

February 9: Investing & Inviting
February 23: Serving Others–Outreach Sunday

UPCOMING

@ First Free

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

Check out our new
website!

Visit at www.firstfreechurch.org

Visit our Facebook page!
First Free is now on twitter
@ FEFCMpls

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CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION — FEBRUARY 2ND @ 12:00 P.M.
If you have hosted a Chinese student or have a special love of China please join us on February 2nd for our New Year's party after the 2nd service.
RSVP to Erica.Lehner@yahoo.com.

EXPRESSIONS — FEBRUARY 10TH & 17TH @ 7:00 P.M.
For those struggling with chronic or devastating disease, join us at 7:00 P.M. in room 103.



THE DEEP — WEDNESDAY,
FEB. 19TH @ 6:30 P.M.

A refreshing time of worship and prayer.
Come join us for a time of rest, enjoyment,
and encounter God through worship and
prayer. Childcare will be provided.

MEN'S SOULSHARE — SATURDAY, FEB. 15TH @ 9:00 A.M.
Men of all ages are welcome to join us every 3rd Saturday for breakfast and fellowship from now until May 2014. Contact Ross Olson with any questions: 612-824-7691.

CHILD DEDICATION SUNDAY — FEB. 16TH @ 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.
If you are interested in having your child dedicated, please contact the church office or email at info@firstfreechurch.org before February 2nd.

QUARTERLY CELEBRATION — FEB. 24TH @ 7:00 P.M.
Join us as we celebrate all that God has been doing at First Free!

*Note: There will be no Women's Guild on February 4th.



SAVE THE DATE!

TERRACE ON CHICAGO March 15th, 2014

Reservations will be available
starting February 9th with seating
times at 5:00 P.M. & 7:00 P.M.

*Childcare will be available during
the 5:00 P.M. seating only.*

Stay tuned for more info!

Church Family News

Our condolences go out to the Fleming family on the loss of their beloved Bev Fleming.

Our sympathies go out to the family of Doris Anderson, who was a long time member at First Free. She passed away on December 27th.

CHRIST-SENT INTO THE COMMUNITY

Interviews with: Members from First Free actively living out being Christ-sent together



Doug Nelson
Basketball Ministry
at First Free



James Amstutz
ESL Teacher at
Salem E-Free



Karin Olson
Volunteer at
Community
Emergency Services



Russ Anteronen
Volunteer Coach at
McRae Park

How long have you been serving in your current ministry?
DN (Doug Nelson): I've been doing guys Monday night outreach hoops for about ten years.

JA (James Amstutz): This is my fourth year teach ESL (English as a Second Language) to Latinos in the vicinity of Salem Church.

KO (Karin Olson): Almost 3 years.

RA (Russ Anteronen): In total, 17 years. I previously opened our church gym for one or more McRae Park basketball teams to practice; and I assisted them with basketball fundamentals or athletic training. I had been competing in Masters track & field, but wanted to pass on many of the things I had learned and encourage youth. Since 1997 I have helped volunteer coach a summer track team. This started out as Hospitality House Striders, a northside Christian youth organization and has since then become "Eagles Wings", which is headed up by northside Pastor Joseph Sutton (no relation to our own Pastor Sutton).

How did you get connected to the ministry you are serving?

DN: It all started as an out-of-shape, 35 and over, group of guys program to play ball and get a workout. It morphed into a younger guys outreach as we let younger guys in and the hips and knees went out of most of the older guys. We now have anywhere from 15 to 25 guys show up, depending on the time of year.

JA: A few years ago Maureen Juarez asked if I was interested in helping with the tutoring program for kids at Salem, which I was, and so I assisted occasionally in the program for a couple of years. When the man who was teaching the ESL class, a Salem member, left to go to seminary, Maureen asked if I would be interested in teaching the class. I did not have any experience teaching ESL, but I do know Spanish, so I thought I would try it. It has been very enjoyable and rewarding.

KO: I talked to a representative from CES at an Outreach Weekend at First Free. CES works out of an inner city church building where my family attended until I was 15 years old. It felt like "coming home."

RA: The connection to McRae was that they called the church asking for use of our gym, and at the time I was our church's liaison to the community. So I ran it by the pastor and the board and they agreed as long as I opened and locked up and supervised.

What is one way that you have seen God work in you/through you while serving in your ministry?

DN: I have seen God work in the lives of the participants as we have prayed together and they have matured in their lives. They seem to look to our time together as a place to fellowship and feel a sense of community. They invite friends to come and know that they will be accepted no matter what. It may not seem like much, but most don't have a church home. Only God knows what He will do with this amazing group.

JA: After a year of teaching, I asked a number of people who have connections to the Latino community if they would integrate the gospel into the curriculum, and if so, how. The primary response I received was to teach English and just try to live the gospel as a teacher. Trying to do two things at one time made it likely that neither end would be met, so I stick with English and slip a biblical story in when appropriate. Some days it requires quick improvisation of the curriculum as there may be some new students who have no knowledge of English and require the most basic curriculum possible. I have had to learn flexibility and patience. Sometimes I leave frustrated that my lesson plans seem to have fallen flat and missed the mark. But then I hear from someone how much they enjoy coming, and it makes the effort worthwhile. I have to trust the Lord that he will use the class to further His kingdom.

KO: I interview clients at the CES foodshelf every Monday afternoon. Meeting people with such a variety of life stories and needs has stretched my capacity to love. Needs include hunger, job losses, addictions, disabilities, emotional problems, illnesses, post-prison time, loneliness and lack of spiritual support. People love having someone who takes time to listen. When praying with clients at the end of their interviews it still surprises me that there are often tears in their eyes as we hold hands and they say "thank you." That's God at work!

RA: Some of the McRae players were children I had tutored at Hale so the parents knew me and trusted I would help their children. Over time some have even played high school athletics. When the track team travels we have ample time to build relationships with children and parents. Christian discipleship has occurred as well as witnessing opportunities. One single mom related how much she appreciated that I helped start a learning foundation with her son at Hale, which continued at Striders track, and followed him as he graduated from Eden Prairie High and is now moving on to college. My serving at the volunteer level also was a stepping stone to my first high school coaching job, when former Hospitality House runner Kenan Moore asked me to coach at Washburn. God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform!