



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

JANUARY 2021

Bear with One Another BY JAY POUND

One of my idiosyncrasies is an unfortunate tendency to talk to (yell at) inanimate objects when they don't cooperate with me. In fact, the night before I wrote this I had a long conversation—out loud—with a ceiling exhaust fan. My problem is that in my head I expect everything to go smoothly. I watch the 5-minute YouTube video explaining the installation and figure it should take me 10 minutes, due to my lack of experience. And when it inevitably takes an hour, I get frustrated, and I start asking the fan, "Why can't you just fit?"

I don't know why I cannot learn to moderate my expectations—I am trying. I am not proud of how easily I get frustrated, and I know that my family would appreciate it if I could do better. But progress has been slow and full of setbacks. Recently, after one of these episodes, I apologized to my wife, Heidi, and she shrugged it off, saying, "I don't worry about it anymore; I know it happens and that you'll get over it."

In other words, Heidi bears with me. And it is a good thing too, I have many idiosyncrasies and flaws—and it is highly unlikely that any of them, let alone all of them, will be dealt with by tomorrow. I hope, and expect, that as I walk with the Lord, the Holy Spirit will continue to renew me, but that is a life-long process.

If either of us is waiting for the other to be perfect, we will both be waiting a while. As a result, bearing with one another is crucial for everything from a happy marriage to a productive working relationship. That is presumably why Paul (in multiple letters) places such a significant emphasis on bearing with each other.

Ephesians 4 begins with the powerful and oft-quoted line, "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (4.1). Paul urges us—urges—that we would live a life worthy of our calling. It is quite the set up. But what is this high and holy calling? What is so important that Paul, an apostle, would urge us to do it? He tells us: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (4.2-3). Want to live a life worthy of the calling you received in Christ Jesus? Then in humility, gentleness and patience, bear with one another in love.

If this seems like small potatoes, consider how being obedient to this might change your world—or for that matter, your workplace, your family or your marriage. Like many of you, I am troubled by the increasing tendency I see in our culture to

forgive nothing. People are increasingly unwilling to bear with anyone who differs with them on anything—from theology, to politics, to public health policy. These days, we simply cut those people off. Oh, we would take them back, but only once they completely agree with us, once friendship with them means we won't have to be patient or gentle or humble. But that—it should be obvious—is a path to self-imposed loneliness and isolation. This side of eternity, all relationships with others require bearing with one another (and maybe on the other side too—resurrection won't erase our personalities!).

As we look ahead to a new year, let me urge us (along with the apostle Paul) to bear with one another in love - especially within the family of God! As a church, we believe that God has placed us here to be a lamppost for the gospel. I submit to you that right now there are few ways that our light could shine more brightly than this. We can and should be known as a place where people bear with one another, where differences of opinion are met with humility and where flaws and idiosyncrasies are met with patience and love. After all, that is what God has done in Christ for us, how can we now refuse to do the same for others?

JANUARY SERMONS

JAN 3: Luke 7:1-17 Marvelous Faith
JAN 10: Luke 7:18-35 What were you Expecting?
JAN 17: Luke 7:36-50 Forgiven Much

JAN 24: Luke 8:4-21 Hearing the Word
JAN 31: Luke 8:40-56 Desperate Faith

Would you like to receive the newsletter via email?
Contact the office at info@firstfreechurch.org

GRIEF SHARE

Grieving the death of a loved one?

Griefshare is a Christian based weekly seminar and support group designed to help you rebuild your life. Join us via Zoom, starting Monday, Jan. 11th. at 7:00 p.m.

visit our website for more info



Job Opening: Part-time Business Administrator

for more information visit:
firstfreechurch.org/jobopenings

submit resume via email:
jobs@firstfreechurch.org

Watch Sunday Sermons on:

firstfreechurch.org/sermons
or
firstfreetv on YouTube

**REMINDER: THE JANUARY 3RD WORSHIP GATHERING IS
ONLINE @ 10:00 A.M.**

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

WANT MORE INFO?

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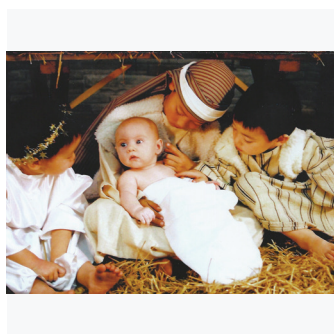
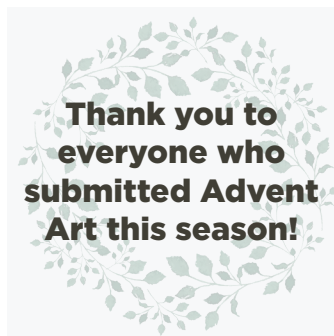
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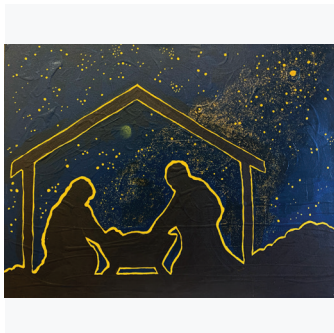
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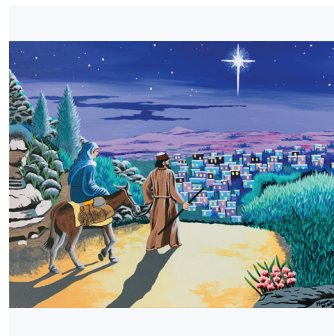
Karin Olson



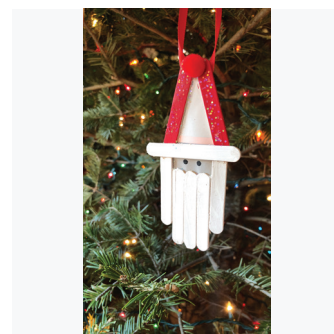
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Karin Olson



Karen Manos



Kelly Kuglar



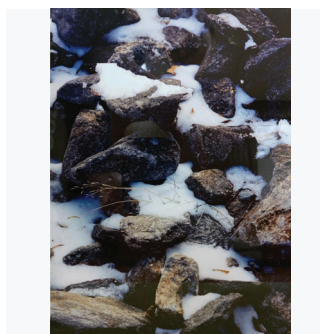
Molly McWilliams



Daphne Kugler



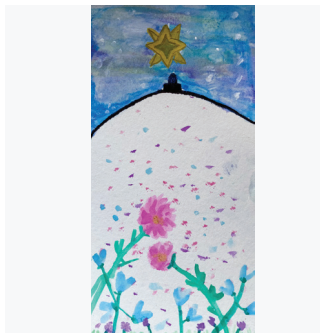
Molly McWilliams



Ross Olson



Claire McWilliams



Leah McWilliams

*Interested in learning more about First Free?
Want to become a member? Check out*

**DISCOVERING
FIRST FREE**

JAN 27 & FEB 3 @ 7:00 P.M.

*Sign up at firstfreechurch.org/events or
contact the church office*

Thank you David and Pam Kriesel-Koll!

As a congregation, we want to say, "Thank-you!" to David and Pam Kriesel-Koll for their many years of faithful partnership in ministry, and a special thanks to David for serving as First Free's Business Administrator for the past 6 years.

Dear Friends,

God blessed our family so much in this crazy year of 2020. As you know, our daughter Sarah had two cardiac arrests, but has recovered 100%. She is now back at work as an OT in the NICU at Sanford Hospital in Fargo.

God provided a home for us in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, equal distance between our daughters Sarah and Amanda. We had thought that in a couple of years we would move to be closer to the girls and their families.

But God answered prayers that we hadn't even prayed when friends asked to purchase our home in Richfield.

So this is goodbye and thank you to all the wonderful folks who have loved us and been such a great influence for our grandson Colten. You will remain in our hearts and prayers. If you are ever in our neighborhood, please look us up.

12502 210th St, Fergus Falls, MN 56537

-Pam and David Kriesel-Koll



CREEKSIDE CLUBS
Resume on Wednesday January 27th @ 6:30 p.m. (tentatively)

VELOCITY WEDNESDAYS
Resume on Wednesday January 20th @ 7:00 p.m.

Sunday morning Creekside Bible Time and Velocity Sunday Morning will start new lessons for At Home starting Jan 17.

Women's Neighborhood Bible Study

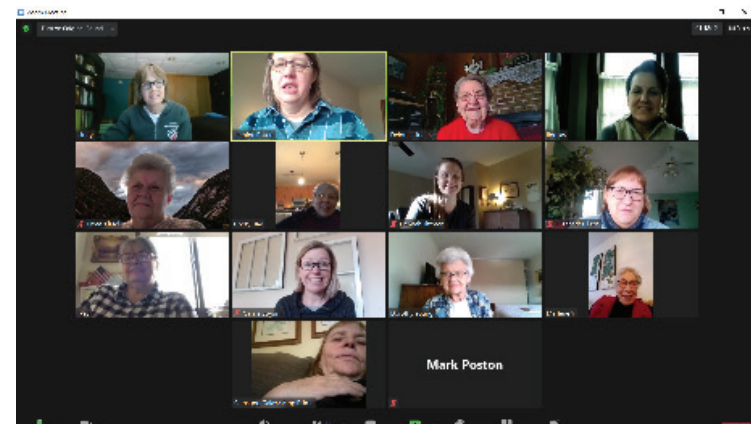
This past week our Women's bible study ended the semester with sharing time. Thirty four of us reviewed what we had learned this semester and were able to share and pray as we prepare for Christmas!

We start again Jan. 5th and 6th studying Jeremiah. If you are interested in joining any of our groups you can sign up on our church website! We have Zoom and in person options available.

If you are not receiving our weekly email updates from Pastor Joel, please email the church office at office@firstfreechurch.org

OR

If your information has changed recently (address/email/phone number) please contact the office so we can update it in our system.



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Congratulations to Susan and Eric Stabnow on the birth of their daughter, Kayla Stabnow.
- Kelly and Bryan Voigt welcomed Alya Mae Voigt into the world on Dec. 11. She was born premature and was 4lbs 9oz and 16.5 in. Alya was diagnosed with Hydrops while in utero and passed away from this earth to her eternal home with Jesus on Dec. 14. The Voigts moved to Oregon this Fall.