



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
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# First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

JANUARY 2022

## *Christ Formed in You* BY JOEL SUTTON

The Beatles documentary, "Get Back" has recently come out. Some have loved it. Others have not.

George Harrison (of Beatle fame) once said that the "first really decent guitar" that he owned was the Gretsch Duo Jet. The electric guitar, manufactured by Gretsch Guitars, was known for its trebly tone. In the early '60s, Harrison bought the guitar for 70 pounds (about \$200 at the time).

Early in 2011, Gretsch Guitars announced that the company would manufacture a limited run of 60 exact replicas of George Harrison's Duo Jet guitar as a tribute model.

USA Today reported that "Gretsch Guitars product manager Joe Carducci says master [craftsman] Stephen Stern re-created the guitar precisely, replicating the nicks and dings of a half-century's use, even using a CAT scan to determine the semi-hollow guitar's body-chambering style." The suggested retail price for the tribute Duo Jets would be \$20,000.

Why is this replicate guitar so expensive? Because it copies a valuable original

so closely. In the same way, you and I find our highest value in becoming an amazing replica of Someone whose worth is infinite: the Lord Jesus Christ.

This next year of 2022, our *church-wide goal is that Christ might be formed in each person who calls First Free home.* In other words that we might become a replica of Jesus. The apostle Paul pouring out his heart to the believers in the Galatian church says, "My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until *Christ is formed in you!*" (Galatians 4:19, ESV).

Christ formed in you. How does that happen?

It must start with us abiding in Him. Jesus in John 15:4 says, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." The fruit Jesus is talking about is becoming more like him. It is impossible to have Christ formed in us, without abiding in Him.

As you live and remain in Christ through the Holy Spirit, God promises to transform you from your own image

into the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit will come and shape you from within if you rely on him to come and shape you. Christ takes shape in a life that is willing to become putty in God's hands. Christ will press the shape of his own face into the clay of your soul when you cease to be hard and resistant. When you abandon yourself to Him, He will be formed in you.

So as we launch into this new year of 2022, I want to challenge you to take the next steps in order to see "Christ formed in you". How will you abide in Christ this next year? What will that mean for you? Maybe begin by developing or strengthening a spiritual habit - regularly reading and studying the Bible, a daily time of prayer, a practice of silence and solitude, or giving generously. Maybe get connected to a small group. Or maybe finding your place to serve in the church.

Whatever it is, might your prayer be like that of the English theologian, John Henry Newman, "Lord, shine in me and so be in me that all with whom I come in contact may know thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus."



*Save the Date*

**TAKEOUT  
ON CHICAGO**

**SATURDAY MARCH 5, 2022**

**Would you like to receive the newsletter via email?  
Contact the office at [info@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:info@firstfreechurch.org)**

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

**WANT MORE INFO?**

Web: [www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)  
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 Twitter: @FEFCMpls

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[www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)

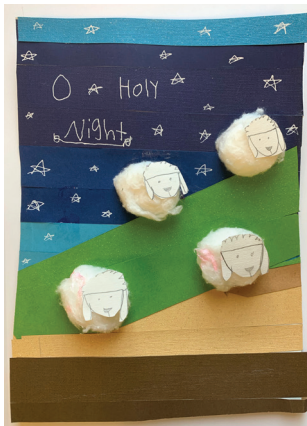
**Thank you to everyone who submitted  
Advent Art this season!**



Penka Atanasova



Penka Atanasova



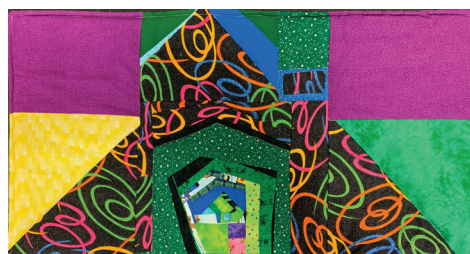
Sadie Lehner



Annika Lehner



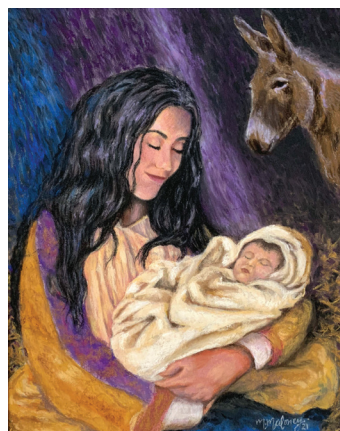
Everett Lehner



Jeanine Bruen



Esther Nordell



Marlene Maloney

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

- Our condolences to the family of Marilyn Fisher who passed away on December 19th, 2021.
- Congratulations to Heidi and Tony Byrne on the birth of their daughter, Penelope Mae Byrne!
- Our condolences to Jane and the family of Mordechai Hershstein who passed away on December 2nd, 2021.
- Our condolences to the family of Danny Harthan who passed away on December 27th, 2021.

**MISSIONARIES OF THE MONTH**

**Ben and Debra Reece**

The Reeces are currently in South Carolina, where they are overseeing the recruitment and interview process for their Kingdom Practicum training program in Jordan, and a NGO in Lebanon working with Syrian refugees with a medical and education team.

**What's your favorite food?**

Shrimp boil (Shrimp, corn, sausage, potatoes, onion, bay seasoning)

**What's your favorite game to play with your family?**

Pictionary

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

A recent grad from the Jordan training program just started a training program for Chinese missionaries, using the same principles from our program.



**CREEKSIDE CLUBS**

Resume on Wednesday January 19th @ 6:30 p.m.



**VELOCITY WEDNESDAYS**

Resume on Wednesday January 19th @ 6:30 p.m.

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

**DISCOVERING  
FIRST FREE  
JAN 23 & 30**

During the Second Service

*Sign up at [firstfreechurch.org/events](http://firstfreechurch.org/events) or  
contact the church office*

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