



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
5150 CHICAGO AVE S.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55417

Want to receive First Word
via email? Contact the office
at info@firstfreechurch.org

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES MN
PERMIT NO 32622

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

JUNE/JULY 2023

A New Vision of God's Power BY JAY POUND

In 1 Kings 19, we get a peek at a remarkable encounter between God and one of his faithful prophets. In this chapter, Elijah, a prophet through whom God has done deeds of tremendous power, is hiding at Horeb after literally fleeing for his life. When God asks Elijah what he is doing in Horeb, Elijah responds with despair. Despite the many mighty works God has done, both through Elijah and before his eyes, Elijah feels alone and isolated. He worries that he is the last one left in all Israel who is faithful to Yahweh.

In response, God tells Elijah to get up and stand on the mountain, telling him that the presence of Yahweh is about to pass by (19.13). But then a curious thing happens. Elijah walks out and stands alone on that mountain and waits. And then, as he stands out there alone, a great wind comes that tears the mountains apart, shattering stone. And then, after the wind subsides, an earthquake shakes the ground beneath his feet. And after the earthquake came a burning fire. But we read that Yahweh was not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. And then, after all of that power and violence came a gentle whisper, and in that whisper, Yahweh spoke to Elijah. In the whisper God commissions Elijah, and tells him that there were at least 7,000

others in Israel that God had reserved for himself who had never bent the knee to Baal (19.11-18).

When I read this story, I see God reminding Elijah of a powerful and important point: God's power does not always look the way we expect it to look. Elijah experiences three events of spectacular power, exactly the kinds of experiences that people - both then and now - find it easy to associate with divine: a wind that shatters rock, an earthquake and fire. All three of these seem to be obvious displays of power, and yet 1 Kings 19 makes a point each time to say Yahweh was not in these displays. And then, when the presence of Yahweh does pass by, Elijah experiences it as a gentle whisper.

I think the point God is making to Elijah is that he should not assume that when God is not shaking the earth or consuming altars with fire from heaven, that God's power is not at work. God's power is always at work, almost always in ways we do not see and cannot anticipate. Often - if not most often, the power of God is in a gentle whisper, speaking quietly yet irresistibly to the hearts of people all over the world. Elijah thought he was alone, but that was perhaps because he thought God was only working in ways

that he himself could see. God tells Elijah that he has reserved thousands of faithful people for himself, people Elijah does not know and has not seen. God, it seems, has been at work all along, Elijah was simply looking for the wrong signs.

When I read this story today, I find myself challenged by the lesson. Like the rest of us, like Elijah, I have some pretty clear ideas about the way I would like to see God work in our community and our country. Like Elijah, I find myself thinking that a few huge demonstrations of obviously supernatural power would go a long way. But one of the many problems with that way of thinking is that we risk missing out on the power and presence of God at work all around us. We miss the chance to be part of what God is already doing in the lives of thousands at any given moment. If we really want to see the power of God at work, perhaps we should spend less time making suggestions and more time asking for God to open our eyes to where he is already at work. May God give us eyes to see his work in our lives and world.



SIGN UP FOR VBC!

**JUNE 19-23
9AM-12PM**



SCAN HERE
to sign up



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

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

FIRST FREE STAFF

JOEL SUTTON
SENIOR PASTOR
joel.sutton@firstfreechurch.org

JAY POUND
ASSOCIATE PASTOR
jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org

PAUL ANLEITNER
WORSHIP PASTOR
paul.anleitner@firstfreechurch.org

EMMA DELISI
WORSHIP ASSOCIATE
emma.burns@firstfreechurch.org

JASON PENZA
STUDENT PASTOR
jason.penza@firstfreechurch.org

DOUG NELSON
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR
doug.nelson@firstfreechurch.org

CARRIE BOYUM
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR
carrie.boyum@firstfreechurch.org

STACEY URBANZ
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ASSOCIATE
stacey.urbanz@firstfreechurch.org

JEANINE BRUEN & ALLIE DANIELSON
FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES
nurses@firstfreechurch.org

SCOTT BECKETT
FACILITIES TECHNICIAN
scott.beckett@firstfreechurch.org

JOANN BURNS
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR
joann.burns@firstfreechurch.org

DAN FERGUS
TECH DIRECTOR/COMMUNICATIONS
dan.fergus@firstfreechurch.org

SARAH OLSON
GRAPHIC DESIGNER
sarah.olson@firstfreechurch.org

VISIT US ONLINE

www.firstfreechurch.org



SOCIAL MEDIA

youtube.com/firstfreetv

facebook.com/firstfreechurch

instagram.com/firstfreechurchmpls

JUNE ACTIVITIES



Creekside Family Hike | June 3rd 1:00-4:00 p.m.

All Creekside Families are invited to join us for a Family Hike guided by Ross Olson. We'll be hiking at Minnehaha Falls meeting near Sea Salt. An adult needs to accompany kids. Bring your own snacks and water bottles. Come for a time of fun, exploration, and fellowship. Register at firstfreechurch.org/children.



Vacation Bible Camp | June 19-23rd

STELLAR Vacation Bible Camp is coming to First Free June 19-23, from 9 a.m - 12 noon. Kids will launch into an out-of-this-world adventure, which will leave an impression and will last for a lifetime. Kids will discover that Jesus is the light of the world, and that they can shine Jesus' light!



Picnic at Triangle Park | June 25th 11:30 a.m.

Join us for our church picnic at Triangle Park (Near 54th and Edgewater Blvd.) following our morning worship service. Bring chairs or a blanket and your own food and join us for a time of fun and fellowship.



Neighborhood Block Party | June 28th 6:00 p.m.

Come join us for an evening of food, fun and fellowship! On Wednesday, June 28, we will be hosting a family-friendly neighborhood party in our North Parking Lot. We will have free hot dogs, snacks, inflatables and spin art. We hope you will join us for a fun evening together and take the opportunity to invite friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

JULY ACTIVITIES



Experience Jesus Canoe Trip | July 10-15th

This trip will combine the best of our High School Adventure Trip and intentional time looking into the life of Christ (that has shaped much our Student Ministry Team). We will use Camp Forest Springs in Wisconsin as an outfitter and launch point for our trip onto the Flambeau River.



Middle School Adv. Trip | July 22-28th

Our Middle School Adventure Trip will combine fun and exciting outdoor activities and a camp-like cabin experience for students completing grades 5-8 as of June 2023. Our Middle School Students will also experience a two-night canoe trip out on the boundary waters. This trip is based out of Rock Ridge Christian Camp & Outfitters, they are passionate about taking youth into the wilderness and helping them grow physically, mentally and spiritually.



Picnic & Baptism | July 30th 11:30 a.m.

Join us for our church picnic and baptism ceremony (conditions permitting) at Lake Nokomis following our service. Bring chairs or a blanket, your own food, and join us for a time of fun and fellowship.

SUMMER SERMON SERIES

How are we to live as God's people in a world that is becoming more difficult and more hostile towards followers of Christ?

In recent years, our society has become more uncomfortable for people of faith, especially of followers of Christ. In a Christianity Today article, Harold O. J. Brown points to changes in the culture, to Supreme Court decisions, to trends in our schools and universities, and says, "Much of the nation ... has been or has recently become in essence anti-Christian, anti-Jewish, anti-natural law, and implicitly or explicitly pagan"—pagan meaning godless.

Throughout Scripture the people of God are frequently presented as sojourners in exile. We are strangers in this world. We find ourselves without easy answers for unique challenges and questions we face.

So we asked some in our church, what might they be struggling with as exiles in our world, that we might be able to address this summer. For the months of June and July we will attempt to Biblically answer some of their specific questions in our summer series: "Questions from Exile".

June 4 | How do I live in exile?

June 11 | How can I authentically follow Jesus in my workplace?

June 18 | How do I love other believers I don't really like?

June 25 | How can I navigate the polarizing views with other Christians?



PRAY WITH US

Contact the church office if you would like to receive our weekly prayer email, Pastor Joel's Friday Update, or join our Zoom prayer meeting.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Our condolences to the family of Lois Chapman who passed away at the age of 95.
- Our condolences to the family of Grant Butterworth who passed away at the age of 98.
- Congratulations to the following families who recently dedicated their children to the Lord: Titus Amstutz, Irene Boyd, Abigail Danielson, and Ashley Pierre-Louis.