



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

MARCH 2019

This Month @ FIRST FREE

MEN'S RETREAT MARCH 1-3

To really be a part of a church community it is important to forge relationships. Yet that can be hard to do on a Sunday morning when you run into a service and run out without connecting in a more meaningful way. This is why coming to the Men's Retreat is so critical—it's a time to unplug and really connect with other men in our church body, to foster deep relationships that may help you to weather the storms of life. If you are a man out of high school, you and your friends are invited to the Men's Retreat on March 1st-3rd at Camp Shamineau. Visit shamineau.org/overhaul for more details and to sign-up.

LENT AND EASTER VISUAL ARTS GALLERY

Just as we did during Advent, we want to invite artists of all ages and skill levels to submit paintings, drawings, photography and graphic designs for consideration in our Lent & Easter visual arts gallery. In the foyer, on screens throughout our building, and on social media, we will be celebrating Christ's passion, death, and resurrection through this important expression of worship. If you have questions, or would like more information, contact Paul Anleitner at paul.anleitner@firstfreechurch.org. Submissions will be accepted and reviewed throughout Lent and Easter, beginning the week of March 10th.

TERRACE ON CHICAGO

Get dressed up, see the church transformed into a fancy restaurant, enjoy a gourmet dinner, and support our youth group's summer ministries. Dinner at 5:00 or 7:00 with a takeout option at 6:30. Childcare available for the 5:00 seating. Make your reservation in the church lobby or visit firstfreechurch.org/toc.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead on Sunday March 10th!

Something's Not Right

BY JAY POUND

In December of 2009, my youngest brother was diagnosed with cancer. Among the many thoughts careening through my mind, one that often floated to the surface was simply, "this isn't right." He was young, only 22. He was vibrant, active and good. He loved nature, and would frequently take inner city kids on camping trips out into the Georgia wilderness. He loved people, loved his family and loved God. And a little over a year later, after excruciating treatment, he died. I knew something was not right, knew something was in fact desperately wrong.

In the months and years as I have confronted this deep sense of wrongness, I found that scripture too rings with these same observations and questions. Prophets and psalmists alike decry the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering and oppression of the righteous. God's own people cry out in anguish, wondering how it can be that the pagans rise in wealth and power while they - the faithful few - are

trampled under foot. They are hard questions, and they always have been. They resisted neat and simple answers every bit as much then as my own do now.

It is therefore not surprising that scripture does not offer us simple answers either, and those who have come in search of them have often left disappointed. Perhaps that is in part because we cannot understand. What words could wash away the pain of a broken marriage or the loss of a loved one? What explanation was going to make me OK with my brother's death? What scripture offers is not an answer or an explanation, but a person, an invitation to know and trust in God, who does understand and who will one day put all things right.

And this too might seem trite, like "mere words," were it not for the fact that God has already acted decisively in Christ. At the center to every Christian response to the problem of evil is not a doctrine,

but the cross. Here, now and always, is the proof that God sees and understands, far better than we ever could, the damage caused by sin and evil. Here was God, in the flesh, so grieved by that damage that he was willing to lay down his own life to put an end to it.

In Jesus, I found a grief over my brother's tragic death that matched my own, and then surpassed it. A grief over all suffering and sin that drove him to drastic and decisive action. I still do not understand why my brother developed cancer, why he had to suffer through chemotherapy, why his life had to be cut so short. What I have found is trust in the wisdom of God. I don't have answers, but because of the cross I have confidence that God will one day put all things, including this, right.



UPCOMING SERIES | SOMETHING IS WRONG

- MARCH 10 The End of the Story (Rev. 15:3-4)
- MARCH 17 The Beginning of the Story (Gen. 6:5-8)
- MARCH 24 Good out of Evil (Rom. 8:28)

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

WANT MORE INFO?

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**SEE MORE INFO AT:
www.firstfreechurch.org**



The annual fundraising event for Velocity Student Ministries summer trips is on March 23rd.

The theme this year is Italian! Menus and reservation cards will be handed out on Sunday mornings inside the bulletins. There will be takeout, gluten free and vegetarian options as well.

Before Dinner Aperitivo & Antipasti

*RASPBERRY BELLINI
CUCUMBER LEMON MINT INFUSED WATER
CRANBERRY NUT BLUE CHEESE BITES
ITALIAN MEATBALLS*

Insalata

CHOPPED SALAD
romaine lettuce, dry Italian salami, mozzarella, Roma tomatoes, green peppers, red onions, basil, Italian parsley tossed in a red wine vinegar & olive oil vinaigrette

PIZZA BIANCA
flat oven-baked Italian bread topped with olive oil, crushed red pepper & garlic ricotta, mozzarella, romano cheese, & fresh basil

Preferiti

PENNE RUSTICA
shrimp, pancetta, chicken, pimentos, penne pasta tossed in a rosemary thyme cream sauce topped with paprika & parmesan baked till golden brown

SAUSAGE AND PEPPERS
grilled balsamic glazed Italian sausage, red onion, & bell peppers

GARLIC MASHED POTATOES
creamed potatoes with roasted garlic, herbed butter, sour cream & chives

Dolci

MINI DOLCE TRIO
lemon cream dessert lasagna, berry basil sugar cookie bruschetta, strawberry cream chocolate dipped cannoli

CHOCOLATE TARTUFO
vanilla bean ice cream ball coated in crushed pistachios with a blackberry chocolate truffle center hand dipped in a shell of dark chocolate



Student Ministries Summer Missions Trips

This summer, Velocity Student Ministries will be traveling to three different places for their summer missions trips.

LEAD THE CAUSE

We will be heading to Chicago to attend a conference that focuses on equipping students with the skills and experience in how to share their faith. Dare2Share and Sonlife have partnered to put on Lead the Cause. This collaboration brings together the best of both ministries' core training and philosophies in order to provide a practical strategy for building youth ministries that are focused on the life of Christ and have disciple multiplying at their core. With engaging sessions, dynamic speakers, and hands-on training, students will understand how they can personally take part in being a disciple of Christ. They will gain a renewed passion for their faith, their love for Jesus, and their desire to reach the lost. After attending Lead the Cause in Chicago 2019 students will be equipped to pray with passion as they see the world with Jesus' eyes. Students will be ready to change the world and confident in how to share their faith.

CZECH REPUBLIC

We have the opportunity to serve alongside a local Church in the Czech Republic in running an English Camp. We are partnering alongside Josiah Venture, whose vision is to be part of a movement of God among the youth of Central and Eastern Europe that finds its home in the local church and transforms society. In order to be a part of that movement, our team will be in English classes, sports teams, and workshops acting as helpers or main leaders. Students will learn to do ministry like Jesus in servanthood, peer-to-peer evangelism, encouraging local believers, and God's perspective on the necessity and beauty of his church for disciple-making. The goal for our team is to share our lives and the love of Jesus Christ through peer-to-peer relationships! English camp provides an environment to practice cultivating, planting, and reaping with students that have had little or no contact with Christians, the Bible, or the truth of Jesus Christ. This will give us opportunity to be part of a ministry that partners alongside churches in reaching the most atheistic nation in Eastern Europe, with less than 1% Christians.

JR. HIGH ADV. TRIP

This adventure trip for middle school students will combine fun and exciting outdoor activities and a camp-like cabin experience for students who are entering 7th & 8th grade. Rock Ridge Christian Camp & Outfitters is passionate about taking youth into the wilderness and helping them grow physically, mentally and spiritually. We will be doing this Adventure Trip through Rock Ridge, a 55-acre camp is located on the shores of Little Long Lake in northern Minnesota, creating a perfect setting for sharing the ways of Jesus Christ. Students will have opportunities to canoe, rock-climb, hike, river-tube, zip-line and challenge the high ropes. We will prepare, engage, and challenge one another through hands-on experiences and varied outdoor adventures. By encouraging each other to step outside our comfort zones and see who we are in Jesus, we expand our horizons and bond with fellow students - all while having the time of our lives.

