



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](mailto:info@firstfreechurch.org)

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 32622

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# VACATION BIBLE CAMP

## JUNE 25-29, 2018

For kids entering grades K-6.

### DONATION STATION

Be on the look out for the Donation Station to choose specific items you can purchase to donate to VBC. Other needed items will be listed on the VBC web page.

### WANT TO HELP?

Help us transform the church into Shipwrecked! Check our website for work days or contact [vbc@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:vbc@firstfreechurch.org) to find out how you can serve.



REGISTER AND FIND THE MOST

UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION AT [FIRSTFREECHURCH.ORG/VBC](http://FIRSTFREECHURCH.ORG/VBC)



# First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

MAY 2018

## *He Knows Not How* BY JOEL SUTTON

There is a beautiful area in northern California known as the wine country. Immaculately groomed vineyards stretch on for miles and grows in startling symmetry. Yet each vineyard grows its own particular varieties of grapes according to its own specific standards. The processing facilities also differ – some using the old world process and others a high tech operation.

But all of them rely upon one indispensable factor. They each are dependent upon the right type of climate for the growing of their grapes. Good grapes are produced when good vines are planted in good soil and then nurtured in the right environment.

Jesus tells us the same thing, when he says, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in

the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” (Mark 4:26-28; ESV, underline added)

When it comes to the kingdom of God there are some things that people can do and some things people cannot do. I love that phrase, “he knows not how.” As God’s people we should sow and harvest, but we cannot produce the fruit. We can sleep and rise, but we cannot make the harvest happen. The harvest happens, but we know not how. It is the “all by itself” principle.

Christians do not automatically grow up in Christ. They need to be in an environment that encourages and nurtures growth. Although we plan and strategize, we recognize that growth – both spiritually and numerically – is God’s domain.

Therefore, at First Free our concentration is on the environment. We focus on the quality: inspiring worship, Biblical and engaging

teaching, authentic community, and outward-facing service. We focus on praying together and loving each person who comes through our doors. We seek to eliminate obstacles to spiritual growth by developing effective ministries for children, youth and their families.

Our mission at First Free is to help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. This past year, as a church, we have specifically concentrated on the second half of Jesus’ greatest commandment, loving your neighbor. One hundred and fifty-seven people took the High Five challenge, to love five specific neighbors. In the foyer of the church, we have our “High Five” prayer list. That means we are loving on, serving and praying for over 785 neighbors. Can you imagine the harvest God is going to produce?

On Sunday, May 6th at 11 am we will be celebrating together all God has done here at First Free over the past year. We will be hearing different stories of people in our

*continued on next page*



## CURRENT SERIES: FAMILY MATTERS

|        |                          |        |                   |
|--------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| MAY 6  | Advantage of Singleness  | MAY 20 | A Father's Words  |
| MAY 13 | Power of Praying Parents | MAY 27 | The Church Family |

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

**WANT MORE INFO?**

Visit [www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)  
 Visit our Facebook page  
 Find us on Twitter  
 @ FEFCMpls

**FIRST FREE STAFF**

**JOEL SUTTON**  
 SENIOR PASTOR  
[joel.sutton@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:joel.sutton@firstfreechurch.org)

**JAY POUND**  
 ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
[jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org)

**JASON PENSA**  
 STUDENT PASTOR  
[jason.pensa@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:jason.pensa@firstfreechurch.org)

**BETH BROWN**  
 CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR  
[beth.brown@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:beth.brown@firstfreechurch.org)

**MIKE GRAFF**  
 WORSHIP PASTOR  
[mike.graff@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:mike.graff@firstfreechurch.org)

**MAUREN JUAREZ & JEANINE BRUEN**  
 FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES  
[nurses@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:nurses@firstfreechurch.org)

**ANNE PETERSON**  
 OFFICE MANAGER  
[anne.peterson@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:anne.peterson@firstfreechurch.org)

**MARY QUINT**  
 DESIGN/OFFICE ASSISTANT  
[mary.quint@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:mary.quint@firstfreechurch.org)

**SCOTT BECKETT**  
 FACILITIES TECHNICIAN  
[scott.beckett@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:scott.beckett@firstfreechurch.org)

**DAVID KRIESEL-KOLL**  
 BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR  
[david.kriesel-koll@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:david.kriesel-koll@firstfreechurch.org)



**SEE MORE INFO AT:**  
[www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)

church family that are reaching out to and loving their neighbors. These are stories of people out in the field scattering the seed. We invite you to join us as we celebrate God's good work in us and through us! That morning of May 6th we will also

have the opportunity to say "Thank you" to Mike and Kait Graff for their ministry over the past 6 years here at First Free. We will have a reception between our worship service and our Celebration so you can personally thank them.

**Our Year at a Glance**

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY:**

- 120** Kids on average on Sunday mornings
- 100** Kids on average on Wednesday nights
- 320** Kids attended Vacation Bible Camp
- 70** Kids went to Camp Shamineau in the summer

**OUTREACH:**

- 32** Missionaries supported
- 10** Organizations supported
- \$3,440** Average dollars of support per missionary/organization

**FINANCIAL:**

Total budget:  
**\$975,163**

Out of every dollar spent...

- \$.77** went to ministry and outreach
- \$.11** supported activities
- \$.12** went to facilities

**FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES**

**23**  
 Visitors trained

**23**  
 Stepping On program participants

**300**  
 Visits to the homebound and hospitalized

Average Sunday morning attendance:

**529**  
**304** at 9:15 a.m. &  
**225** at 11:00 a.m.

**13**  
 Small Groups connecting  
**110**  
 people

**7** Community Groups with **115** attendees on average

**STUDENT MINISTRY:**

- 50** Students on average on Wednesday nights
- 30** Students on average on Sunday mornings
- 17** Students went on the Nicaragua mission trip
- 11** Students attended Lead the Cause

*Together Brunch*

Despite the snow, an amazing, multi-generational group of about 60 women were able to make it for a morning full of friendship on April 14th. Thank you to Phylis Nordin for sharing her heart, experiences, and wisdom on mentoring. Thank you to the dozen men (and youth!) who arrived to clear snow and to the Together team for their work to organize this event!



*Saying Thanks to the Graffs*



On Sunday morning, May 6th, we will have the opportunity as a church to say "Thank you" to Mike Graff and his family for the 6+ years as our Worship Pastor. We invite you to join us for that special time after the 9:15 worship gathering.

**Worship Pastor Search Update**

The Call Committee for the new Worship Pastor has been busy at work. We have met weekly since being elected in early March and have been working on laying strong groundwork, establishing what our values are, and creating a job description for the position. If you have any questions during the process of the search, feel free to contact any of the Call Committee members: Carrie Boyum (chair), Jeff Dutton, Ronn Kreps, Jeff Olson, Rick Olson, Kari Taylor, and Pastor Joel.

As we continue to clarify the profile of the next Worship Pastor, we would like your input. We have a three-question survey that we invite you to participate in. You can fill out the survey online at: [firstfreechurch.org/survey](http://firstfreechurch.org/survey) or find a paper copy to complete at the Welcome Desk in the church foyer.

Please keep us in prayer as we search for First Free's next Worship Pastor. We're excited for what God has in store for our church!

- Carrie Boyum, Worship Pastor Call Committee Chair

*Church Family News*

Our deepest condolences to the family of Jerry Young, who passed away on April 21st. Jerry served on the church council and was a leader for the Seniors community group. His memorial service was held on April 27th at First Free.

Congratulations to Hannah and Bryant Dittmer on the birth of their son, Wallace Christian Dittmer, who was born on April 1st.

Congratulations to Holly and Brian Doble on the birth of their son, Charles Bergsten Doble, who was born on April 4th.

**Correction:** Doris Johnson was 87 years old and worked as the executive administrator. Her memorial service will be on May 21st at 1:00 p.m.

*This Month*  
**@ FIRST FREE**

**Parenting Matters: May 5, 8:30-noon**

We'd like to invite you to Parenting Matters, a seminar filled with TED-style talks from 8:30 a.m. until noon on May 5th, 2018. We will be covering topics to help you as you play a vital role in the life of a child as a parent, grandparent, or caregiver. In addition to hearing and interacting with our speakers, you will also get to enjoy some coffee and bagels and choose a book to take home.

The cost is \$10 per person. Childcare available. Register online at [firstfreechurch.org/parentingmatters](http://firstfreechurch.org/parentingmatters).

**Annual Celebration: May 6**

Our Annual Celebration will be taking place on Sunday, May 6th at 11 am. We will hold a single worship gathering at 9:15 am with our fellowship time to follow and then come together in the sanctuary at 11:00 am for our Celebration. Children's ministry will follow its usual schedule.

**Blood Drive: May 7**

We're partnering with the Red Cross to host a blood drive in our gym on May 7th, 1-7 p.m. Blood donations help millions of patients in need. If you are generally healthy, weigh over 118 pounds and are over 17 you can donate! To make an appointment, visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) and enter the sponsor code Firstfreeempls or call 1-800-redcross.

**Child Dedication: May 13**

Interested in having your child dedicated this Mother's Day? Contact the church office or talk to a pastor.

**Graduation Night: May 16**

Join us as we celebrate our graduating high school seniors! There will be time for you to meet the graduates and congratulate them on their achievement as well as enjoy refreshments. Wednesday, May 16th at 6:30 p.m.

**Memorial Day: One Worship Gathering at 9:15 a.m.**