

FIRST FREE CHURCH

Minneapolis

5150 CHICAGO AVE S.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55417

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FIRST WORD

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

"Friendships" by: Pastor Joel

Evidently, God likes friends!

In the very beginning, God said, "It is not good for man to be alone," and he wasn't just talking about marriage. Solomon wrote, "Two are better than one. If one falls down, a friend can help him up, but pity the person who has no one to help them up" (Eccl. 4:9-10). Jesus had a friend named Lazarus, and when Lazarus died Jesus wept. Paul wrote to his friends in Thessalonica, "You are my glory and my joy."

Do you have a friend who can help you up if you fall down? A friend who you could call if you needed to at 2 am? Someone who can find you where you are and gently lead you to a better place? Could you be that person in someone else's life?

Although God's Word speaks often about good and close friendships, apparently many of us don't have friends like that. Seventy percent of Americans say they have few close friends. Forty-three percent say they have only one person or no person they can confide in.

Now, there are all kinds of reasons for this decline of friendship in our society: longer working days, constant job relocation, technologies that isolate us, woundedness from childhood that cripples our relational abilities. But knowing the reasons doesn't change the reality.

Most of us don't have enough friends or any friends. And that's not good, because when we go through life without friends, it's not just the experience of life that's diminished; we are diminished. We're less than we could be. We're less than we were meant to be, and that's especially true for Christ followers, because God uses friends and friendships to shape us into the people he created us to be.

One of our values here at First Free is "authentic community". Romans 12:9 says, "Love must be sincere." In other words, love doesn't fake it. When we are together, we don't wear a mask. Our relationships are filled with love and grace.

So for the next 5 weeks, we decided to focus on friendships. We will be looking at some famous friends in the Bible. What is it that made their friendships so alive? And if we sit in the shadows and watch and listen, maybe we can learn how God uses friendship in our lives.

New Sermon Series: Famous Friends

- May 4 - "BFF" - David and Jonathan
- May 11 - Unusual Friends - Ruth and Naomi
- May 18 - Mentoring Friends - Elijah and Elisha
- May 25 - Drafting Friends - Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
- June 1 - Disagreeing Friends - Paul and Barnabas

VBC: WAYS YOU CAN HELP!



MORE INFO
www.firstfreechurch.org

GENERAL ITEMS

Donations Needed: (Visit the "Donation Tree" in the gym or foyer for more specific ideas)

- * Gift cards to Michaels (or coupons)
- * Pool Noodles
- * Colorful Boas
- * Colorful Streamers/Crepe Paper
- * Large Bright Flowers/Foliage
- * Gift cards to Target/Walmart
- * Colorful Plastic Slinkies
- * Bright Colored Tissue Paper
- * Animal Fabric
- * Oversized Stuffed Animals: Jungle Animals (butterflies, monkeys, etc.)
- * Animal Masks
- * Old Umbrellas
- * Animal Print Duct Tape
- * Animal Costumes: Preschool Size

VBC PREP

Watch for a scheduled work day (Date & Time TBD): Contact Beth Brown for more info

Prep that needs to be done:

- * Put together crew buckets
- * Make tissue paper flowers
- * Check in the week before VBC to see what's needed!
- * Organize materials
- * And more fun things!
- * Paint props

PRAY!

- * For the kids
- * For the leadership team
- * For the volunteers
- * For beautiful weather - no rain!

First Free's Mission - To help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together.

UPCOMING @ First Free

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

Check out our website!

Visit at www.firstfreechurch.org

Visit our Facebook page!
First Free is now on twitter
@ FEFCMpls

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EXPRESSIONS — MAY 5TH & 19TH @ 7:00 P.M.
For those struggling with chronic or devastating disease, join us at 7:00 P.M. in room 103.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION — SUNDAY, MAY 12TH @ 7:00 P.M.
Join us as we celebrate what God is doing at First Free on Sunday, May 12th at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be provided.

MEN'S SOULSHARE — SATURDAY, MAY 17TH @ 9:00 A.M.
Men of all ages are welcome to join us every 3rd Saturday for breakfast and fellowship from now until May 2014. Contact Ross Olson with any questions: 612-824-7691.

GRAD NIGHT! — SUNDAY, MAY 18TH @ 7:00 P.M.
Join us as we celebrate the Class of 2014 and their accomplishments on Sunday, May 18th at 7 p.m. Come to hear their memories, future plans, and all that God has done in their lives.

ONE SERVICE ONLY — 9:15 A.M. SUNDAY MAY 25TH
Join us for our one service on Sunday, May 25th at 9:15 a.m. due to Memorial Day weekend.

GIRLS ROCK FUN NIGHT!
Girls Rock (1-6) will be having a girls fun night at the church from 7:00 p.m. Friday, May 16th to Saturday, May 17th.

Church Family News

NEW BABIES:
Henry Matthew Beckett: Born on 4/25, weighing 8lbs 2oz, 21 inches Parents Matt & Erin Beckett

CHILD DEDICATION:
- SADIE LEHNER — Parents Pete & Erica Lehner
- KIERAN DRAKE & CULLEN DRAKE — Parents Kevin & Erica Drake

CONGRATULATIONS 2014 GRADUATES

College & Graduate Degrees:
Tim Audette: Bethel University with a Masters in Organizational Leadership
Anne Peterson: Hillsdale College with a B.A. in English Literature and Theater
Ryan Friesen: University of Northwestern—St. Paul with a Bachelors in Kinesiology

High School Graduates:

Olivia Akinpelu
Andrew Bostrom
Brenna Carey
Julia Connelly
Elizabeth Doyle
Rachel Fergus
Luis Guzman
Eve McClun
Cherith Nelson
Sydney Olson
Anna Schubloom



Chris Olson
Arianna Owens
Esther Swanson

INTERESTED IN VBC 2014?

REGISTER KIDS OR VOLUNTEER ONLINE AT:

<https://fefcmpls.wufoo.com/forms/first-frees-2014-vbc-child-registration/>

OR

<https://fefcmpls.wufoo.com/forms/first-frees-2014-vbc-volunteer-registration/>



UPDATE FROM YOUTH PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE.....

FROM JEFF DUTTON

The journey to add a new Youth Pastor to our staff and church family continues. The committee has been collecting resumes from various sources — colleges, referrals, seminaries, on-line postings, etc. The response to this point has been tremendous. We have candidates from all over the map with impressive experience, training and great commitment to student ministry. We are grateful for all of the qualified folks God has brought to us. The committee is in the process of reviewing resumes and selecting the best matches to continue in the process. We anticipate we will begin to connect with selected candidates and start interviews in early May. We plan to stop accepting resumes on May 15th. We are committed to God's timing, but are on track to have our top candidate in place to begin in mid-August.

A special thanks to the folks on the committee:

- Alan Peterson
- Tim Audette
- Frank Cupersmith
- Julie Danielson
- Johanna Holliday
- Heather Stacey
- Jeff Dutton

Their contribution to the process has been so valuable. Thank you!
Please see anyone on the committee if you have questions.

Continue to pray for the committee and our candidates as we move forward. Pray for God's preparation in the life of our future Youth Pastor. We plan to give an update at the May celebration as well — see you there!

VALUE #3: AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY - CONNECTING OUR LIVES TOGETHER BASED ON A COMMON LOVE FOR OUR SAVIOR AND OUR MISSION

by: Jay Pound

Editor's Note: Below is the continuation of our discussion of our values and how that drives our mission here at First Free. Be sure to be on the look out for these values to be discussed further in future editions of First Word.

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4.1-6)

When God becomes your father, his family becomes your family. That is after how families work—have always worked. It also happens to be a big part of the good news, that people alienated from one another find reconciliation in Jesus Christ. So at First Free, we value and champion community because authentic community reflects and testifies to our common savior, salvation, Spirit, baptism, hope, mission and of course our common Father. Choosing to do life together in genuine community is one of the most important ways that we as a local body can live out the truth of the Gospel.

But in addition to being a crucial theological statement, community is also eminently practical. A few verses later in Ephesians 4,

Paul proclaims that God designed us to pursue his mission together. Paul goes even further, comparing the church to a body - a unified whole that needs the unique abilities of each part to accomplish tasks. That, says Paul, is why God gives each of us different gifts, so that together - as a community - we might accomplish the work of the gospel. When we all use our unique gifts together - creativity, planning, administration, teaching, serving, hospitality - we are simply more effective. And, Paul would remind us - that is after all how we were designed to work by our wise creator God.

Authentic community - sharing life, gifts and resources across all boundaries of age, ethnicity, socio-economic group, etc - is God's strategy for accomplishing the great commission. To that end, he has gifted everyone uniquely through his Holy Spirit and called us all to serve his mission together. And that kind of community, in addition to being effective in the work of the gospel, is also the way we embody the truth of the gospel as a church. Through authentic community, we proclaim Jesus as Lord across all borders and boundaries, and anticipate the day when people from every tongue and tribe and nation will join in the worship of Jesus our savior and Lord.



WEIRD ANIMALS VBC
BY BETH BROWN-THE ZOOKEEPER
KIDS LOVE WEIRD ANIMALS!
KIDS NEED UNCONDITIONAL LOVE!

WHAT IS "WEIRD ANIMALS" ABOUT ANYWAY? ARE THESE ANIMALS REAL?

Kids need to know they're loved unconditionally. We want them to know that Jesus loves them all the time, no matter what. At this VBC the kids will learn that Jesus' love is one-of-a-kind. And, they'll learn it amongst the very colorful, creative setting of "Weird Animals"!

"Kids love crazy, weird, even gross animals. The weirder, the better." There are 5 very unique, very real animals that God has created and the kids at VBC will get to know them a bit better. Have you ever heard of an axolotl? How about a tenrec? The VBC team has been having a blast brainstorming and planning for VBC 2014. Please check out the "Ways You Can Help" section of the newsletter or look for the flier at the Creekside Canteen!

Please contact me with any questions, to offer some help, or just to share something that's weird or unique about you!