



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55417

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# First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

MAY 2017

## Vacation Bible Camp 2017

JUNE 26-30



For kids entering grades K-6



### VBC KICK-OFF: MAY 7

Meet the Imagineering team, register kids and volunteers, check out the donation station, and more!

### 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 Maker Fun Factory! Check our website for work days or contact [vbc@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:vbc@firstfreechurch.org) to find out how you can serve.

Registration for children & volunteers is open now at [firstfreechurch.org/vbc](http://firstfreechurch.org/vbc).

Be sure to check the VBC web page for current and up-to-date information!

Questions? Email [vbc@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:vbc@firstfreechurch.org)

## Finishing the Story BY JAY POUND

When we think of the gospel, our minds tend to gravitate toward the surprising and dramatic reversal of the cross and resurrection. This is perhaps only natural, as together those two events represent the great turning point of the story, where the apparent defeat of Jesus by crucifixion is revealed to be the very means by which God wins His decisive victory over the powers of sin and death. And of course it is the bodily resurrection itself which reveals in stunning and indisputable fashion that Jesus has conquered sin and death. Shocking and singular, these events rightly command our attention and demand our celebration. They are among the most exciting parts of the most incredible story every told. But it is not the end of the story.

The gospel has one final chapter, after even the resurrection, which deserves our attention and celebration. In Philippians 2, Paul briefly summarizes the gospel story by quoting what is either a very

early Christian hymn or creed:

Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, coming into existence in the likeness of humans. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God highly exalted him and granted him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is King, unto the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11)

Here we find all the core elements of the gospel, just as we would proclaim it today, just as we examined it in our recent sermon series from the gospel according to John. The creed begins by affirming that Jesus pre-existed with the Father, and that He humbled Himself, entering our world as one of us (which we of course celebrate as the incarnation at Christmas). And then, as though that were not enough,

Jesus humbles Himself still further, remaining faithful to His Father even unto death on the cross.

If we were mapping out the movement of the story, we might say that thus far it has been all downward in direction: from heaven to earth, and then from earth to the grave. But of course, that is not the end, and from now on all the movement is in the other direction. On Easter God raises Jesus from the dead (from the grave to the earth - as it were). But notice that is not the end either. Jesus is not merely returned to "earthly" life: on the basis of His perfect fealty to the Father, exemplified by His sacrificial death, God "highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above all names."

Here we have the final movement, whereby God himself declares the risen Jesus to be the rightful Lord of all creation, and decrees that all creatures - in heaven, on earth and under the earth - owe Jesus fealty as their Lord. The gospel ends not simply with a living, resurrected Jesus, but with Jesus as the reigning King over all creation. As Hebrews 1:13 has it, God has in effect invited Jesus to sit at his right hand. In



### CURRENT SERIES | FRUIT: IT DOES THE BODY GOOD

APR. 30	Love	JUNE 4	Peace
MAY 7	Joy	JUNE 11	Faithfulness
MAY 14	Patience	JUNE 18	Gentleness
MAY 21	Kindness and Goodness	JUNE 25	Self-Control
MAY 28	One Service: Memorial Day Weekend		

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

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other words, when we picture the throne room of God, we should be picturing two thrones, the great throne of the creator God, and then at His right hand, Jesus the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham, the Lamb who was slain.

Historically, our faith tradition has not celebrated the ascension - the enthronement of Jesus, as described by our passage above (and Mt. 28:16-20, Acts 1:6-11, Hb. 1:13, 1 Cor. 15:25-28), at least not in the same way we have celebrated Good Friday and Easter. But perhaps we should. The ascension belongs with the rest of the gospel story, and to leave it out is to change the story. And beyond that it reminds us that our faith is not in an event, or in a doctrine (or set of doctrines), but in a person - the person of Jesus the Messiah. So make some time to celebrate (again): Jesus has ascended to the right hand of God the Father where He even now reigns as King:

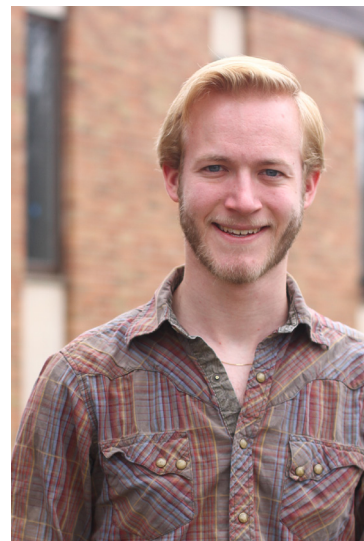
"To the one seated on the throne *and* to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" (Rv. 5:13, NRSV, emphasis mine)

*Living on Mission:*

**Christ-centered and Christ-sent Together**

This year for our Annual Celebration, we wanted to focus on stories of individuals. Whether by discovering a new way to serve others, deepening a relationship with Christ, or growing closer in community, these individuals are living out the mission of becoming Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. Here is one story.

I have been attending First Evangelical Free Church since I was thirteen years old. Within that period I attending other churches for varying lengths of time, but I now have been at First Free for a decade. I was a waiter in the first Terrace on Chicago, I went to Challenge the first year we started going, and I even remember going to youth group in the small room by the elevators. I have been attending First Free for close to half of my whole life.



Stuart Klenk

However, until recently I had still not become a member. It had never been proposed to me that it was even a possibility. Becoming a member of a church was something that older people did. In college, though, I became familiar with other denominations and traditions of Christianity. In the Heidelberg Catechism, I confess that "I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith. And of this community I am and always will be a living member."

For me becoming a member was about recognizing what has been true for a long time: I am part of First Free. If you are a Christian you can be a member in our church. That's all it takes.

**Other members of the congregation will be sharing their experiences at our Annual Celebration. Join us on May 7th at 11:00 a.m. as we take a look back and hear stories from the past year, worship in song and prayer, and hear our leadership share plans and goals for the next year.**

*Retreat 46 at Camp Shamineau*

"We treasure Him (Jesus) because He first treasured us!" This was our slogan at Retreat 46, a weekend retreat for 4th-6th graders at Camp Shamineau, at the end of March. Retreat 46 is a great way for 4th-6th graders to get a preview of the camp experience. First Free brought 23 boys and girls plus 7 adults and 3 teenagers! We had a blast at a carnival, horse ranch, nature center, boat races, chapel, low & high ropes courses, and more! We were challenged to Live for Jesus and to Treasure God.



First Free gives coupons for Camp Shamineau, Rock Ridge, or Camp Nathanael to all summer campers who attend a First Free program. We'd like to see all our kids have the opportunity to go to camp! Summer brochures and coupons are now available at the Creekside Canteen. Questions? Contact Beth Brown or Jason Pensa.

*Our New Sign is In!*

FROM PASTOR JOEL

A neighbor came to me the other day and said, "Hey, I see you have a new sign in front of your church. I like it." He paused and then asked, "Did you have a different sign before that?"

We all know where the church is located, but how great that we now have a sign that really "pops" and lets our neighbors know we're here. The new sign communicates that our church is contemporary and vibrant: "something is happening" here. It also communicates our message with our logo, mission, and website address to those outside the church.



The logo is both a cross and a tree. A cross for the Christ-Centered part of our mission and a tree for the Christ-Sent part of our mission. The tree

also expresses our connection to the Evangelical Free Church of America which also uses a tree for its logo.

We are excited that our neighbors are noticing. We look forward to how God is going to use that sign to bring more people into His Kingdom!



*This Month*  
**@ FIRST FREE**

**South of the River Potluck: May 6**

Anyone who lives south of the Minnesota River is invited to come to a potluck at Jon and Carrie Boyum's house on Saturday, May 6th at 6:00 p.m. Kids and families welcome! RSVP to Carrie at [joncarrieboyum@hotmail.com](mailto:joncarrieboyum@hotmail.com) or 612-237-3619.

**VBC Kick-off: May 7**

Join us May 7th during fellowship time in the gym to meet the Imagineering team, check out the donation station and register kids and volunteers!

**Annual Celebration: May 7**

Our Annual Celebration will be taking place on Sunday, May 7th 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.

**Child Dedication: May 14**

This Mother's Day we will be having child dedications. Interested? Contact the church office.

**Graduation Night: May 17**

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 17th at 6:30 p.m.

**Men's Soulshare: May 20**

Men of all ages are invited to breakfast and fellowship at 9:00 a.m. on May 20th. Questions? Contact Ross Olson.

**Grad Morning: May 21**

Join us as we honor those who will be graduating from high school and college!

**Memorial Day Weekend**

We will have one worship gathering at 9:15 a.m. over Memorial Day weekend. Office closed on Monday, May 29th.

*Church Family News*

Congratulations to those who were baptized on Easter Sunday: Adela Bragg, Maurine Garratt, Charlene Tian, and Charlene's mother Hong Hao.