



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

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You Will Be My Witnesses BY JAY POUND

My dad was born and raised in a small town near Cleveland, Ohio, and he grew up playing and watching sports. When he watched, he rooted for the Cleveland teams: the Browns, the Indians and the Cavaliers. He was at the 1964 NFL Championship Game (pre-Super Bowl era) in Cleveland where the Browns dominated the Colts 27-0. No one there at the time, my dad included, would have ever believed it would be the last professional sports title any Cleveland team would win for over 50 years. But it was. I am not a Cleveland fan for reasons due to complicated family dynamics (My mom's family is from the Pittsburgh area), but over the last few decades even I started to feel bad for Cleveland—and for my dad.

Five years ago, when the Cleveland Cavaliers once again made it to the NBA finals, my parents just happened to be in town staying with my family for the final few games of the series. I got to watch all of game 7 with my dad, both of us racked with anxiety for the entirety of the game. We cheered when Lebron ran the length of the court to make a crucial 4th quarter block, and we went crazy when Kyrie Irving sank the three point shot that sealed the victory. Cleveland had just won its first professional sports title in over 50 years, and we had watched it

happen. We were witnesses.

In the church, witnessing has in recent times gained a peculiar connotation. I grew up in the church, and I was both encouraged and trained to “witness” to others. Witnessing meant presenting the gospel to others and inviting them to believe. Sometimes you would use a booklet to walk others through the basics, other times you might be trained in how to use the “Romans Road” (a series of verses from Romans thought to capture the key claims of our faith) or the “colors” method. All of these no doubt have some merit, and some challenges.

I think the essence of what Jesus asks is something simpler. In his words to his disciples in Acts 1:8, Jesus says simply: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” I suspect that what Jesus has in mind is what you and I normally mean by “witness” in any other context: he wants the disciples to share what they have seen and heard and experienced. Witnessing is first and foremost personal. Jesus, talking to those who have been with him, who have heard his teaching, who have seen his death and resurrection, says

to share what they have personally experienced. That's what it means to be a witness.

For weeks after the Cavaliers won the NBA title, my dad and I could not stop talking about it. It was exciting and significant, and we could not wait to tell others—whether they were interested or not (just ask our wives). We called and texted people, we brought it up at church, in restaurants and in line at Aldi. When you experience something incredible, something exciting, that is just what you do. You bear witness, you tell others what you have seen and heard and experienced.

Those of us who call Jesus our Lord and Savior all have our own stories to share. If we have received forgiveness, if we have been set free from the power of sin and death, if we have experienced the joy of new life through the Holy Spirit, we should be willing and able to bear witness to those experiences, to tell others of what Jesus has done in us and for us. We should of course grow in our understanding of our faith, should be able to explain it clearly to others, but the core of our witness should simply be to point people to Jesus and tell others what he has done for us.

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First Free Photos

Twin Cities Marathon



Camp Nathanael

Creekside Family Hike

HAS YOUR INFORMATION CHANGED?
Please update the church office if your phone number, email or home address has changed recently

Our Mission:

TO HELP
INDIVIDUALS
BECOME
CHRIST-CENTERED
& CHRIST-SENT
TOGETHER

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"You Will Be My Witnesses" (continued from page 1)

On November 6-7 we want to invite you to join us for Outreach Weekend where you will hear some of our own youth and young adults share about what God has done in and through them over the past year in Europe, Africa and South America. They are witnesses to the global work of God, and remind us that all of our individual stories find their ultimate meaning in God's great story. Join us as we celebrate the fulfillment of Jesus' words in Acts 1: Jesus is the Lord, and we are his witnesses, in Minneapolis, in Minnesota, and even to the ends of earth.

Outreach Weekend

Saturday, November 6 at 10:00 a.m.

Several young people from our church will share about their summer short-term mission trips. There will be muffins and scones with coffee and juice. Childcare will be available for infants through third grade. The event will be livestreamed and recorded.



Emily Holliday spent time this past summer at the Fort Peck Tribes Health Promotion Disease Prevention in Poplar, Montana as a nursing student through Crown College. She worked with programs that focus on improving the overall health status and quality of life of youth and the elders of the community.



Jessica Holliday served with Youth With a Mission for six months. After training in Kona, Hawaii at YWAM's Discipleship Training School, Jessica was sent to Paraguay to assist with youth ministry, evangelism, leading services and retreats, hosting a soccer tournament, and serving in an orphanage.



Asher Koch served with Teen Missions International in Ndola, Zambia. After spending two weeks of training in Florida, Asher went with a team to Ndola, Zambia. While in Zambia, Asher helped to construct an ablution block—which is basically a public bathroom and shower area—and shared the Gospel.

Sunday, November 7

Guest speaker Josh Krato, will speak at both worship services. Also on Sunday morning, Enrique and Becky Fernandez, along with Timothy and Carolyn Dahlin—from the Latin America Training Network—will speak in room 105 during both hours. Phil and Cindy Read (Navigators International Student Ministry) will present in room 103, also during both hours.



Josh Krato has been serving in Prague, Czech Republic since 2013. Growing up in St. Louis, Josh traveled to Prague on two different short-term summers mission trips, where he met his wife, Jaja. During one of them, a pastor in Prague challenged him to move to the Czech Republic as a missionary. Currently, Josh is the EFCA Prague City Team leader as he focuses on developing leaders to do discipline and evangelism.

Welcome Emma Burns.

Worship Intern

An important role of the life of a church community is to identify leaders in the next generation and to give them the space to lead and grow in their ministry callings. Emma Burns has spent most of her life growing as a disciple of Jesus at First Free Church, and we see a call of God on her life as a leader in worship arts ministry.



This is why the church leadership has invited her into an official internship role as a leader in worship starting this fall. Emma will be working with Paul and the Worship Arts ministry to be leading our congregation more regularly, not just in song, but in prayer and proclamation of the Gospel in our worship gatherings.

Get to know a little bit about Emma:

"I just graduated this past spring from Creighton University, with a major in both Secondary Education and History. After graduating I moved back to the Twin Cities and found a job as a Special Education Paraprofessional at an elementary school. I also started Creighton's Masters Program in School Counseling and Preventive Mental Health this past Summer. This program is completely online and allows me to stay close to my community in Minnesota and give me the training I need to provide support to students in the best way I can.

"One of the main reasons I wanted to move back to Minnesota after graduation was to be close to First Free again. This church has always been such a special part of my life. Having the opportunity to participate on the Worship Team over the years has strengthened my faith and solidified a calling that I feel to serve God through my talents. I feel blessed to have such a wonderful community here at First Free that I can worship with through song, prayer, and communion!" -Emma

Church Family News

Congratulations to Eliana (Fergus) Nordell and Jack Nordell, who were married on October 2.

Congratulations to Kathryn and Nathan Schroeder on the birth of their daughter Elliott "Ellie" Schoeder, born October 15.

Congratulations to Eddy and Sabina Emile on the birth of their son Ashley Pierre-Louis, born October 25.

This Month

@FIRST FREE

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS NOVEMBER 7

Don't forget to set your clocks back on Saturday night!

CES FOOD & HYGIENE DRIVE

This Fall, the Caring Commission will be sponsoring our annual Food and Personal Items Drive, supporting Community Emergency Service (CES). Grocery bags with lists of needed items will be available in the foyer on Sundays, October 31 and November 7. Collection days will be Sundays, November 7 & 14.

QUARTERLY CELEBRATION (BUSINESS MEETING)

Join us as we celebrate God's faithfulness to us on Monday, Nov. 8 at 7:00 p.m.

GRIEFSHARE—SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

A seminar especially for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Join us Sunday, November 14 at 3:00 p.m. Learn more and sign-up on our website: firstfreechurch.org/events.

HARVEST OF PRAISE

You are invited to our annual Thanksgiving worship gathering on Wednesday, November 24 at 7:00 p.m. to give thanks for all God's blessings! Afterward there will be fellowship time with treats. Nursery childcare will be provided.

CALL FOR ART

This November and December we are once again inviting artists of all skill levels and ages to submit photos, paintings, drawings, graphic designs, or other expressions of art to be shared with our church community in our 4th annual Advent art exhibit. Pieces can be dropped-off at the church office during the week. For more information, contact Worship Pastor Paul Anleitner (paul.anleitner@firstfreechurch.org)