



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

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Little by Little BY JOEL SUTTON

There is no magic bullet to spiritual maturity.

Sometimes we are tempted to think there is. "If only I could find the right key - read the right book, go to the right conference, have the right experience, listen to the right tape or sermon. Then I will turn into a mature believer."

The truth is spiritual growth is a gradual process of development. There are no shortcuts to maturity. It takes time. Ephesians 4:13 says, "...we all... become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (NIV- italics added)

The truth is spiritual growth is a gradual process of development. There are no shortcuts to maturity.

Notice that Paul implies that maturity is developed. It's a journey that lasts a lifetime. Just as God allowed Joshua and the Israelites to possess the land "little by little" (Deut. 7:22), God uses a gradual process of change to develop us into the image of his Son.

We ask, "Why do I have to go through this?" and "What is God doing in my

life?" The answers, in part, lie in this truth, that spiritual maturity is a process.

God could instantly and miraculously change each of us into mature believers, but in His sovereign wisdom He has chosen instead to take the time to slowly develop us and teach us one lesson at a time.

That is why we began this fall emphasizing our five Extraordinary Norms. It is the reason we have developed a resource of practices that you can use in order to pursue these Extraordinary norms.

The Apostle Paul often times compares the Christian life to athletics, reminding believers that they have to train in order to stay in shape. Listen to Paul's words from 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who compete in the games goes into strict training. They do it get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last."

Most people, in order to reach some form of physical fitness have to exercise and practice healthy habits. Likewise, spiritual fitness can be shaped by the habits we develop - the spiritual

exercises and the biblical disciplines we practice.

As the Apostle Paul says, "Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit."

The Extraordinary Norms booklet has been designed to help you be more intentional about growing in each of these five norms. If you don't have a booklet, pick one up at the church welcome desk. And then take your time working your way through it. Reflect on the questions at the end of each section. Check out additional resources you can use to assist you in going further. Develop some practices that will encourage your growth. Be intentional.

As the Apostle Paul says, "Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit." (1 Timothy 4:7, Phillips translation).

Our prayer is that as the Holy Spirit guides and empowers you, all five of these Extraordinary Norms become normal in your life. Our hope is that as we do this together, Christ will be more fully formed in each of us.

GOOD SINCE | Past Truth For Present Life

Have you heard someone say, "I've felt better since..." They are referring to a time in the past that has effected the present. That is the power of "since". In this next series we will be looking at some spiritual past truths that effect how we live in the present.

Nov. 6 - Since Christ Suffered in the Body - 1 Peter 4:1-6

Nov. 13 - Since we Live By the Spirit - Galatians 5:16-26

Nov. 20 - Since God has loved us; 1 John 4:7-21



Thank you to everyone who helped serve at the Twin Cities Marathon!



Creekside Family Hike at Crosby Farm Regional Park

Would you like to receive the newsletter via email?
Contact the office at info@firstfreechurch.org

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

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Welcome Allie Danielson!

I am so excited to be a Faith Community Nurse at First Free! I graduated nursing school from Metropolitan State University in 2019 and have worked at Abbott Northwestern Hospital and most recently as a Public Health Nurse. My main focus as a Public Health Nurse was working with those who have tuberculosis and assisting new immigrants and refugees to the county. I also assisted in our vaccination clinics and in the county's COVID response. My first degree is in elementary education, which has been helpful as much of nursing is to provide education to clients. I believe being a nurse is a calling, and I am blessed to be able to create connections with people from all walks of life.

My husband and I have been attending First Free since 2014. We live in Chaska and have a 4-year-old daughter named Abigail and a new puppy named Juniper. I have been on the Caring Commission for quite a few years and was also a homebound visitor. I am excited to create supportive connections at church and walk alongside those facing challenging situations. I look forward to serving our congregation as a Faith Community Nurse!



Pick up a copy of the Extraordinary Norms Resource today at the Welcome Desk!

We hope that this resource will help all of us be more intentional about pursuing these extraordinary norms in our everyday lives. We believe that God's power is at work in us to transform us, but we also recognize that we are called to be partners in that work. We hope that this guide can provide some helpful direction and resources for you.



Extraordinary Norms Survey Results

On behalf of the staff and council, we want to thank all of you who took time to participate in our recent survey on our extraordinary norms. We had over 110 people complete the survey, and the staff have already spent some time looking through the results.

Ultimately, our norms are about culture, they describe the kinds of behaviors and priorities we want to be normal for our congregation. This survey helps us to identify where those extraordinary norms are already a reality, and where we need to provide teaching and training to help make them a reality. The results of the survey will help guide our decision making as we plan sermon series, electives and other special events over the coming year.

Thanks again for your help and partnership as we all work together to become the people God has created and called us to be in Christ.

Fall Adult Elective: God's [New] Covenant People

Later this Fall I will be teaching an Adult Elective during both services over three weeks (Nov. 20, 27 and Dec. 04) titled, "God's [New] Covenant People." Many of us have in recent years recognized that Christianity—and Christians—no longer occupy the place in our culture that they once did. Our culture has at the same time become more secular and less accommodating of our faith, our values and our worldview. While we are still fortunate to enjoy broad freedoms and legal protections, we have nonetheless felt a loss of respect, institutional influence and cooperation. Where once we felt ourselves to be respected insiders, now many of us feel like cultural outsiders. And much of this has happened within my (relatively short) lifetime.

While this can feel both hard and sad, it should not feel surprising. We follow the crucified and risen Lord; opposition was not just foreseeable, it was foreseen. Jesus knew following him would not be easy, and he frequently warned those who would be disciples that the path they were choosing was difficult. But he also promised that in the end, it would be more than worth it.

This Fall, I want to spend three weeks exploring how thinking of ourselves specifically as God's covenant people can offer a new perspective that will help us to navigate these challenges better. We will look at what it means to be part of a covenant, and how that can help us think differently about ourselves and our relationship to those around us. Part of the purpose of a covenant is to give us a firmly rooted identity and clear direction for human flourishing that will help us to better reflect God's wisdom and love into a world that so badly needs to see and receive it.

-Pastor Jay Pound



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Our condolences to the family of Delbert Delong who passed away at the age of 89.
- Congratulations to Jason Olson and Christina Dotseth on the birth of their daughter Adalyn Joy Dotseth!

UPCOMING EVENTS

CES FOOD AND HYGIENE DRIVE Sunday, November 6 and 13

Once again we will be collecting items for Community Emergency Services. Here are the items they are most in need of:

- Sugar (2lb and 4lb packages)
- Vegetable and Olive Oil
- Cereal
- Chicken Noodle Soup
- Hygiene Items (shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste)
- Jars of Pasta or Spaghetti sauce
- Cleaning/household items (multipurpose cleaner, dish soap)



QUARTERLY CELEBRATION November 21 7:00 p.m.

Our Quarterly Celebration (business meeting) will be held on Monday, November 21 via Zoom. The Zoom link will be published in the Friday November 18 email (or you can contact the church office during business hours).

HARVEST OF PRAISE

Wednesday, November 23 at 7 p.m.

You and your family are invited to our annual Thanksgiving worship gathering to give thanks for all God's blessings! There will be a pie social following our praise gathering—households of 2 or more bring a favorite pie to share. There will be no nursery or childcare provided; families are encouraged to worship together.

CREEKSIDE ADVENT FAMILY EVENT

Saturday, December 3 from 10-12 noon

Begin a new tradition and celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus, with your family at the Creekside Family Advent Festival. We'll have advent wreath-making, cookie decorating, Christmas bingo, a manger scene photo op, hot cocoa & snacks, and a scavenger hunt. We'd love to know if your family will be joining us. Sign-ups are not required but are appreciated.

CALL FOR ART

This 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 5th annual Advent and Christmas 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)