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## Outreach Missions BY JOEL SUTTON

What was Christ's mission?

"For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son so that anyone who believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

"The Son of Man came to seek and save that which is lost."

Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Simple. Straightforward.

From the very beginning of the Bible story we find God interested in us. In Genesis 3, we hear God's first missionary call given to Adam, "Where are you?". Later in Genesis 12 God in His covenant with Abraham promises, "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." God's mission has been to seek and save the lost—wherever they are from the very beginning.

So how can we join God on His mission?

1. Shift our thinking from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. We need to move from our selfish goals, ambitions, dreams, thoughts and plans to seeking and asking what God's agenda is for our life. There is nothing more important than being in love with Jesus Christ and letting that love for him be put on display.
2. Shift our thinking from temporary values to eternal values. When we believe what the Bible teaches about hell and that there is no second chance for eternal life after death, suddenly our perspective changes. When we begin to talk about the eternal destiny of millions of people, a lot of things suddenly become insignificant and irrelevant. People need the Lord.

3. Shift our thinking from security to service. Mark 8:35 says, "For whoever wants to save his life (security) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel (service) will save it." Look for opportunities to move out of your comfort zone to serve God and others.

On Sunday, October 15th, we will be focusing on missions. We will hear from Dave and Patsy Alfors and their years of ministry in Cameroon among the Fulbe people. Also, our youth will hear from some of those from our own church who went out and served this past summer. My prayer is that as we hear from these who have served across the globe that we might make God's mission our mission—here at home and around the world.

## SENIOR PASTOR UPDATE

by Joel Sutton

This past Sunday morning, I shared with our church family that on January 1st, 2025—a year and 4 months from now—I will be stepping back from my role as the Sr. Pastor here at First Free and retiring.

I have served here as the Sr. Pastor for over 21 years. Both Becky and I love this church. You are family. My prayer is that there can be a very healthy transition as the church calls the next Sr. Pastor. This is the reason I am sharing this news this far in advance.

I would ask that you would be in prayer for this transition. Pray for the call committee. Pray for Jeff Olson, our church chairman, as he leads our church during this time of transition.

A special congregational business meeting will be held on Sunday, October 8th at 11:30 am, after the worship service. The meeting will be held in-person in the sanctuary. The agenda for this meeting is to elect members of the church to serve on the Senior Pastor Call Committee. The Nominating Committee has nominated the following three candidates to serve on this committee: Cindy Larson, Erica Lehner, and Mark McClun. Three council members will also serve as part of this committee: Becki Kobielush, David McCoy, and Jeff Olson.



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If your information has changed recently (address/email/phone number) please contact the office so we can update it in our system.



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

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**OUTREACH WEEKEND**

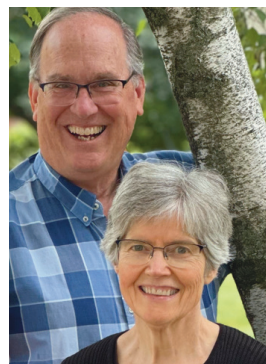
Come experience Outreach Sunday **October 15th!** Here are some options during the 9:00 hour to learn ways God is on the move throughout the globe:

- All adults are invited to the gym to learn about the work Dave and Patsy Alfors have been doing in Cameroon among the Fulbe people. God's spirit is at work in both outreach to Muslim people as well as training among Cameroonian Christians. Come learn and hear stories of God at work in Cameroon, and meet this couple who have had boots on the ground for years of faithful service to Him!
- All students (6-12th grade) are invited to the Room 107/108 to hear from First Free students who served on short term missions this past summer. Hear highlights, see pictures, learn how God is working and how God prepared and equipped these individuals to serve across the globe. Consider the possibilities of God calling YOU to serve next summer. What if?

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Pastor Ken Warwick**

Ken has been in full-time missions work with the Evangelical Free Church (ReachGlobal) since 1988. They have served in Austria, then later assisting short-term missions and in 2009 Ken took on the role of Director of Personnel for ReachGlobal.

After retiring in 2021, Ken has been working part-time for the EFCA Technology team, serving his local church in Faribault and caring for multi-generational family needs.



**EXPRESSIONS SUPPORT GROUP**



Like many of the other support groups at First Free, Expressions is a place where people "do life" together: encouraging, praying, serving each other and seeking biblical wisdom together. However, membership in this group is dedicated to people dealing with chronic illness ranging from ongoing physical diseases to mental health issues such as chronic depression or anxiety.

Creativity is a big part of this support group.

The focus of the "art" we make is on creating a wordless expression of feelings or thoughts, rather than creating something beautiful; no experience with art is necessary and stick figures are welcome! Using art is one way to foster conversations about difficult things and it often generates delightful observations and discussions.

Expressions generally meets twice monthly on Sunday afternoons at 2 pm. All art materials are provided and there is no cost to attend. Those who think this group would be a good fit for you please contact Delores Huanca or the church office.

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

- Our condolences to the family of Sarah Turner who passed away at the age of 42.
- Kindergarten Bibles were presented to: Abigail Danielson, Louisa Bormes, Wallace Dittmer
- Congratulations to Ron and Mae Olson on their 70th wedding anniversary!
- Our condolences to the family of Lorraine Kalb who passed away at the age of 91.
- Join us on Sunday, October 8th where we will be honoring Bob Chapman during the fellowship time and worship service for his years of ministry here at First Free. Bob is moving to Chicago to live with his family.

**MINISTRY ACROSS THE STREET**

written by Jeremy Kobielush

Across the street from church, there are three houses that serve as a light shining brightly to our neighbors.

There are three families living in these homes, which First Free has owned for many years. One of the homes is rented to a single mother in need of housing and stability, and the other two to refugee families from overseas who need the same.

We have been blessed with a partnership in recent years with Arrive Ministries, a Christian nonprofit resettlement agency that helps refugees seeking a new life in America. Arrive helps place refugee families into housing, and since 2019 several families have called our houses home. When a new family moves in, we have formed teams of First Free attendees to come alongside them, build friendships, and help support the new family as they adjust to their new nation—everything from showing them where to shop, teaching them how to drive, helping kids with homework, troubleshooting WiFi issues—any needs you could imagine needing when trying to live in a completely foreign culture. But mostly: Just being a friend.

This is a ministry. We get to show the love of Jesus in very tangible and practical ways.

But it's not just a ministry to the people in the houses. The entire neighborhood is very aware of this ministry.

Many neighbors have approached us to express how, even though they have never been to a church service at First Free, there is an appreciation for what is going on at the homes and an admiration

for what our church is doing there. We are blessed that God is using us. What a thing to think about—we can directly see that God is using you and me for this ministry!



In addition to the people side of the ministry, these homes are physical structures that require upkeep and care. There is a committee that oversees their maintenance, leases, permits, etc.

The City of Minneapolis has an inspection process on all rental properties, and we were due this year. Pete Lehner developed a list of what maintenance work was needed to get the houses ready. The list was long, with big projects needing to be done. Jon Boyum reached out to the Men United study group, the Living Life community group and others to gather support and volunteers to help on three consecutive Saturdays.

When I arrived the first Saturday morning, I saw John Symington, Bob Goodman, Glen Hulstrand and Rick Olson, along with Hung Gu and a few kids, already hard at work on top of a garage tearing off shingles so it could be re-roofed. I have looked up to these men for quite some time, and now I had found myself literally looking up at them as they served this ministry with their time and talents!

Then I walked to the backyard and saw what had to be a couple dozen people

working in teams—painting, pounding nails, scraping paint, replacing siding, cutting down branches, filling holes, repairing railings, replacing downspouts, caulking and more. Kids came with their parents, some people stayed all day, others gave the time they could. The young boys who live in the homes were eager to help too, particularly anything that involved getting to use the tools! The best part was when their mom came out with a large plate of African rice and chicken for lunch. Now we were the ones being served! It was awesome.

The neighborhood noticed this too. I suppose when you see a small army in your neighbor's yard, it tends to stand out. Several neighbors came over to talk with us. One told us she's never been in our church building, but that there's nothing our church could do that would make a better impression on the neighborhood than the ministry we have with these immigrant families.

One by one, we checked off every item on the maintenance list. Ted Koch met the inspector the following week. The inspector said there were three tiers. Tier 3 requires a re-inspection every year, Tier 2 is every five years, and Tier 1 only every eight years. The inspector gave us an A- score and said we were in the Tier 1 category! That's a testament to the generosity of all the volunteers, and the goodness of God.

At First Free we strive to shine the love of Jesus to our neighbors, and this ministry is a huge opportunity. If this sounds like something you want to be part of, there will be more opportunities coming soon—so stay tuned!

**CREATED TO CREATE**



Genesis 1:1 clearly shows everyone is creative because everyone is made in the image of a creative God. To be creative simply means to create.

Come for an evening of creating, each time working with a different kind of art material and different subject matters. Instructors, Gayle Gilman (pastel artist) and Marlene Maloney (former art teacher/artist) will welcome you and encourage a relaxing and fun creative time. No experience necessary. Ages 10-up.

Tuesday, October 10th, 6-8 pm: Landscapes, cut paper collage

Tuesday, November 14th 6-8 pm: Pastel drawing