



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

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Five Extraordinary Norms BY JOEL SUTTON

Mention the term "spirituality" today and many people will conjure up images of people wearing white robes, sitting in a yoga lotus position, burning incense, and chanting "ommmmm" with their eyes closed.

Others think of Christian mystics and monks as those who cloister themselves away from the real world and subject themselves to the rigors of poverty, chastity, and solitude.

Unfortunately, many Christians feel that spiritual maturity is so far out of their reach, they don't even try to attain it. They have this mystical, idealized image of what a mature Christian looks like.

Maturity—they believe—is only for super-saints. But that is a huge misunderstanding. There are not different levels of the Christian life. Jesus said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me." God has called each of us to lay our life at the feet of Jesus and to do whatever he asks.

In 2 Timothy 1:8-9 the apostle Paul writes to Timothy, "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and **called us to a holy life** - not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace." (Bold emphasis is mine).

God has called each one of us to a holy life. God's single and only call is for you to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Here at First Free we rephrase God's call this way: our mission is to help individuals live Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. To help us know what this looks like we have focused on what we call our five extraordinary norms.

The idea behind extraordinary norms is simple: we believe that if we all, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are living Christ-centered and Christ sent lives, then what is "normal" for us ought to be different than what is "normal" for the world. These "extraordinary norms" should be the radical minimum standard for every believer at First Free.

1) Every believer should be shaped by God's story and share it with others.

There are two parts to this extra-ordinary norm. First, being shaped by God's story means that you know and allow the Biblical story of God's redemption and love to inform and shape your life. Second, as you are shaped by God's story, then you share that life-changing story with others.

2) Every believer should be building relationships that feel like family with other believers.

God has designed us all to be in community. Nearly every page of the Bible declares that it is essential for us to have deep friendships with other believers in order to grow in our faith. Therefore we expect everyone at First Free to seek out and get connected into his type of community.

3) Every believer should be growing in their ability to reflect the character and priorities of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is our model. As we have stated this year our goal is that Christ is formed in every person here at First Free. It should be normal that Christ's character and his priorities are being formed in us. We will love others more. We will serve others more. We will exhibit Christ-like humility and generosity. Prayer will become more and more important to us.

4) Every believer should be recognizing and responding to the needs of others in a tangible way.

James 2:18 says, "But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." The fact that we see people around First Free obeying James' command shouldn't surprise us. In other words, meeting the practical needs of those inside and outside our church should be normal for us as disciples of Christ.

5) Every believer should be living life as a residential missionary.

God has commanded us to "Go, make disciples." It is part of God's call for each of us to be about God's mission of not only sharing the good news of Christ, but also be reproducing ourselves in Christ.

(article continued on inside)

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



FALL FLING 2022

Sign up online for Fall Fling 2022, October 28-30th!



FALL KICKOFF

CREEKSIDE

Creekside Kids: September 11th
Sunday Morning, Bible Time: 9:00 a.m. and Children's Church 10:30 a.m.

Creekside Clubs: September 21st
Wednesday Nights 6:30-8:00 p.m. for kids first grade through fifth grade.

Family Hike: October 1st
Saturday at 1:00 p.m.



VELOCITY

Velocity Sundays: September 11th
9:00-10:00 a.m. during the first service in Room 107/108

Velocity Youth Group: September 14th
Wednesday Nights 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Fall Fling: October 28-30th
Camp Shamaineau Fall Trip



WNBS & MOPS

WNBS: Wednesday September 14th 9:30 a.m.
WNBS is a weekly Bible study at the church for women of all ages. Each week we study God's word, discuss our homework, enjoy fellowship and pray for one another. The Thursday study will be via Zoom, and will meet from 6:30-8 p.m.

MOPS: Friday September 16th 9:30 a.m.
MOPS is a place to make new friends, discover a wealth of helpful hints and smarter strategies when dealing with the challenges of motherhood.



ADULTS

Marathon Sunday: October 2nd
Sign up on our website to volunteer. One worship service at 10:00 a.m.

Community Groups: September 11th
Groups resume Sunday during the 9:00 and 10:30 a.m. service.

Men United: September 30th
Friday Mornings at 6:30 a.m.



SUMMER AT ROCK RIDGE

Written By Lucy Kobielush

This summer I decided to work at Rock Ridge Christian Camp and Outfitters, and it was honestly one of the best decisions I could have made for my summer. I was nervous going into it because I didn't really know anyone else who was working there, but it shaped up to be one of the best experiences of my life. My position at Rock Ridge was called "guide in training" or GIT for short. The GITs go on a training trip, and then are support staff for a week, helping out around camp and just basically the people who keep camp clean and running. The final week, the GITs co-guide with an actual guide and go on a canoe trip with campers. My experience as a GIT was really fun. My training trip was a bit different than usual because Desirae had an injury that prevented her from guiding it like she normally would, so one of the guides, Melody, guided my trip. Melody and I became really good friends after that and I genuinely think that without the trip we wouldn't really know each other. More of acquaintances. My week as support staff was also incredible. The staff has mandatory 7 AM devotions and then around 45 minutes of quiet time before breakfast. I really liked that organized exposure to scripture, and through that, I learned how to analyze scripture. Our devotionals went through 2 Timothy and we talked a lot about how

to live a life that gave glory to God. Staff also helped out in chapel when there were campers and admittedly, I learned quite a bit from Desirae's sermons. Even after having heard them over and over throughout the summer, there were things that stood out to me that hadn't previously.

The week I had campers was incredible. The first day was a bit rocky weather-wise (I got stuck on an island twice) but after learning how to fight the wind my campers really bonded. and honestly, I bonded with them too. We had some weird conversations in our boat and were always the last ones to get to portages or sites, but it was totally worth it. It was really interesting navigating the line between leadership and being a peer, and that was exacerbated by the fact that two of the girls were older than me (they didn't know that). I learned so much that week about being in a leadership position, especially with people who were around the same age as me, and how to be relational and make connections without being best friends. Admittedly, it was hard for me because I make friends super fast and trust really fast, and there are things I will definitely do differently next time. But I'm so glad that I got to experience leading a group in the wilderness and I think that I got the perfect group to

learn with. Even now, some of them reach out to me and we have really good spiritual conversations (shout-out to Pastor Joel, I have sent my campers a few of your sermons).

After my GIT session was over I talked to Desirae about coming back up as kitchen assistant for the second half of the summer and she was all over the idea. We talked it out and I went back up for a month to help in the kitchen. Through that, I learned a lot about the ins and outs of a commercial kitchen and kind of just techniques and whatnot for cooking. It was an awesome experience, and I've even put my knowledge to use helping my sister when we make dinner together. Ultimately, my camp experience was incredible, and something that I will definitely be doing again.



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Our condolences to the family of Vernetta Wessman who passed away on August 26th at the age of 94. Funeral service will be on Tuesday Sept. 6th at 2:00 p.m. at church.

(Five Extraordinary Norms article continued)

We desire that these five characteristics be normal at First Free. They shouldn't be just for the pastors or spiritual heroes among us. When someone walks into First Free for the very first time, they should see recognize these five extraordinary characteristics as normal for those who are living out a Christ-Centered, Christ-Sent life.

Might all of our prayers be like that of the English theologian, John Henry Newman, "Lord, shine in me and so be in me that all with whom I come in contact may know thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus."



WOMEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD BIBLE STUDY 2022-23

Fall Study begins 9/14/22
1&2 Thessalonians: Living in the End Times

Winter Study begins 1/4/23
Esther: Character Under Pressure

Spring Study begins 3/8/23
Busyness: Finding God in the Whirlwind



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

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