



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2023

Together: We are Family BY JOEL SUTTON

People outside the church often times say, "I don't believe in organized religion." But it is also true, that these same people are often times longing for a sense of family and community.

In one Gallup poll it was reported that four out of every ten citizens in the United States today admit to frequent feelings of "intense loneliness." We can find many factors for this—the fragmented nuclear family, the high divorce rates, the emphasis on individuality, etc. Everywhere you look there are signs of people who have a deep hunger for fellowship, community and a sense of family.

God in His wisdom has called us as a church not to be an "institution" or "religion", but to be a family! Ephesians 2:19 says, "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." (ESV; underline added).

We are a new human family, created by King Jesus where we find our allegiance in Him rather than in the earthly realities to which many others align themselves. We are a forever family.

Growing up, whenever I would get into trouble (which was more often than I care to remember), my father would always remind me, "As Suttons we don't behave that way." I was part of the Sutton family, therefore the expectation was that I behaved in a manner that reflected our family.

What are the expectations for us as part of God's family? Paul tells us in Ephesians 4 that as those who are in the family of God, we are to walk "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (4:2,3).

Wow, what an expectation! According to Paul, we are to be eager to maintain our unity and love one another. That means we commit ourselves to building each other up. Can you imagine, if from this day forward one of your goals was to build up and encourage those around you?

It also means that we each recognize the value of every person in the family. They may be obnoxious; they may be immature; they may be disagreeable, but Christ died for them. We need to love them.

We are a forever family. We must live out this relationship towards one another. We need to communicate this reality to our community. When people walk in the door, they should sense, "First Free is a place where you are known and cared for and loved. It is a family."

Here are some questions you might challenge yourself with regarding your role in creating this First Free Family:

- Who do I talk to on Sunday mornings? Have I met anybody new over the past month?

- How strong is my desire to be with those in my Adult Community Group? Do I spend time with them outside of Sunday mornings?

- Do I notice periods of "high stress" in lives of others in the family? How can I help support them or meet their need?

- Do I need to forgive someone? Am I willing to look beyond someone's faults and accept them as they are?

- Am I generous with encouragement and appreciation? Who can I "build up" today?

This fall, our sermon series is titled, "Together: We are Family!" We will be doing a deep dive into Paul's letter to the Ephesians. As we will discover, one of Paul's major themes in this letter is that fact that God has created through Christ a new family, a forever family. That is us.

Also, this fall alongside the sermons, each of our adult small groups will be studying Ephesians. It will give you an opportunity for you to discuss and apply more fully this wonderful letter. (By the way, if want to join a small group, contact Pastor Jay at jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org).

What a privilege to be in the family of God here at First Free!

BAPTISM AT LAKE NOKOMIS



Thanks to all who joined us at Lake Nokomis for our annual Baptism and Picnic!
Congratulations to the 7 individuals who were baptized!

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

FALL KICKOFF

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

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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CREEKSIDE

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

Creekside Clubs: September 20th
Wednesday Nights 6:30-8:00 p.m. for
kids first grade through fifth grade.



VELOCITY

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

Velocity Youth Group: September 13th
Wednesday Nights 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Fall Fling: October 27-29th
Camp Shamineau Fall Trip



WNBS & MOPS

WNBS: Wednesday September 13th 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 15th 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 1st
Sign up on our website to volunteer.
One worship service at 10:00 a.m.

Community Groups: September 10th
Community Group Hour resumes at
9:00 a.m.

Men United: September 29th
Friday Mornings at 6:30 a.m.



for more information go to firstfreechurch.org



A heartfelt thank you goes out to Steve Rose who is stepping down from his work in the nursery this fall. "Mr. Steve" has been involved with the nursery and preschool since his son Charlie was one year old: that's 26 years ago! Most recently, Steve worked with the 2's and helped create a safe and loving environment while leading play dough time and teaching kids to pat the Bible. Thank you for your years of service and your heart for the children at First Free!

CZECH REPUBLIC MISSIONS TRIP

by Lucille Carter & Christina Boyum

This July, we got a wonderful opportunity to join Lenka Bragg on a mission trip to the Czech Republic. As 2022 high school graduates, our opportunities to go on overseas mission trips while in the youth group were prevented by Covid. Lenka Bragg was gracious enough to invite us on this summer's trip to replace the ones we had missed. The mission portion of this trip took place at an English family camp in the mountains of the Czech Republic. The camp was run by a church from Prague, and we were part of an American team who helped them teach English and run the camp.

absolute privilege to see kids who had never heard of Jesus before hear about him for the very first time. It was also wonderful to witness the curiosity of these kids as they asked many questions about what they learned from the Bible.



On this trip, the two of us were tasked with preparing and teaching crafts for the 10 kids, ages 3-11, attending the family camp. The crafts that we prepared aimed to connect with the Bible stories that the children were learning while also giving them opportunities to build on their English skills. The children's program was organized similarly to a Vacation Bible Camp with stations like games, singing, Bible story, and English class. It was so special to watch each kid come out of their shell and grow in their confidence, in their English, and in themselves. The kids had so much passion and joy, and they were so excited to be involved in every activity that was prepared for them. It was so interesting to discover each of the kids' personalities as it was more of a challenge to get to know them with a language barrier and a variety of levels of English. It was an

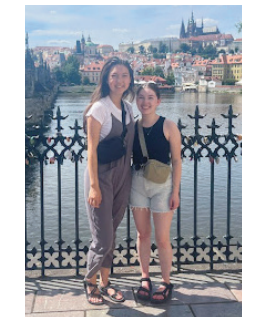
It was such a blessing to do life with the Czech people. In a camp setting like the one we were in, connection comes naturally and it was so heartwarming to see the openness and friendliness that everyone had towards one another. Seeing God work and tie people together was so special. Creating community together, eating meals together, doing workshops together, and talking on the many hikes was a gift. We even put on a few "čajovnas" or teahouses, which were events designed to encourage deep and spiritual conversation which were very fruitful. In a place where there were so many different people from all different places of the world with all different life experiences, it was so so special to see that we are all connected and can come together in fellowship.

One of the songs that we sang a lot throughout the week was called "A Place Called Earth" by Jon Foreman which talked about what it would be like to see a glimpse of Heaven on Earth. This week at camp could be described as a small glimpse of Heaven on Earth because of the joy that was experienced when people, who had on the surface nothing tying them together, could join together



to love one another and worship God together. We as humans long to feel joyful, which is something that everyone can relate to. Our hope is that through this week at camp, everyone realized that true joy is found in God.

We would like to thank everyone who was able to support this experience for us through gifts and prayers. We would also like to thank Lenka, Adela, Petra, and the rest of the amazing American team for being our travel agents while we were in The Czech. We truly feel that God was at work in the Czech Republic and we are so thankful that we got an opportunity to experience it. It goes without saying, but this was a truly life changing trip for the both of us. We went



on this trip to serve the people of the Czech Republic, but we were the ones who were truly blessed to experience the world like we never have before.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

- Congratulations to Molly and Noah Neumann on the birth of their daughter Ramona Neumann!
- Congratulations to Mel Swanson who is going on an Honor Flight, a one-day trip to Washington D.C. on September 11. He is being recognized for his service to our country and will have a chance to connect with other Veterans who have had similar experiences.