



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
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# First Word

A CHURCH FAMILY PUBLICATION OF FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH  
WWW.FIRSTFREECHURCH.ORG

SEPTEMBER 2015

## VBC @ FIRST FREE CONTINUED...

God working through VBC. A couple short stories:



• "A few kids who attended VBC lost their father suddenly a few weeks before VBC. They learned a lot about a God who comforts and heals broken hearts." Wow.

• It was a mountaintop experience for the crew leader who had a kid ask Jesus into his heart. He said, "But that was so easy!"

• Wednesdays are when we traditionally have had a magic show with our infamous Jack Nordin. The VBC team strongly desired to do something in Jack's

memory. So, on Wednesday of VBC we shared with the children that Mr. Jack had gotten cancer and that God had called him to heaven. We shared a special slideshow of photos of past magic shows that Henry Clinton, his grandson, put together. It was quite touching and we know had an impact on many of the children...and adults!

### Thank you, Team Everest Sherpas:

JoAnn Burns, Mike Graff, Kari Taylor, Pam Owen, Tracy Johnson, Erika Garcia, Katie Goodman, Beth Olson, Katie Klenk, Marilyn Fisher, Jan Nyholm, Becki Kobielush, Paulette Goodman, Vanessa Beckett, Cheryl Conrad, Kim Sorensen, Mary Chantland, Jessica McWilliams, Amy Aunan, Courtney Hunter, & Beth Brown



## I Love Looking Back BY PASTOR JOEL

I love looking back.

At the end of this past school year, with the High School graduation of our daughter Hope, Becky and I got out our photo boxes and our piles of pictures that were stashed in several boxes and we looked back. We found pictures we had forgotten about. We reminisced about times when our children were younger. We commented about how quickly they grow up. Then we picked out several dozen and posted them up for all those who came to the graduation party to see. It was a fun project.

Looking back gives us an opportunity to remember God's faithfulness. Matthew begins his gospel with an invitation to review the past; to see how God was working in the history of Israel to bring about the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. Isaiah 46:9 reminds us to, "Remember what happened long ago, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God and no one is like Me."

This summer at First Free we have been busy. There was . . .

- Our Vacation Bible Camp.

- A preaching series on prayer.
- Nokomis Farmer's Market each Wednesday night in our parking lot across the street.
- Group after group of our children heading to Camp Shamineau.
- Youth group trip to Rock Ridge near Ely.
- The hiring of Jason Pensa, our new Student pastor, and Anne Peterson, our new office manager.
- A senior high missions trip to New Orleans.
- Teams from the church out serving at Serve Minneapolis.
- A baptism and church picnic at Lake Nokomis.

Wow, just reading that list makes me dizzy. But what a wonderful summer!

Because we know most of you either have been away for a week or two at the cabin or on vacation - we don't want you to miss what God has been doing around here. So as we prepare to move ahead into the fall, we don't want to miss the opportunity to celebrate what God has been doing here during these hot, humid days of our summer. So take a look back with us in this month's First Word.

**CLASS 101**

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER @ FIRST FREE?

JOIN US FOR CLASS 101 ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 FROM 4-7PM

TO SIGN UP, CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE AT [INFO@FIRSTFREECHURCH.ORG](mailto:INFO@FIRSTFREECHURCH.ORG)

**Fall Kickoff!**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH**  
TWO WORSHIP GATHERINGS @ 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.  
JOIN US AS WE KICKOFF COMMUNITY GROUPS, ADULT, STUDENT, & CHILDREN'S CLASSES

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH**  
CREEKSIDE CLUBS & YOUTH GROUP KICKOFF @ 6:30 P.M.

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

**WANT MORE INFO?**

Visit [www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)

Visit our Facebook page!  
Find us on Twitter  
@ FEFCMpls

## FIRST FREE STAFF

**JOEL SUTTON**  
SENIOR PASTOR  
[joel.sutton@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:joel.sutton@firstfreechurch.org)

**JAY POUND**  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
[jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:jay.pound@firstfreechurch.org)

**JASON PENZA**  
STUDENT PASTOR  
[jason.pensa@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:jason.pensa@firstfreechurch.org)

**BETH BROWN**  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR  
[beth.brown@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:beth.brown@firstfreechurch.org)

**MIKE GRAFF**  
WORSHIP PASTOR  
[mike.graff@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:mike.graff@firstfreechurch.org)

**DEE HUANCA & MAUREEN JUAREZ**  
FAITH COMMUNITY NURSES  
[nurses@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:nurses@firstfreechurch.org)

**ANNE PETERSON**  
OFFICE MANAGER  
[anne.peterson@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:anne.peterson@firstfreechurch.org)

**SHELBY ANDERSON**  
DESIGN/COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT  
[shelby.anderson@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:shelby.anderson@firstfreechurch.org)

**SCOTT BECKETT**  
FACILITIES TECHNICIAN  
[scott.beckett@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:scott.beckett@firstfreechurch.org)

**DAVID KRIESEL-KOLL**  
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR  
[david.kriesel-koll@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:david.kriesel-koll@firstfreechurch.org)



**SEE MORE INFO AT:**  
[www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)

## NOLA:FUSION MISSION TRIP

by Jason Pensa

Here are a few glimpses into some of the stories from our time serving at Urban Impact in New Orleans from our students:

"After a few days of being there I was amazed to feel God's strength and love in and around us. Although we may not have seen immediate results in these kids or neighborhoods, it is comforting to know that we were able to show them what it means to be loved, listened to, appreciated, and to share knowledge, stories, and laughter. Urban Impact is a light in a dark place. It gives kids a chance to be kids without worrying about their safety, provides homes, food, and community. I am so honored to be a part of such a wonderful mission, and to be a part of it with a bunch of amazing people."



"One day I was hanging out with kids outside of the church, when this little girl approached me. She jumped in my arms and refused to get down. I didn't mind, so I just carried her around wherever I went. After a while, I sat on a bench in the shade with her on my lap. She looked up at me and said, 'Pretend I'm your baby. Now hold me close and rub my back.' I did what I was told and let her rest her head on my shoulder. I looked down and realized she had fallen asleep. She had only just met me, yet she was comfortable enough with me to sleep on my shoulder. It hit me how strong her need was to be loved. Some kids were harder to love than others, but that didn't mean they needed love any less. Throughout the week, I thought about how this was true for everyone."



"There was a four year old boy named Beaux. One day we were sitting

around talking and all of a sudden there was a loud pop, which was probably just a firecracker or something. But this little boy panicked and wouldn't stop crying and he curled up into a ball. It broke my heart to see this joyful little boy who was all smiles one minute and scared out of his mind because of a firecracker the next. It really touched me and made me realize how much these kids could have seen or been exposed to. I'm glad we went down there to help and show love to those kids, I hope that we had some sort of impact on their lives."



Thanks to Koya, Ellie and Emma for sharing a few of their stories.

## SERVE MINNEAPOLIS

by Jay Pound

*"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."*

One of the simple but inescapable requirements of following Jesus is the necessity of serving. Jesus models it, teaches it, commands it, and leads by example. He reminds us that even he—the Messiah, our savior and the son of God—came not to be served but to serve. That's why "I am serving others cheerfully" is one of our marks of a Christ-sent believer.

We hope, following Jesus' example, that we are always looking for ways to serve those around us cheerfully—at home, at work, at church and in our neighborhoods. But once every year in August, we invite everyone to join in for one big day of service, together. This year we sent out three groups—one to Hale Elementary, one to Field Middle School, and one group serving right here at First Free. We cleaned, we scrubbed, we pulled weeds, we shoveled mulch, we met neighbors and built relationships—and we had fun! And in doing those things, we lived out the of God for community.

Thank you to all of you who joined us, and all of you who prayed for us! May God provide more opportunities for us to serve our community, and may He continue to use them to make His love known to our neighbors.

## Upcoming @ FIRST FREE

### EXPRESSIONS — SEPTEMBER 13 & 27 FROM 3:30-5:30 P.M.

A time of journaling for those dealing with chronic illness or pain. Join us from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in room 103.

### FARMER'S MARKET — CONTINUING THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30 FROM 4:00-8:00 P.M.

Come enjoy local grown food in our neighborhood starting June 17th from 4:00-8:00 p.m. Be sure to come back for more Wednesdays through September 30th. Located just across the street from First Free at the corner of 52nd Street & Chicago Avenue.

### FALL KICKOFF — SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 @ 9:15 & 11:00 A.M.

Join us for our Fall Kickoff on Sunday, September 13th. We'll be returning to our two Worship Gatherings at 9:15 & 11:00 a.m. and start up community groups, adult, student, and children's classes.

### CREEKSIDE CLUBS & YOUTH GROUP FALL KICKOFF — WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 @ 6:30 P.M.

Join us as we kickoff our Creekside Clubs and Youth Group for the upcoming school year! Clubs and youth group will both start at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16th.

### THE DEEP — WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 @ 6:30 P.M.

Come, be refreshed and encouraged. Join us for a time of worship and prayer at The DEEP on Wednesday, September 20th at 6:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided.

### CLASS 101 — SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 @ 4:00 P.M.

Interested in becoming a member at First Free? Check out our Class 101, September 20 at 4:00 p.m. to learn more about what it means to be a First Free member. Visit [firstfreechurch.org](http://firstfreechurch.org) for more info.

## CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Congratulations to Maria & Allan Peters on the birth of their son Joshua James Peters! He was born weighing 9lbs, 2oz, and 23.5 in.

## SEPTEMBER SERMONS:

September 6	Praying with Faith - James 1 & 5
September 13	Christ-Centered & Christ-Sent: Annual Vision Sermon - Matthew 28:18-20
September 20	Guest Preacher: Pastor John Gerhardt - Urban Impact New Orleans
September 27	Risking Church - Hebrews 10:23-25

## VBC @ FIRST FREE! EVEREST 2015: JUNE 22-26

by Beth Brown

Everest VBC Statistics:

- 325 total children came during the week
- Averaged 280 boys and girls each day
- 180 volunteers served on the team during the week!
- 286 K-6th graders
- 50 in the nursery
- 50 in the preschool
- 2 for sure prayed to receive Christ, many seeds planted

### Shelters for Nepal

First Free's VBC registration kicked off at the time the earthquake struck Nepal, including the area of Mount Everest. The VBC leadership team decided this was a tremendous opportunity to tie in our "Everest" theme to helping families in Nepal. We partnered with ReachGlobal to provide sustainable transitional shelters for needy families. \$125 provides a shelter for a family in Nepal. Our goal was to provide shelter for 10 families! It was powerful to watch boys and girls bring ziploc bags full of coins and even bring in piggy banks from home. By Friday we had raised over \$4,000—enough for 33 shelters! Tears of joy were shed that day.

Also, on the Thursday night of VBC we received a powerpoint straight from Nepal! Earl Wentzel's niece works with Nepali schools and is living in Kathmandu, Nepal and was there during the earthquake. She made a powerful powerpoint to show to the kids on Friday. There were pictures showing people living in tents! We learned that some schools fell down and that some were temporarily made out of tin and bamboo sticks. School is very noisy when it's raining on the tin roofs! It ended with asking for prayer for the children in Nepal, that they wouldn't be too afraid and that, along with food, they'd get new schools and homes.

...MORE ON VBC EVEREST 2015 ON BACK PAGE

5150 Chicago Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55417 ■ 612.827.4705 ■ [info@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:info@firstfreechurch.org)

**A FIERCE FLOURISHING**

**MOPS** **MOMS next**

*You Are Not Alone*

Meets 2 Fridays a month from September through May @ 9:30-11:30 a.m.

visit [mops.firstfreechurch.org](http://mops.firstfreechurch.org) for more info