

September 2011

Dear Parents of 4th, 5th and 6th Graders,

It is time to think again about the traditional fall Children's Hike at First Free Church. As the autumn leaves begin to turn and school is in the air, we will again be strolling around Pike Island, at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. This is the location we could not hike in the spring because it was under water. This fall's hike will be on Saturday, September 24. Hiking later in the month gives us more time to get the word around, but also introduces the possibility of that season of which we do not speak. (Where is global warming when you need it?)



We are inviting the current 4th, 5th and 6th graders who attend First Free's Junior Church, Stockade or Girls Rock! as well as the children from New Salem Church Kids' Clubs. The children can bring friends along, but we need to know ahead of time to make proper preparations. In general, the friends need to be of the same age group as the inviter and/or be shorter than the shortest leader (But as Horton said, "A person's a person no matter how small.")



Those who are not attending another church, we invite to come to Junior Church which begins at First Free on Sunday, September 11. The children meet in the sanctuary with the adults at 11:00 am and are dismissed at about 11:30 to go downstairs. A copy of the schedule is enclosed with the mailed version of this letter. We touch on a lot of topics of great importance in a world where children are exposed early to many things we wish they would never have to face. We have developed a three year curriculum over the past 20 years and repeat it every three years so each child gets opportunity to hear the whole set of topics once. If you have any questions about particular topics, please contact me.

The Hike information is as follows:

in Minneapolis. For those who need a ride to church, let us know. We will transport the group to Pike Island which is down Post Road into Ft Snelling State Park across highway 5 from the airport. Ross carries a cell phone 612-719-6165 if you need to contact the group when they are underway (or contact NASA who will probably be tracking us from space.)

Place: Meet at First Evangelical Free Church parking lot, across the street from the church, which is at 5150 Chicago Avenue South

Time: The children need to be at the starting place by 9:00 am on Saturday, September 18. We will bring them back to their own homes (or other designated drop off place) at the end of the day. We usually start bringing them home at about 5:00 pm, but for some, they may not reach home until 6:30 pm or later. (Note: You are required by law to take your children back, along with the mud, but not necessarily including the amphibians, reptiles and insects they bring.)



Cost: Because we provide lunch and three snacks as well as a packet of keepsake pictures for each hiker, we ask for a donation of \$10.00.

What to bring: Dress for the weather. Long pants are best even if it is hot, however, because we often hike through poison ivy and nettles. Shoes that are

OK to get wet are important because since we are hiking at the junction of land and water and there will be mud. For kids of this age, mud is a magnet. Sunscreen and bug repellent can be applied ahead of time to those who need it. We will also bring along some for those who need it as the day progresses. If it looks like rain, a rain parka would be nice. Snacks and water bottles can be brought but we will also provide plenty of food and drink. Personal backpacks will help us split up the load of goods to carry on the journey.



Weather: We have, over the years had every kind of weather from sweltering to snowfall. Even if it rains, the hike will go ahead. In a worst case scenario, we will do something indoors like going to one of the museums.

We need parent volunteers to drive and/or hike and youth shepherders who come along to provide crowd control and guidance. If you are interested in helping, let us

know. If you've helped before, we know you where you live!

If you are receiving this notice in the mail, and we do not hear from you by September 21, we will contact you to find out if your child is coming. If you get this notice off the internet, in your car windshield at the Mall or dropped from an airplane, you will need to e-mail, text, tweet, make a call, smoke signal or send a carrier pigeon to the fearless leader\* to reserve your place.

Your timely call back or e-mail may help that fearless leader escape from feeling like a telemarketer who talks to nothing but answering machines for hours at a stretch.

\*Perhaps he ought to be less fearless, but then, there may never have been any hikes.

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