

First Free Church  
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# Firstword

First Evangelical Free Church A Church Family Publication

May 2010

## “FROM CEREMONY TO CELEBRATION!”

Marriage was God’s great idea; therefore, marriage is to be celebrated. When God fashioned Eve and brought her to Adam, they celebrated (Gen. 2:22-25). When Ruth and Boaz were united, there was jubilation (Ruth 4:14). Solomon and Shulamith rejoiced their way through Song of Songs.

Proverbs 5:18 says: “*May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.*” “Rejoice” means to reel as though intoxicated. No doubt about it! God’s talking about celebration!

Rejoicing in your coupleness - celebrating your oneness (beyond the wedding day) - is an action that demands choices. If the Holy Spirit lives inside you, you have the power to turn your marriage into jubilation.

How do you do that? Let me suggest three actions you can start with in order to celebrate in your marriage.

### Keep Accounts Short

The psalmist says, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart... see if there is any offensive way in me*” (Ps. 139:23-24). That is a good practice for all of us to do - whether married or not. But in marriage it is especially important to keep your consciences clear before each other. If you have hurt the other person, then humbly seek your mate’s forgiveness. In other words, keep short accounts with each other.

Since God is the One we are to imitate in the way we forgive, we need to understand how He forgives us. God does not withhold forgiveness. On the contrary, He forgives completely, with no remembrance of our sin. He says He hurls all our iniquities into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:19). He never brings them back up to hold over our heads.

Seek forgiveness from each other quickly and regularly. Keep accounts short with one another and with God.

### Give Honor To Your Mate

Husbands, be sensitive to your wife’s needs. Ask what she needs; then listen carefully. Pay attention to her when she talks with you. Accept her feelings. You may not understand them, but you must respect them as real and viable.

Wives, magnify your husband’s strengths, not his weaknesses. Do not review past failures, and love your husband for who and what he is right now. Celebrate your relationship by giving honor to one another and by giving honor to your marriage. God wants you to see your husband through the eyes of Jesus, with all the potential He sees.

### Live in God’s Presence

The key to fellowship with your mate is for both of you to live in God’s presence. When you and your wife are both committed to Christ and what He is doing in the world, you will be naturally drawn together. Spiritual unity enhances romance.

God wants you to have oneness. Romance was God’s idea. The Bible says two shall become one - intellectually, emotionally, physically, recreationally, and spiritually. When you are only having oneness in three of those areas, your marriage is not fully what God wants it to be. But when you and your spouse connect in all five areas, that is when you find real, honest oneness.

Do you and your spouse pray together? Do you do ministry together? Do you share what God is doing in your life with your spouse, and visa-versa? Make those things a part of your time together, and you will celebrate together!

This month of May I am preaching a series on marriage called iMarriage. In a world like ours, where marriages are all about “I,” - including too often in the church - God’s Word gives us hope. Marriage, as God designed it, is a great idea.

-Pastor Joel

## Benevolent Fund

The Benevolent Fund is a sum of money set aside to help those in financial need. People who have been helped by First Free’s Benevolent Fund range from members and regular attenders of the church, to extended families of church members, and to people within the church’s neighborhood community.

The Benevolent Fund derives its funding from First Free’s congregation. Weekly offerings that are indicated “Benevolent Fund” go directly to help those who need financial assistance. The Caring Commission reviews all requests for funds and each request is kept confidential.

We on the Caring Commission praise God for the generosity of congregation members who so faithfully give their money to the Benevolent Fund. God is at work through this fund. And we pray for every opportunity we have to share God’s love by practically assisting those in financial need.

If you know of someone who has a need, please contact Cindy Larson on the Caring Commission.



**WANT TO LISTEN TO  
PASTOR JOEL’S  
SERMON AGAIN?**

**TRY CHECKING IT OUT  
FROM THE LIBRARY!  
FIRST FREE’S LIBRARY  
KEEPS A COPY OF EACH  
SERMON AVAILABLE FOR  
THE CONGREGATION. AND  
WHILE YOU’RE THERE...  
YOU MIGHT FIND A BOOK  
TOO!**

May

### iMarriage:

Sermons

- May 2 - “How To Outfit Your Marriage” - Colossians 3:12-19
- May 9 - “A Lesson From A Wise Mom” - Proverbs 31:1-9
- May 16 - “Singleness In Christ” - Isaiah 56:1-5
- May 23 - “Living By The Will And Grace Of God” - Misc. Passages
- May 30 - “Putting Your Spouse In Their Place” - Ephesians 5:21-33

We exist to  
**BRING** people  
 into a relationship  
 with Jesus  
**CONNECT** them  
 to God's family  
**MATURE** them  
 in their faith  
**EQUIP** them  
 for ministry  
 so that God's name  
 is **EXALTED**

## Meet Our Council Members: Jeremy Kobielush



My wife, Becki, and I started attending First Free approximately 3 years ago after moving to Minneapolis from Appleton, WI. We came to First Free because it was an Evangelical Free church. We stayed because we were fortunate to discover that very good friends of my extended family are a part of First Free; we were connected to a small group where we met people who have become friends of ours and who will be lifelong friends; the stellar preaching ;) ; and we met

Bob and Lois Chapman who were and are an awesome welcoming team. Lucy (3 years) and Ellen (11 months) are our daughters.

My favorite book of the Bible is the book of Mark. It's believed to be the oldest Gospel and therefore the closest to Jesus' Resurrection. In addition, I had to pick a Gospel as my favorite book because it gives us our foundation; we can go from there in our walk with Jesus. Lately I've been giving a lot of thought to what Jesus has taught us in the Gospels. Mainly I've been thinking about how Jesus taught us to love. The stereotype of Jesus' church seems to be boiled down to rules, Republicans, and Fox news. I want to contribute to a new stereotype of people who love people because we're people who accept and love Jesus.

## Meet Our Council Members:

## - Jeff Dutton and Jim Friesen



### - Jeff Dutton

We have been attending First Free for 2 1/2 years and became members last year. When we knew we were relocating to Minneapolis, we started looking for E-Free churches on the internet. After I found First Free's website, I was talking to Randy

Solem (lifelong friend) about the transition to the Twin Cities. In our conversation I casually mentioned that I had found an E-Free church in south Minneapolis on the internet and was thinking about checking it out. Randy then told me that he and Kathie had been attending the church for a few months. God had a plan and a connection for us to this church.

I have been happily married to Lisa for 18 years. We have two daughters Tess, 12, and Lily, 10. We love living in SW Minneapolis! I work as a Manager of Supply Chain Strategy at Best Buy Corporate. Lisa is a professor in the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at St. Katherine University. Tess attends Anthony Middle School and Lily attends Burroughs Elementary in Minneapolis.

It is difficult to pick a favorite book of the Bible (they're all good!), but recently I have been impacted greatly by the book of Acts. We have been studying that book since last Fall in the Wednesday night Men's Bible Study. God's work in the early church and Paul's missionary trips have been inspiring.

The last three years has been a great time of learning and test of faith for us. The many changes and challenges we've faced with new jobs, selling and buying homes, new schools for the kids, new neighborhood, etc. reminds us how

our faith and trust in God is sufficient for this life. My favorite verse is Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." This message speaks to me every day as I walk with the Lord.

### - Jim Friesen

Our family has been attending First Free since 2001, soon after we moved back to Minneapolis from California. My wife, Joyce, grew up at First Free, so we returned here to her home church. We have two



boys: Brett, a senior at Azusa Pacific University; and Ryan, a freshman at Northwestern College. My areas of ministry for the past several years have been the sound booth for our Worship Teams and

helping to lead the Parents of Teens ABF.

God has been teaching me through the series of Pastor Joel's sermons in James - specifically to have patience. I experienced the loss of my job in January, and God is encouraging me to spiritually prepare for when He answers the prayer for my next job.

One of my favorite people in the Bible is Caleb. As a young man, he and Joshua stood for the Lord in front of the nation of Israel. He saw the early fulfillment of God's promise to enter the Promised Land, and still was a leader of his people well into the latter years of his life. He did not quit or slow down when faced with strong opposition or old age. His example provides encouragement to me.



## Grad Night:

The entire church family is invited to Grad Night on Sunday, May 16th, at 7:00 PM. Grad Night is a special service and video presentation honoring the 2010 High School graduates who attend our youth group. This year we will be honoring the following High School graduates: Ben Byer, JG Ferguson, Anne Peterson, and BJ Pierce. Please join us for dessert and fellowship immediately following the service.

## SOS Climb Aboard Now!



- Volunteers Needed
- Donations Needed  
check the "Fishing Net" in the gym for items
- Decorations and donations needed by May 15th
- Prayers Needed

Contact Beth Brown for info.

June 21-25  
 Kids Entering  
 grades K - 6

VBC Training  
 June 2 or 16,  
 6:30-8 PM

### Inter-Generational Men's Fellowship

May 8th  
 8:30 AM  
 Food provided by  
 The Master Chefs of First Free



FRESH ENCOUNTER  
 MAY 19, 6:30 PM



ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING  
 MAY 10, 7:00 PM