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Firstword

First Evangelical Free Church

A Church Family Publication

February 2011

“WHAT’S YOUR ASSIGNMENT?”

Everybody’s life mission is unique, and only you can fulfill your life mission. The moment you become a believer, the moment you step across the line and give your life to Jesus Christ, God has an assignment for you.

Many of the parts of your life mission are unique, but there is one part that we all have in common. It’s this: God wants you to tell other people about what’s happened to you. He wants you to share your testimony, your lifestyle, and your witness.

In other words, He wants you to share the Good News. In Acts, Paul says this to the Ephesian elders, “*I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace*” (Acts. 20:24). Once I become a Christian, a major part of my life mission is to invite people into God’s family.

Jesus said in John 20:21 - “*As the Father has sent Me, so am I sending you.*”

What has He sent us to do? The Bible tells us in Acts 1:8 - “*You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, in Samaria and in every part of the world.*” This is an important verse: it not only tells us what we’re supposed to do; it tells us where we’re supposed to do it.

First, it says, “*You will be My witnesses.*” Witnessing does not mean you have to be a theological expert. It doesn’t mean you have to be a pastor or preacher. It simply means you share what God is doing in your life. We are to witness and share what God has done in our lives and what has happened to us since we became believers.

Where are we to do it? We’re told to take the message to four places: “*In Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and in every part of the world.*”

What does that mean? What’s your Jerusalem? It’s your family, your friends, and your co-workers. You start with the people closest to you—those in your own backyard.

Then it says you go to Judea. Judea was like the county. What is your Judea? At First Free, we live in Hennepin County with over 1.1 million people. Many of them still need to hear the Good News.

“As the Father has sent Me, so am I sending you.”

~John 20:21

Then Jesus says you’re to go to Samaria. That’s like the county next door. But the Samaritans were culturally and ethnically different from the disciples. Did you know that the Twin Cities has the largest Hmong, Somali, and Liberian populations in the U.S.? There’s your Samaria! You don’t have to go very far to find it. Just look right next door.

Finally Jesus says go to “*the ends of the world.*” Today, there are many opportunities for believers to go on a short-term trip that leads them to the “*ends of the world.*” Our goal at First Free is to encourage every member to have at least one overseas experience.

So that’s the mission. Much of it is in your backyard. Start with your Jerusalem. Move on to Judea. Then to Samaria - and then to the ends of the world. While you’re there, share the Good News. Invite others into God’s family!

This month, *First Word* is focusing on missions. February 12-13th is an Outreach Weekend with the theme: “Our Changing Backyard.” You will be able to hear from and interact with those who are locally reaching our backyard with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Plan on being challenged about your mission!

~Pastor Joel

Terrace On Chicago

~ Mark Meyers

This summer Zion Student Ministry will be offering three ministry experiences for students. Middle schoolers will have the chance to go to Equip, a weekend experience where they will be challenged to care for and share about their relationship with God, with their peers. High school students are encouraged to go to SEMP (Students Equipped to Minister to Peers), which will take place in Chicago at Moody Bible Institute. This is a week-long experience to help students become more confident in their faith and equip them with the tools, knowledge, and experience to clearly share Christ in relevant ways. The third experience we are offering is for 11-12th Grade students to Haiti. In Haiti we will be working with *Open Door Haiti* doing outreach to help jumpstart a church plant, working with youth through English training and evangelistic outreach, and many other things that will really stretch and challenge First Free students.

As a student ministry we want to invite you to the *Terrace on Chicago* on Saturday, March 12th.

This is our annual youth fundraiser dinner. We have a crew of amazing cooks preparing the menu, live music, valet parking, coat check, child care, and while students lead you to your table, they will explain a little more about their summer ministry experiences. Prepare to be blown away by the elegance of the food and atmosphere. Once you enter the dining area, students will then serve your food like the pros. There will be two seatings at 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. We will begin taking reservations on February 13th.

Come support what God is going to do in our students’ lives and through their ministry this summer and beyond as they continue to live out what they learn. Come support our students financially and with your prayers. This year we are looking to raise \$14,000. I believe that God has great plans for our students, and I encourage you to prayerfully consider how you will support them as they seek to serve our Lord Jesus Christ this summer.

February

Under New Management

- February 6 - “Released” - Romans 7:1-12 - Pastor Eric
- February 13 - “They Might Be Jesus” - Herb Bloomquist
- February 20 - “But, I’m Struggling” - Romans 7:13-26

New Series - Following Jesus

- February 27 - “Following Jesus: The Call to Discipleship”

Sermons

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 Members

- Vi Fjellman

Q: How long have you been attending First Free?
 A: All my life. Since I was five years old, at the old church, and then at 52nd and Chicago.

Q: What brought you to First Free?
 A: Our neighbors asked my parents if they could bring me to Sunday School. After a little while, my parents started coming too.

Q: What have been some of your favorite ways you've served here?
 A: Where didn't I serve? I was in the choir for a long time, and I taught Sunday school, and served at funerals. I've done just about everything! I really liked serving supper to the musical people with Marilyn Fisher a few years ago too.

Q: What are some of your hobbies?
 A: I like to knit, and I read a lot. If there's anything to do in the kitchen, I love to be there!



Outreach Weekend

The theme for this year's Outreach Weekend is "Our Changing Backyard." This phrase is doubly appropriate because it reflects not only the future focus of First Free Church, but also our heritage. First Free was started back in 1984 on 12th Street near downtown in an area showing rapid change. Immigrants from many nations crowded the city. Some of the Swedish founders of our congregation had been believers in their home country and came to America not just for economic opportunities, but for religious freedom from the state church. Other founders were new believers who had come to know the Lord in the United States and were anxious to share their faith. Just like in 2011, English was not the primary language for these inhabitants of the 'changing backyard.' Services were held exclusively in Swedish, and it wasn't until the 1920s that the church became bilingual, alternating messages between English and Swedish. It was a leap of faith again when the congregation moved to their new backyard in south Minneapolis in 1951, leaving a familiar home to follow God's leading to this newly-developing area. Today God is once again changing the composition of our city, giving us even more opportunities to reach out with His message and show His love. Our Outreach Weekend will let four groups spotlight what they are doing and show you how you can help.



New Salem Church, formerly named Salem Evangelical Free Church, is located at 3101 14th Avenue South and will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding in March of 2011. At this time their 'backyard' neighborhood contains many Spanish speaking people. The church reaches out to the community with Sunday services in Spanish and English, a clothing ministry, youth groups, and English language classes.

Another language group is the focus of China Outreach Mission, which serves students from China studying at the University of Minnesota. When students first arrive they are given help in obtaining hous-

China Outreach Ministries
 Twin Cities
 Serving Chinese at the University of Minnesota

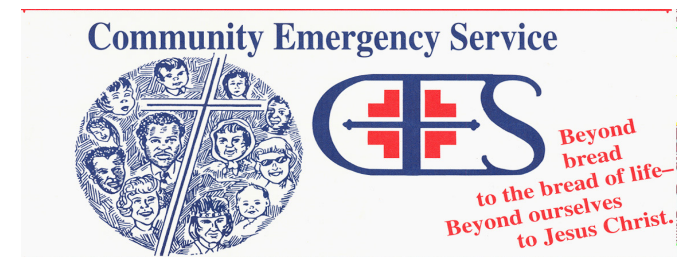
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ing and other basic needs. Throughout the year there are special events to familiarize students with American customs and to enjoy Minnesota's unique activities. A large group meeting is also held each month specifically to present the claims of Christ. Many American and Chinese attendees of First Free are involved with the work of COM.

Herb and Debbie Bloomquist grew up at First Free and attended many conferences just like this one. They have a passion for reaching the lost and strengthening young believers. Since 1986 they have served at Camp Shamineau near Motley, Minnesota, where Herb is Executive Director and Debbie oversees retail sales. Shamineau, a Free Church camp, serves children and youth from 'backyards' throughout Minnesota. Herb's enthusiasm for God's work is contagious, so be prepared to be inspired and challenged.



Community Emergency Service has been in existence since 1971, but is one of the newer additions to our First Free missionary budget. Along with many other churches in the south metro area, we have discovered we can do a better job of helping the needy when we work together. As the name implies, CES helps those in crisis situations with immediate needs, but also provides services to help clients become self-sufficient. Done in a Christian context, many come to know Jesus Christ as Savior, and return as volunteers to help others.



During our Outreach Weekend you will have an opportunity to learn in depth about these works and how you can be involved. All will be participating in a panel discussion during the Outreach Brunch on Saturday, February 12. In addition, Herb Bloomquist will be speaking at both services on Sunday, February 13, and the other groups will be presenting their work during the Adult Bible Fellowships.



QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING
 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21
 7 PM

Outreach Weekend - Feb. 12 & 13 - Sunday ABF/Youth Schedule

9:30 AM
 Youth -- Community Emergency Services -- Don Rudrud
 Living Life -- Salem Hispanic Ministry -- Becky Anderson
 FaithBuilders -- China Outreach Ministry -- Glenn Kenadjian or staff

11:00 AM
 Makarios/Metamorphosis -- Salem Hispanic Ministry -- Becky Anderson
 Seniors -- Community Emergency Services -- Don Rudrud
 Agape -- China Outreach Ministry -- Glenn Kenadjian or staff



Missionary Panel and Brunch
 February 12
 10:30-Noon