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# First Word

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

OCTOBER 2015

## SMALL GROUPS LAUNCH

BY JAY POUND

As a church we believe, and most of us know from experience, that the Christian life just works better when we are able to share our lives with others. Burdens are lighter when we can share them. Serving is more fun when we can do it together. Celebrations are more joyous when we celebrate together. Being in a Small Group is great, it's finding one that can be difficult.

That is why we would like to invite anyone and everyone looking for a Small Group to be a part of our upcoming Small Group Launch. Here is how it works. First, we are asking everyone to sign up ahead of time. We are asking everyone to commit to meeting with their group for six weeks. We will take the information you provide (e.g. availability, life stage, location) and do our best to place everyone into groups and provide leaders.

Everyone will then meet together at Church, on October 11, from 6-7:30 p.m. in Room 105/106 for our Launch Night. Then, we will have food and you will meet your Small Group and your leaders, and have some time to work through any other logistics for your group (childcare, etc.).

For the remaining five weeks, groups will meet at the time and location of their choice. We will encourage all of the new groups to spend a couple of weeks getting to know each other, sharing stories, and praying for each other. (Eating together is always great when you can make it work). After the six weeks are over, each group will decide whether or not they wish to continue meeting.

We hope you will join us and take advantage of this opportunity to get connected in community. Sign up today at [firstfreechurch.org](http://firstfreechurch.org) (Click on the Small Group Launch Banner on the main page), or call the church office Mon-Fri, from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m..

First Free's Mission — To help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. [www.firstfreechurch.org](http://www.firstfreechurch.org)

## I Love the Fall BY PASTOR JOEL

I love the fall. Although the weather turns cooler and the days start to become shorter, the leaves turn into vibrant kaleidoscopes of color. Browns. Yellows. Reds. Orange. God's creativity once again in full bloom.

The fall is also harvest time. Apples to be picked. Crops to be brought in and stored away. It is a time to reap what has been sown.

In the New Testament, Jesus talks about a harvest—a spiritual crop. He tells his disciples in Luke 10, as he was about to send them out to do kingdom work, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." In other words, we have way more people ready to come into a loving, saving, transforming relationship with Jesus than we have people ready to help them. And in John 4, Jesus, pointing his disciples to the Samaritans, a people group they wanted nothing to do with, says, "The fields are ripe for harvest."

According to these two passages there are three things we need to do to finish what God has begun.

1) Open our eyes. Jesus says in John 4:35, "Do not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest.' I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest." Pay attention. Do you know how hungry people are for God?

So many feel empty and know that all the things they have tried have failed to take away that empty feeling. So look around. Open your eyes.

2) Pray. Pray that God would send people who are willing to join with Him in this kingdom work. Pray that this great opportunity is not squandered.

3) Go. You be the answer to your own prayer. Our mission as a church is to help individuals become Christ-centered and Christ-sent together. Our mission is not about us. It is externally focused. It points us to the harvest.

One of our marks of a Christ-Centered, Christ-sent disciple is "I am intentionally investing and inviting others to Christ." Investing in someone, like any investment, can take a long time. There is not always an immediate payoff. But think of one person, who is lost, and begin investing in them. Pray for them. Get to know them. Invest time into your relationship with them.

And then when the Holy Spirit leads, invite. Invite them into a spiritual discussion. Invite them to an appropriate program here at church. Invite them to take the next step toward Jesus. During this fall season, let's be about reaping the harvest that has already been sown.

This month in First Word, you will find Vanessa Beckett's story about how MOPS and MOPSnext have given her opportunities to "Invest and Invite". Also, the fourth weekend of October is our Outreach Weekend. Take a look at all that is going on. Get to know a missionary. See the harvest God is reaping across the world.

Enjoy this fall season,  
Pastor Joel



## CURRENT SERMON SERIES: RISKING CHURCH

September 27	<i>Risking Church - Hebrews 10:23-25</i>
October 4	<i>Risking Deeper Connections - Acts 4:32-35</i>
October 11	<i>Risking Love - John 15:9-17</i>
October 18	<i>Risking Acceptance - Romans 14-15:7</i>
October 25	<i>Outreach Weekend - Rev. Dan Reeve; Center for Student Mission</i>

**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

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

**OUTREACH WEEKEND**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24 & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

First Free is privileged to participate in the support of about 35 missionary individuals and families, ministering all around the world. Every few years we get to see them, hear their stories, and ask questions.

**On Saturday, October 24, from 10:30 am-12:00 noon**, four of our missionaries will be joining us during our Outreach Brunch and sharing testimonies of their ministries on a discussion panel. Childcare will be provided.

**On Sunday, October 25**, Dan Reeve will be preaching in both of our worship gatherings.

There will also be informal home meetings which afford a perfect opportunity for more detailed looks at various ministries.



**Dan & Kimberly Reeve**  
*Center for Student Missions*



**Rick & Becky Mackey**  
*United World Mission in the Dominican Republic*



**Jack & Beth Thompson**  
*ReachGlobal in Hungary*



**Julie Turnquist**  
*ReachGlobal in Illinois*

**Saturday October 24:**

**2:00 pm** Dan Reeve speaking at Ross & Karin Olson's home  
6711 Lake Shore Drive, #1105, Richfield, MN 55423  
phone 612-824-7691

**4:00 pm** Rick & Becky Mackey speaking at Jeff & Rachel Olson's home  
10833 Nord Ave. S Bloomington, MN 55437  
phone 952-884-5246

**Sunday October 25:**

**2:00 pm** Jack & Beth Thompson speaking at Janet & Mark Poston's home  
5644 11th Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55417

**4:00 pm** Julie Turnquist speaking at Marilyn Fisher's home  
3601 46th Ave. S, Minneapolis MN 55406  
phone 612-724-9311

**Community Group speakers for Sunday, October 25:**

**9:15 a.m.**

Jack and Beth Thompson  
Julie Turnquist  
Rick and Becky Mackey

*Living Life*  
*Faith Builders*  
*Student Community Group*

**11:00 a.m.**

Rick Mackey  
Becky Mackey  
Jack and Beth Thompson  
Julie Turnquist

*Real Talk & Embark*  
*Junior Church*  
*Agape*  
*Seniors*

**UPDATE FROM THE BLOOD DRIVE ON JUNE 29:**

Thank you to everyone who donated blood when the Bloodmobile came to First Free.

Thirty units of blood were collected, compared to the 17 units collected in 2014. The goal of 27 people was exceeded by 111%. Of the thirty donors, 13 gave blood for the first time.

The Memorial Blood Center indicated that 90 lives were potentially saved by this blood drive.

Thank you First Free for serving our community!

*Upcoming @*  
**FIRST FREE**

**CPR/AED TRAINING — OCTOBER 11 @ 12:15-2:00 P.M.**

The annual CPR/AED training and retraining will take place on October 11, following the second service until 2:00 p.m. in room 107. Everyone is welcome to come, especially if you are volunteering in the church. There will be a small lunch provided before the training. Please email [nurses@firstfreechurch.org](mailto:nurses@firstfreechurch.org) or call the church office at 612-827-4705 to register.

**EXPRESSIONS — OCTOBER 11 & 25 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.

**CONNECTIONS COMMUNITY GROUP — OCTOBER 4, 11, 18 & 25 FROM 3:30-5:30 P.M.**

The Connections Community Group meets for four weeks on Sunday evenings for a potluck style dinner at Pete and Erica Lehner's house from 5-7 pm. Get to know others from First Free, and learn about the different opportunities to get connected. Try Connections this coming October 4, 11, 18, & 25 by signing up via welcome card or calling the church office.

**THE DEEP — WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 @ 6:30 P.M.**

Join us for a time of worship and prayer at The DEEP on Wednesday, October 28th at 6:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided.

*A Lamppost Story*  
BY VANESSA BECKETT

12 years ago I was going to be a first time mom. Wondering if I was going to be lonely in this journey of motherhood. God was already answering my questions without me knowing it. In the summer of 2004 Rachel Olson, a member here at First Free, asked a group of us new moms if we would be willing to help her start a special moms group called MOPS (mothers of preschoolers). And the journey began.

Over the years MOPS has met me just where I am. MOPS has always made me feel welcome and accepted. Being part of it has challenged me to grow as a woman, a mother, and a leader. MOPS has drawn me closer to Jesus and encouraged me to be an influencer for God's kingdom. God has prompted me to invite Christian and non-Christian mom friends to join. It has shown me that I'm part of God's bigger purpose, picture, and plan. MOPS International believes better moms make a better world and so do I.

Last year was going to be my last year of MOPS since felt like I had aged out of this stage of life. But the coordinators of MOPS announced they would be starting a ministry to mothers of school-age kids called MOPSNEXT. Again it's a place that is an open, accepting place for all mothers of school-age kids to experience authentic community, personal growth, practical help, and spiritual hope. As mothers enter the school years, new challenges and issues arise, but the need for community and hope remains.

MOPS and MOPSNEXT has met once so far this school year, and I'm loving the new theme: A Fierce Flourishing. To flourish, sometimes we need new eyes. A perspective shift that recalibrates our hearts to the rhythm of God's goodness that surrounds us. To tune our hearts to better hear the music of the divine that echoes throughout this world. That we might let that goodness seep into our bones and into our hearts so that we can remember what it feels like to flourish. "For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isaiah 55:12).

This is the year to experience flourishing by celebrating lavishly, embracing rest and noticing goodness. This year at MOPS and MOPSNEXT, may we become a home for found wanderers, redeemed prisoners, explorers at the edge of their comfort, all of us who were one time captives now dancing with unearned freedom, because we have regained the eyes to see.

**CHURCH FAMILY NEWS**

Congratulations to David & Emily McCoy on the birth of their daughter Rory Ann McCoy on August 25th at 11:11 a.m. Rory was born weighing 8lbs and 22.5 in.

Congratulations to David & Keri Graden on the birth of their daughter Scout Corrine Graden on September 2nd at 12:01 a.m. Scout was born weighing 8lbs 7oz and 20.5 in.

Our deepest sympathies go out to Anne Johnson and the family of Don Johnson, who passed away on September 2nd. His funeral was held at First Free Friday, September 18th.

Congratulations to Adam & Erin Nordell on the birth of their twin daughters, Riley Brooke Nordell and Wyatt Hope Nordell on Sunday, September 20th! Riley was born at 3:46 a.m. weighing 6lbs and 13oz and Wyatt was born at 3:48 a.m. weighing 6lbs and 7oz.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family of Marian Nyquist who passed away on Wednesday, September 23rd. Marian was 102 years old.