



**FIRST
EVANGELICAL
FREE
CHURCH**

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**January, 2012
In The First Place...**

A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

As we begin a new year I wanted to share with you a prayer from Scripture that I often pray for us as a church family. Would you join me in praying it for one another in 2012?

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-22

May we see God powerfully at work among us this year!

Blessings for 2012,
Pastor Josh

SECOND WEDNESDAY SUPPER

Our Second Wednesday Supper is January 11. The meal this month is sandwich and salad bar. The meal is served in the Church Gym from 5:30 - 6:15 p.m. The cost is \$2.50 a person, 3 years old and younger eat free, maximum \$10 per family, payable at the door. Please help us by signing up if you plan to attend. Sign up sheets are at the Welcome Center, or you can call the church office by 9:30 a.m. Monday morning, January 9.



MEN'S FRATERNITY

"Winning at Work and Home," year two of Men's Fraternity, has a six-week section focusing on a man and his work. These DVD lessons can be viewed on Thursday mornings at 6:00 in Room A6 beginning January 5. You may purchase a workbook and enjoy coffee and donuts for \$10. Speak with Pastor Phil in advance or just show up on the first week of class if you want to join for this second semester.

RETIREMENT RECEPTION FOR PASTOR PHIL

There will be a Retirement Reception for Pastor Phil on Sunday, January 8, from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. in the Courtyard. At 2:30 p.m. there will be a brief program in the Worship Center.

FIRST FREE BOOK CLUB

The First Free Book Club meets Thursday, January 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the library. They will discuss the book, "Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet" by Jamie Ford. Contact Robin Willford for information.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



A new year begins and so begins the buzz of New Year's resolutions. Will you make them? What will they target? Fitness? Organization? Better eating habits? I want to continue sharing a few thoughts from the book, "Family Ministry Field Guide" especially regarding the idea of goals and resolutions.

When it comes to whose responsibility it is to disciple children in the faith I would imagine very few of you expect the church to shoulder 100% of the responsibility. The author, Timothy Paul Jones, concludes that most parents believe it is their responsibility to disciple their children in the faith. This is not to say the church bears no responsibility, but God has placed the responsibility on the parents, especially fathers (Eph. 6:4). Unfortunately there is not much more than this felt responsibility—and probably a lot of guilt as parents find working this out in life to be difficult.

Jones boils down the roadblocks to a parent's role in the discipleship of their children to two main issues: *A Matter of Training* and *a Matter of Time*.

The *Matter of Training* aspect is a challenging one. Most parents probably did not have this modeled well by their own parents. Jones recommends using sermons as the starting place for once per week devotions with children. Included in the time together would be prayer, an activity of some sort, a biblical text (from the sermon) and a few discussion questions related to the sermon.

But perhaps the bigger challenge is the *Matter of Time* issue. The research cited in the book indicates the greatest hindrance to having family devotions was they simply are not a priority for the family calendar. School and sports activities along with extra-curricular activities trump the priority for devotions together as a family as well as eating together as a family.

Jones writes, "This pattern suggests that a significant number of parents in our ministries have allowed their priorities to be shaped by the dominant culture—a culture wherein the primary goal of parenting is to produce children who become happy, well-paid adults. Parents perceive accomplishments in sports and schooling as their children's pathway to present popularity and future financial success. As a result, athletics and academics define these parents' design for their children's lives."

I write these words as a parent who did not do a great job at family devotions! Ross and I tried several things that didn't feel comfortable and, sadly, we did not persevere to consistency. I regret it for a couple of reasons. First, we didn't get the chance to routinely and intentionally speak into our children's lives about spiritual things. If things came up, we addressed them, but it was not part of our family's normal routine. I also regret it because they did not see this pattern as routine, so they will be paddling up the same river that Ross and I did to try and figure it out for their own families.

In this New Year, I urge you to resolve to commit to routine family devotions. To push through the awkwardness that always accompanies new things and to make family devotions your family's new normal. Start when your children are very young....or when they are just the age they are right now. There are lots of good resolutions to make, but the eternal significance of training your children to follow Christ has implications that will go well beyond fitness, an organized life, and a trimmer you!

MOMMY & ME PLAYGROUP

Mommy & Me meets twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. Contact Jill Yowell with any questions.

January 11 - meet at Towne East Mall
January 25 - details to come



Family News

*Dear First Free Family,
Thank you for all the prayers, support, and encouragement you have given us as my mother's health declined and she passed away. Thank you for the lovely plant, too. We take great comfort knowing she is safe in God's hands.*

Janet Schwarz and family

*Dear Church Family,
I wanted to share with you how much our family appreciated Pastor Phil's and Pastor Dick's caring concern and assistance with conducting Arline's services at the church and at Fairview and to the preparation that went into it. We thank all those who helped with the sound and video for the smooth transitions, Andy for his assistance with the music, and of course Debbie Black for her talents on the piano and organ. Everyone contributed to a very memorable and gracious sharing of Arline's life and legacy with those who were able to attend. All of this, of course, was embedded in the fact that everything we did was to attribute all to the honor, glory, and praise to our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you again for your service to our family.*

Jim Lew

*Dear Friends,
Thank you so much for your prayers, cards, and words of encouragement, and the lovely plant we received at our Dad's passing. They have been a blessing and comfort to our family. We rejoice that Dad knew Christ as his Savior and is in His presence.*

*With sincere gratitude,
Butch Mattson and
Vickie Woodworth*

*Dear First Free Family,
Thank you, thank you, for the lovely flowers for Char's Home-going celebration. Thank you for your continued prayers and your kind expression of sympathy.*

Pastor Dick Hauser and Family

*To Our Friends at 1st Free,
Thank you for your kindness and sympathy at a time when it was deeply appreciated. Thank you so much for sending us the lovely plant. Your prayer support and Pastor Phil coming to the service meant so much.*

Jan and Randy Steinert

STUDENT MINISTRIES by Jeremy Krause

GOSPEL-CENTERED YOUTH MINISTRY

I grew up as the middle child of three boys. Both my brothers are incredibly intelligent and since they have always been natural born thinkers, I have looked to find my identity in other areas (that don't include Star Wars and speaking Klingon). Consequently, I have grown up as a Christian who needs theology to be simple and straightforward. This might be one of the reasons I love working with teenagers.

Most of our students can answer most of the cliché Christian questions with ease. These "Golden Children" have a clear understanding of the rules that good kids should follow, but I wonder if they actually know the main message of the Bible. Think for a moment about the brightest teenagers you know (neighbors, relatives, or others). They might be involved in Church events, be "good kids," and even be really well-spoken with adults. But, do they know—and I mean really understand in both mind and heart—what the Scripture says is most important?

Here's how the Apostle Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3: *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.*

Do you see what Paul's saying is of first importance? As Pastor Josh shared, "I understand that Paul is actually identifying that there are things in the Christian faith that are *not* of first importance and then there are things that *are!*"

How would teenagers you know answer this question: "What is Jesus Christ most passionate about?" Or, how would they answer this one: "What is the main message of the Bible?" One final question that I'd be curious to ask: "What is of first importance to us as Christians?"

My brothers would pipe in here and say "You're just asking the same question in different ways.", and of course they are right. But what is your answer? Consider this quote from Martin Luther. "The truth of the Gospel is the principle article of all Christian doctrine... Most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others, and beat it into their heads continually."

Is the Gospel the most important and powerful component of your ministry to teenagers? Is the Gospel so clearly embraced by you that teenagers who know you could say "You sure beat the main message of the Bible into my head!" Has the Gospel impacted your life so profoundly that it's integrated into both your heart and mind? My hope and prayer is that we can be Gospel-Centered people who in good conscience can look at teenagers and say "I shared with you what is of *first importance*... the Gospel." It doesn't get much more simple or straightforward than this. Now, if only I can learn to say that in Klingon...

LAY BIBLE INSTITUTE

The first night of our 2012 Spring LBI will be a Preview Night on Sunday, January 8, at 6:00 p.m. Class options this semester include Missions, Apologetics, and the EFCA Statement of Faith. If you are interested in one of these classes come to the Preview Night to register and find out more about what all will be involved!

BUSINESS MEETING

Sunday, January 22

4:30 p.m.

in the Chapel

Items of Business:

Year End Reports

Adoption of the 2012 Budget

Childcare available through 5th grade.

DAY OF PRAYER

Thursday, January 5

6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.



Come to the Chapel any time that day to pray.

First Free Women

Cheer up!
On your feet!
He is calling you.
Mark 10:45

First Free
Women's Retreat
March 2 & 3, 2012

Ladies, get your new year started off on the right FOOT! Registration for the First Free Women's Retreat begins in January. Join us for fellowship and fun at the *Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, Wichita Airport*. Courtney Doctor will be our guest speaker and your retreat committee is planning a weekend that we hope will both **cheer** and **challenge** you! Registration brochures coming soon to the Women's Ministry Table.

TUESDAY CONNECTION

New women's studies begin this month! An evening Precept study on Daniel begins January 10 at 6:45 p.m. Contact Cindy Black for details. Women's Tuesday morning Bible studies begin January 17 at 9:15 a.m. The evening ABIDE study begins January 24 at 7:00 p.m. Watch bulletin for details.

SCRAPBOOKING

Scrapbooking meets Friday, January 13, 5:00 - 11:00 p.m. Bring your scrapbooking supplies and enjoy the fellowship while you get some scrapbooking done. Contact Jillian Brotherton to reserve your spot.

LOVE THRU ACTION

Beginning Thursday, January 5, Love thru Action will meet every week from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. You can come for all or part of the time. You don't have to know how to sew; there are many projects you can work on while enjoying the sweet fellowship.

JACKSON CAREER DAY

We have the opportunity to provide lunch for the presenters at the Jackson Elementary Career Day on Friday, January 13. If you would like to help provide one of the soups or help prepare this lunch, contact Jo Coltrain in the church office, jcoltrain@firstfreewichita.org or 681-0664. Donations to purchase some of the food would also be helpful. Please designate 'Jackson Lunch' in the check memo or on the offering envelope.