



FIRST EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
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Financial Peace University

STARTING JANUARY 19TH! FREE CLASS PREVIEW JAN. 12TH

This life-changing class will help you achieve your financial goals by showing you how to eliminate debt, save for the future, and give like never before. There will be a free class preview on January 12th at 6:30 p.m. The course begins January 19th and continues each Thursday evening through March 16th. **Find more information at firstfreechurch.org**

A Financial Peace Story

We were newly married and had recently moved in to our home where we currently live. Things were going well, but we were living paycheck to paycheck and there was no room for error. From a financial perspective we were living on the edge. Christmas was approaching and we knew that our Christmas that year was out of our reach and in God's hands.

We had taken financial courses and decided that we needed to completely follow what the Bible says about finances. We decided not to use credit and that we would not stop tithing in order to find money for Christmas. In

late November we had found that a tax return check never made it to us as our address had changed. The process was started to have a new check sent to us. We began our LONG wait for the check to arrive so we could buy Christmas presents for our kids and other family members.

December 15th came around and there was no sign of our tax return. Committed to our plan, Brenda and I gathered all of the gift cards and other gifts we had been given, and found we were able to buy our kids and family Christmas presents with them. We were amazed at how much God had provided. On Christmas Day, Brenda had brought in our mail and among the stack of

Christmas cards and other mail was the tax return check we had been waiting for. Not only did God provide for our Christmas, but on Christmas day he showed us that when we trust him and follow his plan for our lives, he is faithful.

Financial Peace truly comes from following God's plan for our finances and that is what Financial Peace University is about. Starting January 19th our church will be hosting a money-management course called Financial Peace University. It teaches God's ways of handling money. This plan will show you how to get rid of debt, manage your money, spend and save wisely, and much more!

-Tim Audette

Names of Christ BY PASTOR JOEL

Do you know who Christ is?

Richard Baxter wrote, "The heart of the gospel is to know God." The problem is that so many times our picture of God is warped. It is inaccurate. It is wrong.

And when our concept of who Christ is and what He has done for us is wrong, our response to Him is also mistaken. It is very difficult to yield your life to someone who you do not know properly!

In the first two years of His ministry, Jesus taught the disciples who He was. In Mark 8:27 Jesus asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They gave the responses of the crowds, "John the Baptist . . . Elijah. . . one of the prophets". Jesus then asks, "Who do you say I am?" And Peter responds, "You are the Christ."

Following this incident, Jesus then began to teach his disciples what being the Christ, the Messiah, meant.

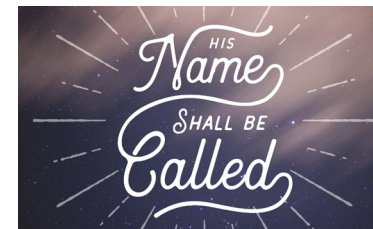
Misconceptions about the person of Christ still abound today. Jesus' claim that He is the only way to salvation doesn't go over well in our world. Everything about Jesus is questioned. Including His birth.

As we come into this Christmas season, we need to review our

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concept of Christ. In each of the stories of his birth we are given different names for Jesus. In Matthew, Joseph is told to call this child that was to be born Jesus and that he would be Immanuel, the one prophesied about by Isaiah. In Luke's account, the angels tell the shepherds, "For unto you is born . . . Christ, the Lord." And John calls Jesus, "the true light". Each of these names—Jesus, Immanuel, the Lord, the Light—carries with a significant meaning; a unique understanding of who Christ, the one whose birth we celebrate on Christmas morning, really is.

So I invite you to join us during this Advent season not only to celebrate, but to get to know Christ all over again.



OUR CURRENT SERMON SERIES: HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED

NOVEMBER 27	Immanuel	DECEMBER 18	Lord
DECEMBER 4	Light	DECEMBER 24	Child
DECEMBER 11	Jesus		

**OUR MISSION:
TO HELP
INDIVIDUALS
BECOME
CHRIST-CENTERED
& CHRIST-SENT
TOGETHER**

WANT MORE INFO?

Visit www.firstfreechurch.org
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**SEE MORE INFO AT:
www.firstfreechurch.org**

This Month @ FIRST FREE

Gungor Concert: December 6th

We are excited to host Gungor on their Acoustic Christmas Tour! The concert will be on Tuesday, December 6th at 7:00 p.m. (doors open at 6:30). This is a public event, so tickets will sell out. Buy tickets via the link at firstfreechurch.org/comingsoon.

Expressions: December 11

Expressions is a support group for those dealing with chronic illness or pain. Join us from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in room 103.

Poinsettias Available

If you would like to honor or remember loved ones by purchasing a poinsettia to be displayed in our church sanctuary this Christmas season, please fill out the form at the welcome desk and return it to the church office by Wednesday, December 21st. Quantities are limited. Plants may be taken home after our worship gathering on Sunday, December 25th.

Christmas Orchestra

The orchestra will be playing for our worship gatherings on December 18th during both services. We are looking for musicians from 7th grade and up to join us! Contact Kari Taylor at 612-866-1591 or KTStudioDesigns@gmail.com if interested.

Christmas Eve Services: December 24 at 3:00 & 4:30

Join us in celebrating God coming to earth and dwelling among us at our annual Christmas Eve Gathering on Saturday, December 24th at 3:00 and 4:30 pm. Nursery childcare will be provided during the 3:00 service.

One Worship Gathering December 25

We will have one worship gathering on December 25th at 9:15 a.m. Merry Christmas!

Give the Gift of Experience BY JASON PENSA

With Christmas just around the corner, you might have a few great ideas for presents that would really surprise and delight your son or daughter. Maybe you can already picture the smile on your child's face as they light up with excitement on Christmas morning. But you and I both know that the excitement will fade and that gift you put so much time into will become just another thing cluttering up your son or daughter's bedroom.

I recently read that we have twice as much stuff collectively as people did fifty years ago and yet we are statistically much less happy. So many of us are up to our eyeballs in material possessions and it doesn't take a long look to see that we could all benefit from simplifying our closets and basements. Did you know that shared experiences make us happier as human beings than material possessions? Interestingly enough, anticipation for an experience brings about more joy to a person than the anticipation of a material possession. On top of all that, people tend to become less happy with a material possession over time whereas the memory of an experience tends to get fonder over time.

So when you think about how to make your son or daughter happy this Christmas season, think about giving them an experience. Not something that will become forgotten clutter in a few months, but rather an experience they will be able

to treasure in their memory. Consider giving an experience that will help encourage them to be more Christ-centered and Christ-sent as a young adult. One way to give an experience is by serving others together. This fall, in our children's ministry we've been encouraging our club leaders to find ways to serve with the kids. This past month in our student ministry, we had a day of serving--going to visit a group of seniors and doing a prayer walk in our city. I am also encouraging all parents of teenagers to think about giving their son or daughter the opportunity to serve on a missions trip this summer as their Christmas gift.

Growing up, I remember every year around Thanksgiving my family served meals on wheels. It wasn't just the driving around and delivering of food that I remember, but the fun we were able to have as a family serving together. James even states, "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress..." (James 1:27) We need to be giving our kids and our students opportunities to serve together. We as the church want to be the hands and feet of Jesus loving those who maybe feel unloved, praying for those in our community, or helping to provide food for those who otherwise go without.

So this Christmas, why not give the gift of a serving experience?

Making Time for Advent BY BETH BROWN

Christmas resonates warmth. Joy. Family. Advent signifies the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. What are you going to do during Advent to keep your focus on our Savior? Do you have a plan? It's not too late to get started!

Whether you are single, married without children, married with grown children, or married with young kids, don't miss this season of Advent. It is for EVERYONE. It's a hopeful reminder of what we all need. Jesus.

There is an abundance of ideas of things you can do during this season to impact your family or others. Look for ways to create opportunities to keep focused on Jesus so you don't get lost in the busyness of this time.

Here are a few practical ways to celebrate Advent in your home:

1. Start a devotional that celebrates the real meaning of Christmas. Dedicate time each evening to it.
2. Choose a book to read with your family.
3. Make something together as a family-a recipe or a craft.
4. Use Christmas Cards as prayer reminders. Once a day, pull out one card and pray for that person or family.
5. Make a Prayer Garland. Cut out 24 green & red construction paper strips. On each strip, write the name of a family member, friend or ministry. Staple them as links into a garland. Every day in December, remove one of the strips and pray for the person or ministry whose name is on that strip of paper.
6. Build a Manger together. Check out this website: dadstools.org and "Let's Build a Manger".
7. Send a small Christmas care package to a missionary.
8. Invite friends over for a Christmas-themed morning tea. Children can do this, too!
9. Watch the "Why Do We Call it Christmas?" DVD series from What's in the Bible?
10. Watch a movie like "Jacob's Gift" or "The Nativity".

Books to read together

1. *Jotham's Journey: A Storybook for Advent* by Arnold Ytreeide (read each day of Advent)
2. *Tabitha's Travels: A Family Story for Advent* by Arnold Ytreeide (read each day of Advent)
3. *Bartholomew's Passage: A Family Story for Advent* by Arnold Ytreeide (read each day of Advent)
4. *The Sparkle Box: A Gift with the Power to Change Christmas*
5. *The Advent Book* by Jack & Kathy Stockman

Take Time to Serve Others:

1. Visit an elderly home and hand out homemade cookies.
2. Take a few small gifts to a shelter for women and children.
3. Write a letter to a family friend or troops stationed overseas.
4. Buy a small gift for a child in the long-term care wing of the children's ward and bring a bouquet of flowers for his/her mother.
5. Take a plate of cookies and a homemade Christmas card to your doctor's office, library, church office (yup, great idea!) and/or dentist office.

Advent Devotionals

1. Contact Beth for "An Illustrated Advent for Families" PDF to print for your family.
2. Find free Advent Calendar devotionals at FocusOnTheFamily.com/Advent.
3. Free Jesus Storybook Bible Advent Calendar Printable + Reading Plan - goes along with the Jesus Storybook Bible (excellent for preschoolers).
4. Free "Let Your Light Shine" Advent toolkit from faithgateway.com.
5. *Prepare Him Room* by Marty Machowski (for toddlers through preteens).
6. Free Download: Family Advent Guide from Lifeway.com.
7. *Christmas Love Letters from God* by Glenys Nellist
8. Download an advent calendar at GoWeekly.com
9. *Unwrapping the Greatest Gift: An Advent Devotional* by Ann Voskamp.
10. *The Message of Christmas* by Eugene Peterson.
11. *Family Reading Bible: The Christmas Story*.
12. *The Expected One* by Scott James.
13. Advent resources from thegoodbook.com (preschool on up).

Church Family News

We extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Peggy Baum. Her funeral will held at First Free on December 2nd at 2 p.m.

Congratulations to Walter Ortman who turns 105 this month. Happy birthday!

Bylaws Changes

The Council proposed a bylaw change at the November Quarterly Celebration (i.e. Quarterly Business Meeting). It will be voted on at the next Quarterly Celebration in February 2017. If you wish to view the proposed bylaws changes, go to www.firstfreechurch.org/comingsoon or you can call the church office for a paper copy.

Food Drive

Thank you to all who donated goods for the Community Emergency Services Thanksgiving Food Drive! Overall, First Free gave a total of 943 pounds of food! Thank you all for your heart to give to those in need.

