

REACHING OUT!

This fall we're planning a series of prayer events in the neighborhoods surrounding the church. We will be gathering after the worship service, and breaking into groups to walk the streets and pray for our city. We will close each event with a meal together at a local restaurant (Cost of meals will be \$10 or less). We hope that through prayer and interaction with the local people, businesses and other institutions we might become more aware of how God is working in our city. Please join us as we Pray and Break Bread. The next scheduled event is November 8.

We are also praying about an initiative begun by the Coalition of Urban Youth Workers here in New York City called 2020 Vision for Schools. They are asking churches in the city to begin praying for a local school in their neighborhood, and then to begin looking for ways of serving that school and building credibility by volunteering as tutors, crossing guards, coaches, etc. Please pray that God's Spirit would lead us and give us discernment in this area. For more information about 2020 Vision visit, <http://2020schools.net/>.

PRAISE THE LORD! Seven NYCEF & two First Free young people baptized recently!



CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

Advent begins Sunday, November 29 and we will open the season a day early. Join us Saturday, Nov. 28 to help adorn the church with Christmas lights and other festive decorations for the season. We will officially mark the beginning of Advent with a combined service with New York Chinese Evangelical Free Church and a community meal following the worship service. To mark the final Sunday in Advent, Dec 20, we will celebrate the coming of Christ with a musical celebration here at First Free. The program will involve several solo and choir performances incorporating music from the *Behold the Lamb of God* album by Andrew Peterson. Please pray for participants as they prepare in the coming months, and please plan to join us Dec 20 at 6:30 p.m.

First Free
B R O O K L Y N



First Evangelical Free Church
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A Friendly, International Fellowship, Welcoming All

First Free
B R O O K L Y N

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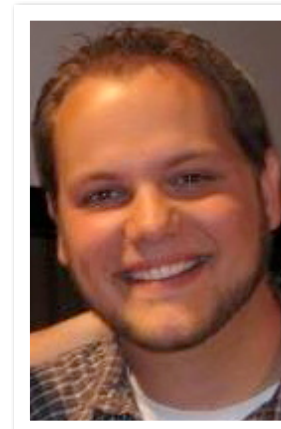


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CONTINUING CHRIST'S WORK IN BRINGING THE WORLD TOGETHER INTO GOD'S KINGDOM

WIRED... for God's Kingdom

When I worked at Trinity College, outside of Chicago, some of the questions that students seemed to wrestle with over and over were; How am I wired? Why am I the way that I am? Why did God design me the way he did? I think they were wrestling with an important idea; they wanted to know what role they played in what God was doing in the world. Is that a question you have ever wrestled with?



Pastor Adam

Do you ever sit around wondering why God made you the way he did? What are you supposed to do with your random set of talents, gifts, skills and passions? If so, that's a good thing, because these are the kinds of questions that open us up to God working in and through us.

In Psalm 139, David writes "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." These are important words. Not only does it mean that each human being has intrinsic value, but it also means that our

random set of gifts and passions are probably not all that random after all! If God took great and precise care in the way that he created you, then the seemingly hodgepodge collection of things you love and are good at could actually be ways God might want

to use you in his work in the world. You might think of your gifts, talents, and passions as the pen and ink that God uses to write his story through you.

Each one of us is wired for God's Kingdom. The experiences of our lives, combined with the gifts, abilities and passions God

purposefully gave us, provides each of us with a unique way of contributing to God's mission. I have heard so many people say things like, "Oh, God could never use me," or, "I don't have the gifts for ministry." I resonate with that. When I look around at the larger Christian community, I am tempted to be intimidated and discouraged by those who have gifts I wish I had, or those whose gifts are better refined than my own. But careful reflection on David's psalm points me in a different direction. My task is not to compare myself with others, but to seek to understand how God has wired me to

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UNCOMMON VIRTUES

--A Community of Trust and Generosity

I am always on the lookout for a good deal. Who isn't? Most people these days are looking for ways to get the most bang for the buck, find the best value, get the most out of every product they buy and every experience they have. It seems like most people go around making decisions based on the question, "What's in it for me?"

I wonder, have you ever asked that question; "What's in it for me?" I know I have. My guess is that I'm not alone. Our society is sort of a "What's in it for me?" place to live. You might be asking yourself, what's wrong with that? It only makes sense that I would ask that question and that my personal benefits would be a top priority in life. After all, no one purposely chooses a painful path, right?!

Well, in most cases, that is right; but you know, there was one person who did choose to take a path that was painful wasn't there? As Paul writes in Philippians chapter 2, Jesus "who, being in very nature God...made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!" In this context, we see that the gospel itself is a story of Jesus purposely choosing a path that was harder than other choices open to him. He wasn't asking the question, "What's

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participate in his work. If I am truly fearfully and wonderfully made, then life can become an exciting journey of discovering how I fit into God's larger plan.

Obviously, these are questions you would expect college students to be asking. They are at the time of their life when they are "figuring it all out." But I wonder what would happen if each of us began reflecting on our life and asked God to help us see how our lives to this point have been preparing us to participate in God's work in a unique way. So, I ask the same questions to each of us, how are you wired? Why did God design you the way he did? What, do you think, is your role in what God is doing in and through us? These are questions that will help us see that God calls each of us. He calls each of us to a life of ministry. Careful reflection on these questions will help shape us for God's mission in the world.

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in it for me?" At least not in the same way we always seem to.

So, what does that mean for us, as God's family that gathers here on this little corner of Brooklyn? In a word, everything. The question, "What's in it for me?" is incompatible with a life oriented around following Jesus. Understanding the life and priorities of Jesus should radically reorient the way we think about our life. If following Jesus means that we try to be like him, then our faith can't be based on what we get out of it.

Think about it this way. A "What's in it for me?" person might come into church on Sunday thinking, "What does this church have to give me today?" But a person whose life is saturated by this new way of thinking might come into church thinking, "What do I have to give this church

today?" Do you see the difference? Life becomes focused on ways of giving of ourselves instead of getting for ourselves.

This is not something we "get" right away. The act of giving our life to Christ is just one step in the process of becoming like him. All of us are in process. We are broken but we are also being fixed. That means that to some degree we will all struggle with learning to reorient our lives in this way. Guess what? That's okay! The important thing is that we recognize the way of life that God is inviting us to move toward every day. That's why we need God's Word and Spirit to guide and shape us.

As I think about the church we want to be, I am struck by just how important this reorientation is for us. For us to grow together in unity, AND for us to demonstrate the power of the gospel to our neighborhood, we need to be people who are moving away from a, "What's in this for me?" mentality and toward a, "What's in me for you?" way of seeing the world. Make no mistake, moving in this direction is risky. If I give up focusing on myself all the time and stop being obsessed with making sure my needs are being met, I run the risk of not having my needs met! That's a scary proposition!

This is where being God's family is so important. When we think about our community, we want to be a community of trust and generosity. Each person in our community is called, not to think, "What's in it for me?" but, "What's in me for this community?" And this isn't a call for spending all kinds of hours "doing stuff" at church. This is a picture of generosity. It is an invitation to give yourself fully to our community. We want to be people who offer our love, mercy, forgiveness, service, and passion to the sisters and brothers who share this community with us. A person who does this is not concerned

with getting something in return. No matter what the return, this person gives generously of themselves for the sake of others.

But this also requires trust. Trust that our brothers and sisters will also be reaching out with the same level of generosity. If I am going to stop focusing on getting fed, and instead try to feed others, I have to rely on someone else to nourish me. In being generous with my life toward others, I have to trust that others will also be generous with their life toward me. This means we cannot hope to survive as followers of Jesus on our own. We actually need one another for spiritual vitality.

Communities of trust and generosity are uncommon in our world today. Most communities are full of individuals who look out for themselves and operate with a "What's in it for me?" mentality.

But God's people are chosen to be different. We are called out of the ways everyone else uses and into new ways that demonstrate the gospel to anyone who is watching. This is one way we do that. Giving of myself so that my sisters and brothers can flourish is a way that I can proclaim the good news of Jesus, who gave himself up on the cross so that the world could flourish as God had always intended.

Where are you on the journey toward being a "What's in me for this community?" kind of person? Where are we as a community on that journey? In the end, we don't determine our success as a church based on numerical growth or financial stability. Success as a church is marked by the extent to which our life together is faithful to the calling we have from God. This is one way we live out that calling. I invite you to join me in exploring what it means to be a community of trust and generosity.



Not "what's in it for me," but "what can I give?"



SUMMER SPLASH!

This past summer, we hosted 3 weeks of Summer Splash for children in the neighborhood. It was a great opportunity for the many volunteers from our church to talk about the gospel with local kids. We partnered with NYCEF, including many from the youth group, along with BUMP teams from across the country to minister to over 90 kids. (NYCEF ran a full 7 week program for

kids through the Dorcas Center! They have some great stories of God doing incredible things in the lives of children and students). We are thankful to God for the work he did in the lives of the kids, and for the work he did in our lives as well, as we sought to be a part of his work in our corner of Brooklyn. We look forward to next year and the opportunities to continue to be a part of God's work in the lives of these children.

COMING UP
NOV. 6
Youth Coffee House & Music
NOV. 8, 15, 22
New Member Classes
9:30-10:15 a.m.
PRAYER MEETING
Every Wednesday
7:15-8:30 p.m.
DEC. 6
Congregational Meeting
DEC. 20
CHRISTMAS MUSICAL CELEBRATION

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

Ladies Bible Study meets each Tuesday morning from 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon in the overflow room at First Free. Our goal is to build each other up in love, bearing fruit in every good work, as we grow in the knowledge of God. (Eph 4:16, Col. 1:10)

Our studies this year focus on love and its interconnection with the other fruits of the Spirit. We are beginning the year with Max Lucado's A Love Worth Giving, and will continue later with Phillip Keller's A Gardener Looks at the Fruit of the Spirit.

Join us for practical Bible study, prayer, refreshments, music, and plenty of lively conversation. All women 16 and over are welcome to attend. No registration, no pre-requisites, no attendance commitment, no pressure!

YOUTH MINISTRY

We are motivated by a passion to "equip people for kingdom impact." We all have a role in the process. Each

person can reach back and put a hand on the shoulder of someone a little younger and 'pass the baton' of godliness on. That is why Bob, Paul, Ben and I are all sharing in the hour of discussion with the youth after the service. They need adults to pass on their love for and experience with Jesus.

Each Friday we have varied activities designed toward leadership development, personal mentoring, skill development and outreach. On November 6 we will conduct our second coffee house that gives young people an opportunity to test their growing musical skills under Ben's direction and it opens a door for us to invite guests to hang out with us. One goal is to become a safe place to belong and explore who God is and what He expects.

We have enjoyed activities like Apple Picking in NJ and serving at the Nursing Home Open House and the NYCEFC community outreach. We look forward to the Christmas season festivities.

We are preparing and praying that this fall we can implement a 10-12 year old Instructional Basketball League as an outreach and an opportunity for our young men to impact others.