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# First Free Church



**Annual Report  
2022**



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# A Word from Pastor Mark

Dear First Free Family,

Before I dive in, I'd like to first say thanks to our Communications and Creative teams for their incredible work on this year's Annual Report. I love how they captured the highlights of our ministry in 2022, especially with the addition of personal stories from some of our ministries, which I believe will be encouraging to you.

Our focus in 2022 was to equip people to stand firm in the face of increasing darkness. As you consider our three sermon series, our special services, and even our ministry programming, you see our commitment to equipping kids, youth, and adults through sound biblical teaching, experiential engagement in prayer and worship, and connection through authentic small group communities. We purposely sought to take people deeper in their pursuit of Jesus Christ, and in so doing, we continued to grow numerically and financially as a church. Maybe growth shouldn't have surprised us, but in some ways it did. We never thought our financial giving would be the strongest it has ever been coming off a year of lock-downs due to the COVID pandemic. When we decided to "take people deeper" through our focus on Jesus and His imminent return, we thought this would surely thin out the crowd. It didn't. This points to a move of God at First Free Church. All glory and praise and honor goes to our great God and King! We will continue to follow Him wherever He leads. We will continue to ask Him to move in power in our midst. We will continue to trust Him for even greater things in the days ahead.

I'm so thankful to have been part of First Free for 26 years now, and one of your pastors for 10 years. We have an amazing staff and a tremendous team of volunteers who faithfully serve. We have a loving church family who sacrificially give in support of our ministry. I truly believe the best is yet to come for First Free Church.

Yours in Christ,

*Mark Brockberg*

Mark Brockberg  
Executive Pastor

# 2022 in Review

JAN

**Districts Youth Conference** *January 7-9*  
107 students attended this 3-day conference in Green Bay, WI.

**Beacon Conference** *January 22*

34 women and men attended this conference offering support and healing to those who have experienced infertility/miscarriage.

FEB

**No Regrets** *February 5*  
136 men attended.

**Worship Night + Baptism Event** *February 25*

812 people attended and 57 people were baptized.

MAR

**IF: Gathering** *March 4-5*  
154 women attended.

APR

**Easter Weekend Services** *April 16-17*

2,541 people attended over 3 services and 1,757 households tuned in online.

MAY

**The Book of Daniel 7-12 with Joel Richardson** *May 6-7*  
691 people attended over 4 sessions on the Book of Daniel.

**The Amazing Chemistry Show** *May 20*

986 people attended this family event featuring Chemist and Pastor Josh Denhart.

JUN

**Outreach Week** *June 13-18*

A week of local and global outreach opportunities. We provided a meal for those experiencing homelessness at Houska Park, put on a run/walk to raise money for Anti-Human Trafficking, and hosted a bike-a-thon to raise money for our mission work in Panama.

**Human Trafficking Awareness Night** *June 17*

370 people attended this event spreading awareness about Human Trafficking, led by special guest speaker Rebecca Bender, a survivor of Human Trafficking.

JUL

**Challenge Youth Conference** *July 3-8*

23 students attended this conference in Kansas City, MO.

AUG

**Family Movie Night/Backpack Bash** *August 28*

500+ people attended and 244 kids received backpacks full of school supplies.

SEP

**Men's Golf Event** *September 24*

78 men attended this golf outing at Trempealeau Mountain.

**Worship Night + Baptism Event** *September 30*

622 people attended and 82 people were baptized.

OCT

**Fall Men's Event** *October 14*

115 men attended.

**Trunk or Treat** *October 29*

400+ kids attended and 30+ volunteers handed out candy.

NOV

**Fall Women's Event** *November 4*

134 women attended this event on women and sexuality.

DEC

**Christmas Eve Services** *December 24*

2,732 people attended over 3 services and 911 households tuned in online.

# Weekend Services

Average attendance in 2022:

**1,555**  
people per weekend

2021: **1,362**    2020: **1,169**


Total livestream views in 2022:

**62,689**

Average livestream views per weekend: **1,216**

## Online



 **Website & App**  
 213,067 website visits  
 1,920 new app downloads  
 9,112 total app downloads  
 43,844 media views

 **YouTube**  
 100,288 views  
 44,098 hours  
 650 new subscribers  
 3,616 total subscribers

 **Facebook**  
 453 new page likes  
 536 new followers  
 6,753 total page likes  
 7,443 total followers

 **Instagram**  
 281 new followers  
 2,659 total followers

 **Apple Podcasts**  
 454 followers  
 30,836 plays

 **Spotify**  
 245 followers  
 9,082 plays

# Special Services

Christmas Eve attendance

**2,732**

people over 3 services

2021: **1,655** 2020: **979**

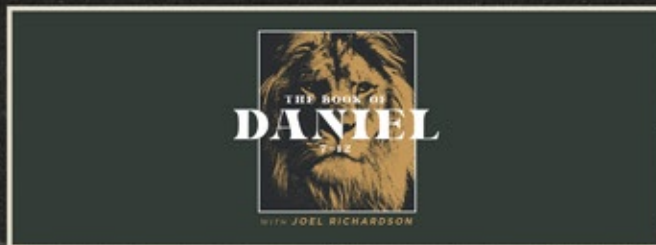
Easter Weekend attendance

**2,541**

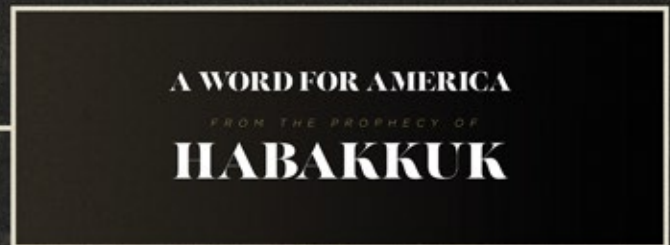
people over 3 services

2021: **1,932** 2020: **0** (online only)

## Joel Richardson

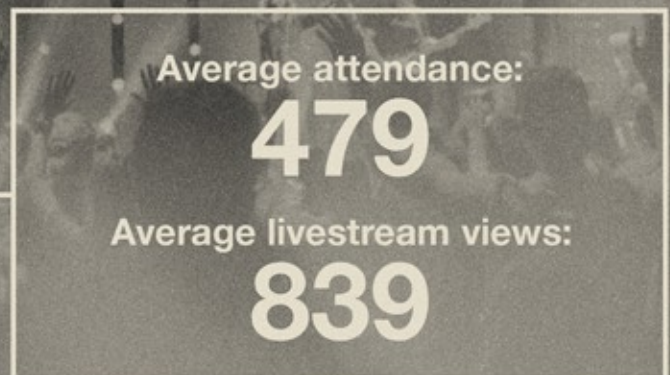


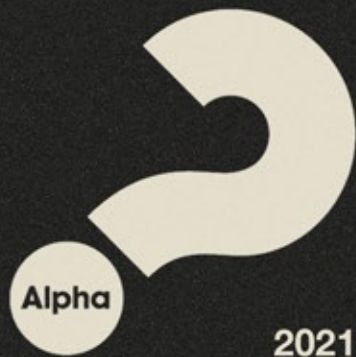
691 attendees  
9,826 online views



1,239 attendees  
6,551 online views

## Worship Nights + Encounter Revelation





**232**

people completed  
the Alpha Course  
in 2022

2021: **78** 2020: **107**



**42** groups in 2022

**641** group members



**122** new members in 2022

**551** total members



**322** visitors personally  
followed up with  
in 2022



**COLLEGE  
COMMUNITY**

average college  
student attendees: **40**



**9.1k** Apple Music  
streams

**30.7k** Spotify  
streams

**10.3k** YouTube  
streams



Average weekend attendance:

**286 kids**

2021: **245**    2020: **252**

**21** kids chose to follow Christ during a service in 2022

**36** kids were dedicated in 2022



**278** kids in Awana in 2022

**113** Awana volunteers

## A First Free Kid's Story

*"My children and I are newer to First Free. This has been a tough season for us as my husband and I went through a divorce. First Free has been a wonderful place to come, learn about God, and grow our faith in Him, something we were not allowed to do before. A moment that I had recently with my daughter was so special and I feel like I owe the teachers and teaching to First Free for what she had to say. We will talk about God, but this being newer, I don't always know what to say to them. I was having a tough day the other week. Honestly, this has been a really tough season of life to be in it right now, and my daughter just held my hand and said, "You know what mama, God loves you so much." It was just what I needed in that moment. Not just to hear those words, but also to know that she is learning about God's love for her and others. That is such an important lesson and I am so thankful that that is something she has gained from First Free." - Anonymous*



**FIRST**

**FREE**

**YOUTH**

Average Wednesday  
student attendance:

**121**

2021: **94**

Youth volunteers:

**34**

Youth Alpha Sunday average attendance: **82 students**

## A First Free Youth Story

*"Although God has always been a part of my life and I've seen Him do powerful things, I hadn't really seen Him work in me. However, in late September of this school year, I remember the day I felt God's hand on me. I remember exactly how horrible I was feeling that day. There was a crazy amount of things going on in my life and I was starting to go into a dark place because I couldn't deal with those things alone. It was the first Wednesday youth group of the school year, and I didn't care to go. Honestly, I thought it was going to be another night where I had to put on a non-genuine smile and sit with my church friends, but that's not what God had planned. Max was giving the sermon and it was as if God had ripped me open and put everything I was feeling and thinking into Max's heart. As he preached, his words hit me exactly where I needed them, and I knew that sitting in that chair at youth group was exactly where God needed me to be that night, so that He could move in a miraculous way. That evening has stayed with me and has changed my thought process by always keeping open space for God to move." - Anonymous*

# *first free* **Prayer**

Prayer team members:

**44**

Online prayer requests:

**222**

the  
**prayer**  
course

PRAYER  ROOM

**103** people went through  
the Prayer Course  
in 2022

Average weekly  
Prayer Room  
attendees:

**75**

## A quote from Prayer Room

*"I was so encouraged and lifted up by their prayers for physical healing and against spiritual warfare that may have manifested as physical pain. They spoke truth of who I am as a daughter of Christ who walks in His light, and encouraged me to stand firm. I felt lightness and warmth and release from some of the pain I was experiencing, and was encouraged in my fight against unbelief. I was nervous to receive prayer, but was so blessed by their words straight from the Holy Spirit. I will be coming to Prayer Room in the future for more breakthrough like I experienced tonight!" - Anonymous*

# Baptisms

# 139

people were baptized in 2022

2021: 80

2020: 46

## Tawnee's Story

*"Being baptized was something I've wanted to do since I was 10 years old, but I never felt worthy. I felt as though there was a checklist I needed to complete before I could ever even consider it. I got picked up by my friend Lisa to meet her husband Darren and their friends at church for the Worship Night and baptism event. This is where I met Jim Page for the first time. Within witnessing 5 people getting baptized, the tears started rolling. I was so happy for all of them, and almost envious. I felt a pull to get in the tank, but that feeling of unworthiness continued to linger. That's when I noticed Jim disappear from the row in front of me. It was almost immediately after I noticed he was gone, that he returned and came to me with a towel and a hand-written note. It read —*



*"I get a strong sense that you're struggling with something. Please consider using this towel tonight. You can give your life to Him."*

*As if I hadn't been crying enough, I burst into tears. Lisa asked if I was going to do it. Through my tears I said "Yes! But where do I go?" She embraced me and told me she loved me. Jim then led me to Pastor Robyn, who prayed over me and pointed me in the direction of the tank. I was then met by Kelly Fernandes who cried when I told her what had just happened and, again, prayed over me. I then joined Pastor Steve and Pastor Mark in the tank, and was baptized in the name of my God. My life has been on a never-ending high since then. Even my bad days don't seem so gray."*

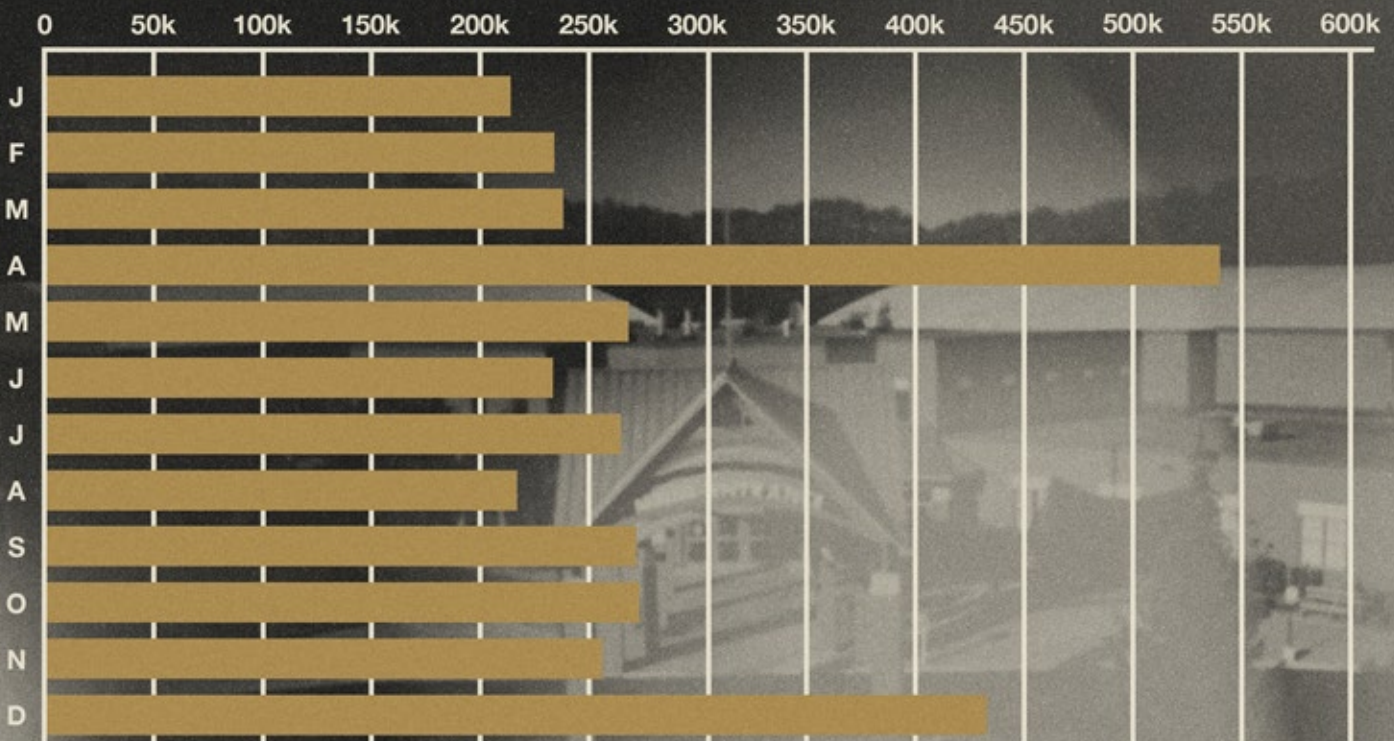
# Your Generosity

General Fund giving in 2022

# \$3,441,791

**1,047** contributors **111** first-time givers

## Monthly Breakdown



# Your Generosity

Benevolence Fund giving in 2022

**\$231,396**

**\$88,566**

donated to community families

**205**

families served through Benevolence

**\$21,242**

supported our food pantry

**121**

families served through our food pantry

**\$99,750**

donated to local charities

**26**

local charities served

**\$51,330**

donated to crisis response

including

**\$25,000**

for Ukraine

&

**\$19,866**

for Hurricane Ian relief

Total dispersed from Benevolence Fund in 2022

**\$260,888**

# Outreach

**\$55,699**

Total raised for our mission work in Panama in December 2022

**17**

people from our First Free Family traveled to Florida to clean up after Hurricane Ian

**295**

boxes collected and donated to Operation Christmas Child

**21**

people from our First Free Family volunteer with Safe Families

**12**

people from our First Free Family mentor a student at Northside Elementary

## FIRST FREE STORE

**1,347**

items sold in the First Free Store in 2022

**\$5,660**

in profits donated to outreach

# Vision from Pastor Shane

Dear First Free Family,

As I think and pray about 2023, and this next season for us as a spiritual family, I am filled with genuine excitement and anticipation. I sincerely believe God is inviting us into deeper waters. As the darkness increases, He is showing Himself faithful to pour out more of His presence and power in our midst. With all of my heart, I believe we are experiencing the beginning of the beginning of what he wants to do! He wants to reveal more of Himself. He wants us to experience more of His presence and power. He also wants us to continue to press in together to a place of prayer and ask! Jesus was clear in Luke 11 that if we ask the Father for the Holy Spirit He will give us the Holy Spirit. Let's ask and keep on asking, and as we ask, let's believe that He will!

My focus, more than ever, is to make sure we are creating a culture in which His people are being equipped to stand firm in the face of increasing darkness. To that end, we will continue to teach and preach His Word without compromise. We will also seek to create more environments for prayer, worship, and corporate fasting. I am feeling a deep stirring in my heart and Spirit to ask and believe for more. More of Him. More of His presence. More of the manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God delights in, and responds to, the spiritual hunger of His people. Some of what we are seeing and experiencing in our midst now is the direct result of that. My prayer for us this is year is that we would not be satisfied. That we would be thankful for all that he has done, and at the same time hunger for more!

Beloved, this is not hype. Deep in my bones I sense God inviting us to more. He wants to reveal Himself in power in the midst of the increasing darkness. The prayer of the prophet Habakkuk in Habakkuk 3:2 has become my prayer:

*"Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy."*

I want to unapologetically encourage all of you to make this your prayer for First Free Church. Let's be a people that thank God for all He has done in our lives, our church, and throughout history. At the same time let's ask Him to rise up in genuine revival power again in our day, in our time, in our church, in our families, and in our communities. I believe that, if this is our cry, and we give ourselves to Him with unabandoned love, we will indeed see His deeds of old renewed in our day. That in wrath He will remember mercy and usher us into a deeper and genuine move of His Holy Spirit. I pray you will all join with me in my cry for genuine revival!

With great love and gratitude for all of you,



Shane Holden  
Senior Pastor

