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From atheist to apostle: Singer to share his story of salvation at Trinity Lutheran Church

Trinity Lutheran Church, 2016 Marlandwood Road in Temple, will present an evening of worship with Chris Driesbach at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19.

Driesbach, a former atheist turned Christian songwriter, will be performing original songs and sharing his story. The hour-long concert is free and a free-will offering will be taken at the door at its conclusion.

Driesbach said he has been singing and playing in Lutheran churches all over the country for the past 12 years, but before that he spent most of his life as “a confirmed, angry atheist.”

In 1995 he was living next to a Lutheran Church in Anchorage, Alaska and had a gig playing at a bar. Driesbach said the church’s pastor lived nearby and they would get together to talk over coffee.

“I was a debater in high school, a pretty good one, I’ve always had a high opinion of my ability to reason and argue and so forth, so one morning I just thought I’d start an argument about religion with him,” he said.

The pastor didn’t argue. Instead, he invited Driesbach to continue the conversation. They met in the pastor’s office over a period of weeks. Driesbach said he would bring up topics that go against scripture and the pastor would respond by reading passages from the Bible.

“It took six weeks, but I was just sitting there at his desk one afternoon and I suddenly realized that all of these things were absolutely true,” he said. “It just floored me. My mind was blown. I never would have guessed in a million years that I could have possibly believed these things, and I did. And I do.”

Driesbach said during his concert he uses pictures and his songs to tell his story.

“I sing songs that are related to being a believer and what life is like for us as believers,” he said. “I love to talk about how my life changed.”

Driesbach said he waits until later in the show to tell how he is a recovering alcoholic who almost died from drinking. He said, even though he’d been sober for nine years, he was having thoughts of suicide when he met the pastor in Alaska.

“I just felt like a real failure and didn’t fell like life had much meaning anymore,” he said. “I was thinking about killing myself, but that day I knew because of the blood on the cross God sees me as beloved and holy and innocent. And I am absolutely not innocent, trust me. I’m guilty of many things, but I didn’t want to kill myself anymore. I had a new reason to live.”

Driesbach said he will have free CDs of his music available, but donations are welcome. He said his message is one of hope and love.

“If you’d like to hear how an angry atheist became a Christian in love with Jesus, I’d love for you to be there and let me tell you the story,” he said.

The Rev. Benjamin Ehlers, pastor at Trinity Lutheran, said Driesbach reached out and offered to give a concert at the church. Ehlers said he wants people to know that his church wants to open up and be there for people in the community with events like the concert. He said they will also be hosting movie nights in the fall.

“So this is another event where we just really want to be welcoming to anybody who wants to come and see what we do here,” he said.

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