



FISHHOOK

May 2023

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect...

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.



Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Romans 12:1, 2, 9-18

This is one of those Bible passages we find that show the beauty of a life transformed by Jesus. Or at least, what a life transformed by Jesus can look like. Paul himself experienced the transformation from "breathing murderous threats" against the people of God to becoming one of the greatest architects of Christian community the world has ever seen. **(continued next page)**

How do we keep our homes, hearts, and churches open to others?

(continued from first page) If you haven't read much of Paul's letters lately, I'd encourage you to do it again. Listen to how he acknowledges the challenges, temptations, and tribulations of the world around us, and how the Spirit given to us in Christ can truly bring about a new person within us, a new way of living through us, and a new kind of community around us. Paul firmly believes that the resurrected life we have in Jesus has broken into this world, and we can see these changes in and around us each day.

We see this in the love Christians can have for each other; the forgiveness and harmony that is possible in Christ; the desire to honor, serve, and sacrifice for each other; and the hospitality we can demonstrate to each other. Paul also sees it in how we treat those outside the church, giving blessing to those who are cruel to us, rejoicing and weeping in appropriate times, and living as peaceably as possible.

In the next few weeks, we'll be looking at hospitality on Sundays. How do we keep our homes, hearts, and churches open to others so we can share God's grace and truth with gentleness and respect? How do we create the space in our lives to have that openness and live hospitably in an inhospitable world? Thankfully, we've got Jesus at our side.

Pastor Dan

Kids of St. Andrews

Newday Preschool

Wow! Can you believe it's the last month of school? We can't! May will surely be a busy month. Our pre-k classes are gearing up for promotion. They have been practicing hard and singing their little hearts out. We look forward to our End of Year Party to celebrate all the fun we had and everything we learned this year.

Next time you are in the Fellowship Hall, take a peek outside and see what the Newday children planted. It was so much fun getting dirty and learning how plants grow. We can't wait to try some of our fruits and vegetables that are in our garden!

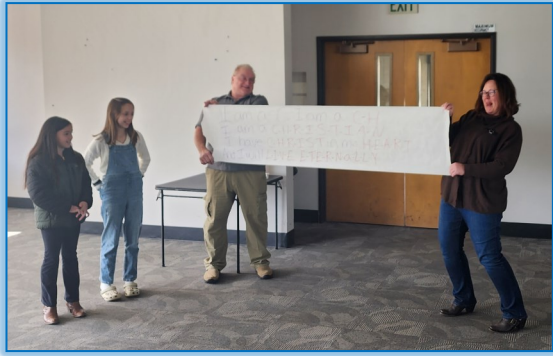
We're now accepting enrollment for summer 2023 and fall 2023 programs. If you are looking for a school that helps children grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, academically, and physically, call our preschool director Marla Rivas at (209) 957-4089 or email newday@stalc.org.



Kids' Church

Kids' Church continues to be a wonderful time of Bible learning and fun for the young ones of our congregation (and for their teachers!). They are preparing a couple of songs to share with our 10:45 service in honor of mothers on **May 14**.

Classes will meet the first three Sundays of May and on the first two Sundays of June before taking a break for summer.



Confirmation Class



While continuing to meet on Wednesday evenings throughout this month, five confirmands will be giving their faith statements on **Sunday, May 21** at both church services. They will be confirmed on **Sunday, May 28** at the second service. Please continue to pray for our confirmands as they prepare to profess their faith in front of the congregation:

*Nathan & Nicolas Brown
Jona Jen
Abby Johnson
Kate Johnson*

Youth Group

For the remainder of the school year, the high school group will be covering Pentecost and outreach to those near us, as well as those far off. A game night will be held on **May 24 at 6:30pm**, and with that the youth group will break for summer!

Many of our high school youth are going to be attending our summer mission trip at Shashone Mountain Retreat in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, from June 17-June 24. Pastor Dan, Pastor Brian, and Bobby and Laura Moore will be attending as chaperones. Everyone is excited for our first mission trip since before COVID! While there the youth will be challenged to grow in their faith, be raised up as leaders, and serve the surrounding community. Keep praying for our youth, as mission trips are formative experiences for them in the faith in Christ.



Serving Stockton and Beyond

Vacation Bible School



VBS will be here June 12-16! We look forward to offering our community a week of free food, fun, and learning about Jesus, the Light of the World. Check out these ways you can help.



100 Volunteers Needed

You have the skills it takes to help with VBS! Opportunities to help range from sitting in a chair to playing with preschoolers...and everything in between. Overwhelmed by kids? Help with setup or cleanup! Feel crafty? Lead a booth! Enjoy organized chaos? Assist in registration! Contact Karen Kelly to get plugged in (current background check required): (209) 406-9562



Donate Jars

Clean baby food or jam jars will be used as candle holders (collection box in Narthex).



Register today!

Your kids, grandkids, neighborhood kids, and co-workers' kids are all invited. Follow the QR code, stop by the office, or visit our website at: www.standrewsstockton.org/2023-vbs-registration/



Sponsor the Event

VBS is completely free to children. Would you like to help underwrite this ministry? Here are some estimated expenses your donations can help with!

Five days of dinner for 250 people: \$2,000 (Costco Cash donations welcome)

Paper goods: \$750

Temporary fence for safety: \$2,500

Designate a check, choose "VBS" on our online giving page, or text any amount to the number 84321 with "vbs." Text-to-give example: \$35 vbs



Good Shepherd



Good Shepherd Family invites you to join us on **May 13 at 12:30pm** for our Butterfly Release—a way to remember those whom we miss and who are rejoicing in heaven.



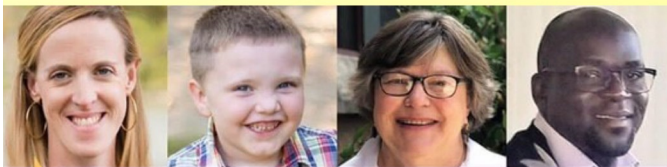
Pulliam Elementary

In April, over 20 volunteers from St. Andrews shared the Gospel story of Jesus' death and resurrection using specially-filled Easter eggs with Pulliam Elementary families. When our volunteers arrived and began unloading their cars, one student came up to them and asked, "Are these the God eggs we did last year? I love my God eggs! I'm going to listen again this year!" Parents followed their kids to each station and also listened to the Gospel message. We gave out 130 sets of "Resurrection Eggs" for students to take home and remember what Jesus did for them. We continue to be grateful for the support from Pulliam's principal and staff and look forward to giving out pumpkins in the fall!



Family Promise

Family Promise Hosting 5/28-6/4



 Family Promise
We're All in This Together



It's that time again to be a blessing to the families supported by Family Promise. If you are able to help with any of these needs on that TUESDAY, THURSDAY, OR SATURDAY, please call the office.

- Van Driver
- Provide Dinner
- Dinner Assistant
- Evening Activities
- Homework Tutor
- Overnight Support
- Setup or Cleanup

Rahab Comfort Dog

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! *And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid him." Mark 16:6 (ESV)*



Rahab Comfort Dog and Micah Comfort Dog spent the day with students and staff at Cesar Chavez High School in Stockton on April 13, and Rahab and Genesis Comfort Dogs spent the day with students on April 14. Please keep the community in prayer as they mourn the loss of a 17-year-old student who was shot and killed off-campus. Another student was injured in the same incident. Lord, let the Comfort Dogs be a light to the people you love so much. *The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Psalm 18:2 (ESV)*

Military handler Bobby Moore, Laura Moore, and military ministry partner Cathy Pauley took Rahab to the 129th Rescue Wing at Moffett Field. The unit participated in the Color Run to support "Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month." Air National Guard men and women got a lot of pets and love in with Rahab, Micah, Aaron, and Genesis Comfort Dogs. As participants ran the mile, powdered paint was tossed on them making it a true "color run." *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)*

Team Rahab continues to visit Madison Elementary School. She has become very popular, and students ask about her when she's not there. This has opened up a lot of doors to a community that doesn't know Jesus. Rahab also came to Pulliam Elementary School to share the Passion/Easter story (see story on page 4). *And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34 (ESV)*



Rahab Comfort Dog and a lot of team members supported Good Shepherd Family's Easter party by hiding eggs, providing the message, cooking lunch, serving, taking prayers, and cleaning up. Rahab brought a lot of comfort to the "kids" who have lost friends this year. *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (ESV)*

Rahab Comfort Dog has enjoyed being outside with the beautiful weather and smelling the flowers blooming from all the rain we received. *The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. Song of Solomon 2:12 (ESV)*

Due to some ongoing health concerns, Top Dog Debra Rider has had to step away from her role with our Comfort Dog team. Debra was instrumental in bringing Rahab to St. Andrews and to leading the team and opening doors for us to serve in the Stockton community. We praise God for her work and pray for her strength and healing. Miriam Deuel has taken on the mantle of Top Dog. She has been a handler from the beginning and brings her organizational gifts and heart for ministry to those hurting in our community to this position. She is being mentored by Debra and trained by Lutheran Church Charities. Pray for this transition in the team and that we would continue to have opportunities to *Share the Mercy, Compassion, Presence, and Proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who are suffering and in need.*



Women in Mission



Books, Beads, Baking, & Beyond

God has gifted each one of us with skills and passions to use for His glory, and some of our ladies are sharing their gifts to equip others with more tools for living generous and creative lives. If you would like to join in or learn more, please contact these folks!

Card Making — **May 10 & 24 at 1:30pm** in the fellowship hall. Karen Kleinert: (209) 406-9708; hkleinert05@comcast.net

Beading — **May 23 at 2:30pm** in the library. Debbie Wilson: (209) 298-8451; skydebbill@yahoo.com

Cookie Baking — Dayle Young: (209) 915-5659; yngfmly4@comcast.net

Walking — **April 29** (Modesto) and **May 13** (Lodi). Joan Sykes: (209) 931-0577; jumblefromjoan@inreach.com

Book Club — Organizational meeting **May 21, 10-10:40am** in preschool room next to kitchen. Members of an ongoing and successful women's book club at St. Andrews would like to duplicate this blessing. Come prepared to discuss your preferences for time, frequency, and genre of books. Members of the current book club will be on hand to discuss how this group has been a blessing to all of them. Call Deb Johnson if you are unable to attend this meeting but are interested in getting involved: (209) 481-1570



Bible Study

Ladies from our women's Bible study volunteered in April for telling the Gospel story at Pulliam Elementary (see story on page 4). It was the first time several of them had ever done something like that, and it was a very rewarding experience.

Join us on Mondays at 9am as we continue walking through the book of Genesis. Bring your Bible (or borrow one from us) and discover God's incredible plan for our world!

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

LWML will meet Tuesday, **May 9, from 1:00-3:00pm**. The theme for our meeting will be "How We Grow." We are seeking a professional gardener as our guest speaker and will be making floral wreaths for our preschool staff.

Our scripture verse for journaling is from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 3:6-7: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it but God made it grow. So neither [she] who plants nor [she] who waters is anything but only God who makes things grow." Write about times in your life where God has grown you spiritually and how He has used sometimes-difficult circumstances to make you blossom.

Bring your journals, your mites, and your glue gun!

Christian Hospitality by Pastor Terry A. Smith*

When I talk about hospitable leadership, I'm encouraging leaders to understand how important it is to create an environment of welcome. You cannot influence people who haven't been welcomed.

Jesus described His kingdom as a feast. I love this idea of a leader thinking about their leadership as a feast for their followers. What would it be like if all leaders had that idea?

But we fight against the pull of increasing polarization, which by definition is inhospitable. We feel it around every significant issue in our society. I think the answer is to shift the conversation. If we view leadership through the lens of hospitality, then we can sit at the table with all kinds of people to build bridges and accomplish amazing things together.

We always start with our values—and one of our values is hospitality. We love to welcome strangers. A key verse for us is Hebrews 13:1-2: Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. The Greek word in verse 1 is *philadelphia*, which means brotherly love. But the Greek word in verse 2 is *philoxenia*, which means the love of strangers. It is the opposite of *xenophobia*.

In culture today, we talk a lot about practicing *philadelphia*—loving people who are like us. But we can't stay in *philadelphia*. We have to move to *philoxenia* and learn how to love strangers. Many of us settle for the low standard of tolerance—but this is not *philoxenia*. We need to encourage people to really do life with people who are not like themselves.

We practice this value in the way we do everything. I couldn't imagine how small my life would be if I hung out with people who are just like me every day. We hold up this value and encourage people to get excited about being with people who aren't like them. It's just so expanding.

*Excerpted from Smith, Terry A., and Global Leadership Summit. "The Hospitable Leader." *Global Leadership Network*, 11 April 2019, <https://globalleadership.org/articles/leading-organizations/the-hospitable-leader/?locale=en>. Accessed 24 April 2023.

St. Andrews Updates

Arson and Insurance

A preliminary hearing was held in April regarding the man accused of the two arsons on our property (among other crimes). The next day, Jose Armando Rodriguez accepted a plea deal from the district attorney's office. He will remain in custody until October of this year, after which he will be under probation within our county with a restraining order from being near the St. Andrews property for the next two years.

Also in April, our insurance was canceled due to the claims we have made. Our staff and council have worked to restore our insurance, though it is now at a much higher cost and with less-extensive coverage. We would appreciate your prayers that we can find a much more affordable and inclusive policy during the upcoming year.

Planning 80th Anniversary

Sunday, September 10 will be a joyful worship service and lunch to celebrate St. Andrews' 80th anniversary. We are seeking a few members that can help plan. Please let Pam in the office know if you are interested in being a part of this team: (209) 957-8750; office@stalc.org

Small Groups

Do you desire to grow in Christ with a group of Christians? Do you feel God nudging you to take a step of faith in leadership? Pastor Brian would love to talk with you about opportunities to join or lead a small group. Please give him a call at the office or email him at pastorbrian@stalc.org.