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# FISHHOOK

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May 2022

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How gracious is our God?

I reread *The Shack* recently. This book is a creative—though perhaps controversial—story that tackles the topic of suffering and God's role in our life through it. I had forgotten about a "conversation" between God and the main character, Mac, about disappointment and expectations. Mac was stunned to learn from God that he couldn't disappoint God, because God already knows everything and therefore has no expectations (as we normally think of them) and is not surprised by what we do, and is not "disappointed" in us. **(continued on next page)**

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## Nurturing Children and Families

### Newday Preschool

*"Children are a gift from God." — Psalm 127:3*



May is a busy month for our preschool. The children are practicing hard for the pre-k graduation and are excited to show our teachers how much we love them for teacher appreciation week!

We are accepting enrollment for our summer and fall programs. We have lots of fun activities planned for the summer: camp week, space week, science week, and much, much more. Classes are filled on a first-come-first-served basis.

We offer Monday-Friday, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, and Tuesday/Thursday schedules for 2- to 5-year olds. We have full-day (7:30am-5:30pm) and half-day (9:00am-11:45am) options. If you are looking for a school that help children grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, academically, and physically, call our preschool director Marla Rivas at (209) 957-4089.



### MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

Open to ALL mothers of preschoolers in our community! Please invite moms of preschoolers who you know and love. We meet in the St. Andrews fellowship hall.

Our loving volunteers watch the children while the moms enjoy a break, have great conversations, learn more about mothering, and grow closer to God. We also have coffee, tea, and treats. If you know of any moms in our church or community that could benefit from MOPS, please share this information and invite them to join this amazing group.

#### **Upcoming Meetings:**

**Tuesday, May 10 — "What is Your Legacy?"**  
**Tuesday May 24 — Celebrating End of MOPS Year**



If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact the church office, Kristin Winter (kristin@stalc.org), or Kara Rehbein (209-598-3882).

***God does not do common, sinful, manipulative things.***

***(continued from first page)*** We clergy have oft been accused of using guilt, expectations, the perceived disappointment of God, and other nefarious means to manipulate and control our flocks. It could also be argued that thinking this way would give free reign to some, thinking they can do whatever they please and God doesn't care.

Paul answered the latter question in Romans 5 and 6, and I'd encourage you to go there and be reminded of God's love for us sinners and the new identity we have in Christ through our baptism. I'd just like to share a few thoughts on the graciousness of God.

I personally have a rather (un)healthy inner critic. Maybe it's a little weaker than it once was. I fear it has crept up too much in my own teaching and preaching over the years, and for that I apologize. And even if you or I don't have that inner critic, there are plenty of people around us trying to move and push us through common, sinful, manipulative ways of human interaction.

But God does not do common, sinful, manipulative things. God is love. God is truth. God is just. These things find their source in Him, and the closer we draw to Him the more these things enter our own lives as well.

How gracious is your God?

Take the 89<sup>th</sup> chapter (John 21) as an example. Have you read Jesus' interaction with Peter as Jesus "putting the screws" to Peter and making him writhe like a worm on a hook, wallowing in the shame of disappointing and betraying Jesus? That interpretation probably says more about sinful humanity that just doesn't understand God than it says about a gracious Savior.

Or is Jesus restoring Peter in the 89<sup>th</sup> chapter? Remember, Jesus already knew Peter was going to betray Him; it came as no surprise to Jesus. Jesus also knew what Peter's role was going to be among the apostles, in the mission of the early church, and how Peter would live and die for Jesus. Jesus giving Peter a chance to personally and publicly be restored and placed back into the center of the mission of God sounds more gracious to me. And I have no doubt I'm missing even more that our very good God is doing for Peter—and for us—in that passage.

How gracious is your God? I pray that following our Forgiving Challenge you have even more to reflect on and celebrate regarding God's graciousness toward you. How much more can we all grow in and celebrate God's love for us? He has shown us His incomprehensible love by giving His own Son for us, that whoever believes in Him may not perish, but have eternal life.

*Pastor Dan*

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## ***Campus Improvement Update***

We thank you again for your generous support of our campus improvement project. Our plans are awaiting approval from the city permitting office. We have received one contractor's bid and expect another shortly. With skyrocketing material costs we are negotiating with contractors to receive the most value for this project. Please don't hesitate to ask a council member for more information!

# Vacation Bible School



## Save the date for VBS, June 13-17!

Calling all kids 6 months old through 8th grade! Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a FREE week-long Bible adventure that runs Monday through Friday from 5:30-8:15pm. *Dinner is included on each of the five nights.* Children have a blast at VBS as they learn about God through songs, stories, crafts, games, dramas, and more.

Register your kids, grandkids, nephews, nieces, or neighbor kids today by scanning this QR code or by picking up a packet from the church office!



**VBS Work Day, May 21 @ 9AM.** Can you wield a pair of scissors? Fold paper? Hold a glue stick? Please join us to get supplies ready for VBS. *Lunch included!*



## Mural painter and preschool leaders needed!

We're in need of some specific skills for VBS this year. We're looking for someone to paint murals as backgrounds to create our "Jerusalem Marketplace" setting. And we need loving, playful folks who'd like to run around with preschoolers during that week! Contact Karen Kelly: [neraknsteve618@gmail.com](mailto:neraknsteve618@gmail.com)



## Want to sponsor this event?

*VBS is completely free to children and includes dinner, a t-shirt, and crafts.* Would you like to help underwrite this ministry? Here are some estimated expenses your donations can help with!

Five days of dinner for 300 people: \$2,000

Paper goods: \$750

Temporary fence for safety: \$1,500

**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

# Calling Alissa Brege, DCE



After meeting in March with two DCE candidates, in early April the call committee recommended a call to Alissa Brege of Long Beach, CA. Our bylaws put the responsibility of calling staff onto the senior pastor and Mission and Ministry Council. In their meeting on April 25, the Mission and Ministry Council, in conjunction with Pastor Dan, voted "yes" to issue the call for DCE to Alissa!

We can expect her to take two to four weeks to consider this call on her life. Both Alissa and her husband Paul would be changing jobs and uprooting their family to plant themselves with us in Stockton. Please keep Alissa and her family in your prayers during this process.

# Opportunities to Love and Be Loved

## It's Not by Magic



Have you ever marveled that the candle of the Divine Presence never goes out? Or been surprised that there are no crumpled bulletins in your pew left from the previous service? Ever wondered how all those little communion cups get filled?

None of this is miraculous...it is the loving work of our altar guild! Please consider joining the team! With a simple training and only committing to help **four times a year**, you can participate in worship in a deeper way. Call Clive and Judy at (209) 239-9103 or email [clivesnedker@comcast.net](mailto:clivesnedker@comcast.net).

## Hosting Homeless Families

Saint Andrews is looking forward to our first week of hosting Family Promise families this month! **Together with Presentation Catholic Church we will begin hosting families for our first rotation starting May 22.** Their final day of the first rotation will be Sunday, May 29, when the families will be picked up that morning.

Each day, the families will be picked up from St. Andrews by 7:00am and will be taken to Family Promise's day center for help with job searching, career development, helping with housing, etc. The families will arrive back at Saint Andrews between 5:00 and 5:30pm. After settling in, dinner will be served followed by some down-time full of games or a movie until bedtime.

We are so happy that God has called us to be a part of a ministry like Family Promise. He is faithful, and because of this, so are His People! We give God thanks and praise for the volunteers who are getting to help out for our first rotation week. Glory to Christ!

## Celebration for Baby Muldowney



Baby Muldowney is on his or her way! **All are invited** to celebrate and help Pastor Brian and Marybeth get ready to welcome their little one.

Join us on *Saturday, May 14 at 1PM* in the fellowship hall for fun and refreshments. **RSVP by May 7** and learn about group gift options by scanning this QR code or by calling the church office. Find their gift registry online at [www.babylist.com/baby-marybeth-muldowney](http://www.babylist.com/baby-marybeth-muldowney)



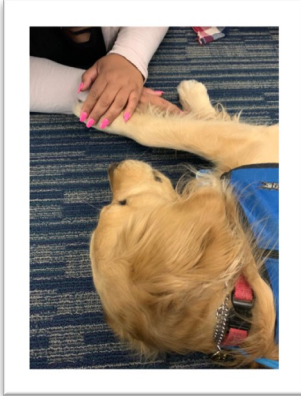
## Thrivent Financial Planning

Are you a Thrivent member or interested in learning about Thrivent? Ashley Tangeraas of Thrivent will be serving bagels and pastries in the courtyard between and after our **May 22 services**. Ashley will be there to answer questions and to also help St. Andrews' members learn about how Thrivent Action Teams and Choice Dollars can support St. Andrews and other ministries. Please feel free to reach out to Ashley Tangeraas at 916-717-3780 or [ashley.tangeraas@thrivent.com](mailto:ashley.tangeraas@thrivent.com).



# Rahab Comfort Dog

*Rahab's Bible verse is Joshua 2:11: "When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord you God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."*



Comfort Dog Rahab and the team continue to bring mercy, compassion, and smiles to those who need to feel the presence of our Lord and Savior.

We had fun visiting the first graders at Sierra Elementary School, Manteca, to talk about the difference between a comfort dog and a service dog. Rahab had adventures at Pulliam Elementary School during the telling of the Easter story through the Resurrection Eggs. Many of the students remembered Rahab from school visits and were so excited to sit down and love on her.

Rahab continues to give unconditional love and acceptance to many: young children and their moms who have experienced abuse, those suffering with dementia, and Alzheimer's patients, just to name a few.

Rahab participated in the Turlock Chaplin Fun Run to help raise awareness of the LCC Comfort Dog program, since Good Shepherd Lutheran Church hopes to receive their

comfort dog this year.

In the aftermath of the Sacramento mass shooting, Rahab visited with first responders, 911 dispatch, and the morgue staff on two separate occasions.

As I write this article, I am asking God to once again help us be His hands and feet after the young 15-year-old Stagg High School student who was killed on campus this morning. I am preparing our team and the other Northern California comfort dog teams to be at Stagg High School Tuesday, April 19, which is less than 24 hours after the event. We have been invited to bring comfort, mercy, and compassion and to help the grieving.

I know many of you have had a chance to enjoy Rahab and our team at church on Sunday, or maybe at a fun event. But please never underestimate or take for granted what my team has been called by Jesus to do. This ministry is called upon during crisis situations that are intense and emotionally draining. I am so proud of the team, for their dedication to serve others and their faith that God will help them along the way. I ask that you hold all of us up in prayer.



After the Sacramento shooting, Anastasia, director of training at Lutheran Church Charities, wrote: *Dear Team, I have been going back and reading all of your messages about the visit to the coroner's office and the operations manager for Sacramento Regional Fire/EMS Communication Center and it struck me on a very emotional level. Your teams in California have been called to serve the first responders; it is clearly evident that is where God has been directing you all. To observe how you all work together, supporting one another and then serving with LOVE, LISTENING, SEEING, and RESPONDING is what Jesus showed us what to do. Compassion is more than a feeling, it is action. I thank God for the door He has opened for you to serve the coroner's office and how quickly you responded. It is exciting to see how your teams develop and sustain those relationships. The first responders know that you are with them for the long haul. Thank you for all you do, as we know it takes much sacrifice in time, scheduling people, travel and much more. Jesus guides each of you and as you go out and serve; His light shines out into the darkness and pain around us as you share His love with them. Matthew 5:16, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." You are amazing people, blessed with the different gifts that enhance this ministry and that compliment one another. You are all in our prayers to be refreshed and strengthened after these visits. We pray for you to feel God's comforting arms and peace to sustain you.*



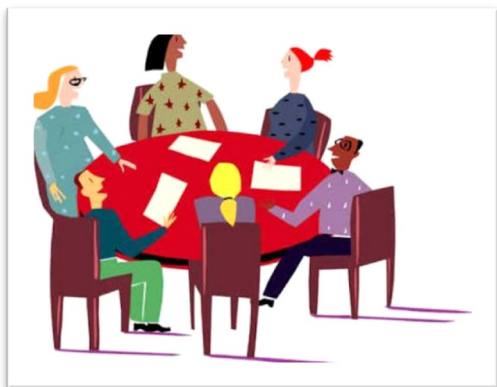
Please acknowledge Team Rahab in your prayers. I personally thank God every day for them! ~ Pastor Dan and Miriam Deuel; Michael and Ann Marie Rehbein; Amy and Philip Lapointe; Bobby, Laura and Dustin Moore; Pastor Brian and Marybeth Muldowney; Cathy Pauley; Barbara Britton; Sue Gruber; Janis Sheen; Brooke Kelly; Debbie Stamos; Nancy Harrison-Werner; Jeff Kramer; Brianna Solis; and Bonnie Centers.

With gratitude,

*Deb Rider*

# Gathering in Groups

## Small Groups Update: What's Next?



Praying all of your small groups enjoyed and grew closer to Jesus throughout the Forgiving Challenge. Each of us should be experiencing the freedom of true forgiveness.

If you'd like to continue learning how to forgive others, there's a bonus 10-day challenge you can pursue! Download the free eBook (enter code IAMFREE at checkout) at <https://redletterchallenge.com/product/forgiving-others-challenge-ebook/> to continue your forgiving journey! This might be a great follow up with your small group after Easter.

Here are two other suggestions of studies to do with your group; information on each can be found on YouTube by searching the titles below:

"Why Is Life So Messy?" with Matthew Kelly

"Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Course - Session 1" with Pete Scazzero

**We would like to encourage each group to continue meeting together after the Forgiving Challenge.** We understand many groups may break for summer, but please reach out to Kristin Winter ([kristin@stalc.org](mailto:kristin@stalc.org)) or the church office if you would like further suggestions for your small group to study.

## Confirmation (H2H)

Confirmation will be finishing out the year with two important dates coming up! God has been shaping and growing our confirmands throughout the past few months, uplifting them in the faith. For that we give God thanks and praise!

**May 15, 8:30 and 10:45am** — Confirmands will be giving their faith statements. We look forward to hearing how their faith in Christ has flourished!

**June 5, 10:45am** — Confirmands will be confirming their faith. We rejoice for Brandon and Aiden Carty, Isaac Deuel, Emily Marlowe, Maili Martin, Ricky Solina, Tyler Haley, Christopher Strong, Gabriel Baker, and their families!



## LWML

All women of the congregation are invited to attend our meeting on **May 3 at 1pm**. At this meeting we will be making 80 door hangers to give to a local rest home.

Save the date for **June 7 at 1pm**, which will be our last meeting before summer break. We will celebrate with a luncheon. Members, please bring a salad or a hot dish to share. Guests are welcome to come and enjoy!

Thank you for a blessed year of serving the Lord with gladness.

## Thank you, Sheryl!

Sheryl Bettencourt has been a Bible study and LWML leader at St. Andrews for over 16 years! Her length of service predates everyone on our staff except Pastor Dan. Please join us in humble gratitude for Sheryl's faithfulness to God's people here at St. Andrews.

## Sunday Mornings at 9:45am



***The Cross+Gen ministry team invites you to join us for our final four Sunday meetings as we grow together in faith: 5/1, 5/8, 5/15, and 5/22. (We meet next to the kitchen.)***

*What is Cross+Gen? Cross+Gen is a faith development ministry accessible to all ages that uses multiple learning styles to engage Scripture. We desire to build cross-generational relationships where children, teenagers, and adults in the congregation support and encourage those outside of their home environment to grow in faith.*

Do you have questions? We'd love to chat with you! Feel free to speak with any member of the Cross+Gen team or contact Holly Andersen and she can direct your inquiry. We hope you'll join us!

*The Cross+Gen Team*

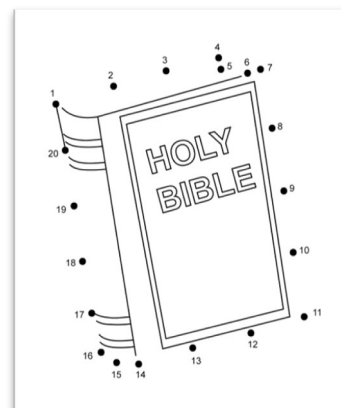
Katie Young, Kara and Scott Rehbein, Lanny and Dayle Young, and Holly Andersen

### Connecting the Dots (in Pastor Dan's office)

Join Pastors Dan and Brian! From the first to the last page of Scripture God has a purpose. The details all point in the same direction. Every person, place, thing, and event is meant to draw us closer to the Messiah, Jesus.

Learn how the details of the Bible connect to the grand story of God's redeeming love.

*There will be no class on May 1 while the pastors are at the confirmation retreat.*



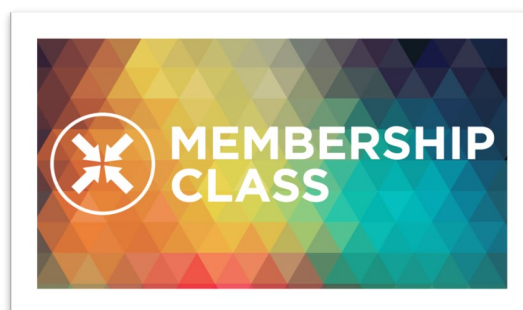
### Minor Prophets (in the library)

Charlie Johnson is leading a Bible class about the minor prophets of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Classes are offered in person in the library at 9:40AM and on Zoom Sunday evenings at 6:00PM. Contact the office for the Zoom link.

### Learn about St. Andrews! (in the fellowship hall)

On Sundays in May, staff and leaders of St. Andrews ministries will explain more of what we believe and how we minister to our community.

We'd love to spend time with you and share what our church is all about. Please call or email the office for more information.



### Contemporary Service Band (rehearses in the sanctuary)

Do you play an instrument or sing (or do both at the same time)? Do you have a musical gift you'd like to share with St. Andrews? Do you like sleeping in past 8am? Then we are looking for you! Contemporary service is seeking musicians for both special music and new band members. Rehearsals are at 9:45am on the scheduled Sunday. If you're interested please scan the QR code and fill out the linked Google form, or email Erika Kleinert at [erika@stalc.org](mailto:erika@stalc.org).