

FISHHOOK

February 2023

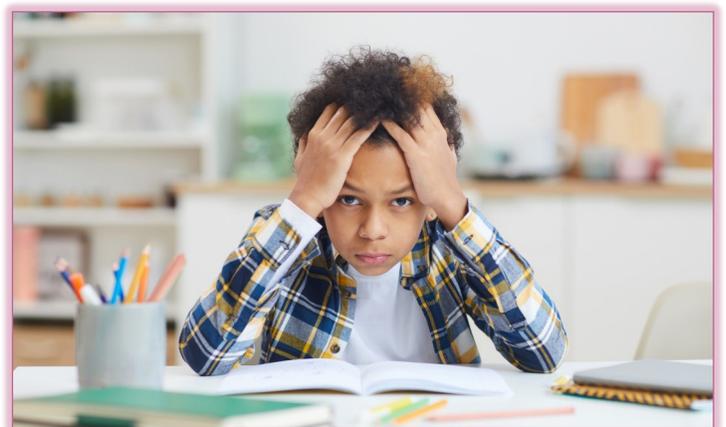
"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." — Jesus, Acts 1:8

Raising five children, I've heard a few lines repeated during my parenting. Things like:

- I don't know how
- It's too hard
- I can't do that
- I'm not big enough
- You can't make me
- Can you show me how to...

But on the more positive side:

- Let me try
- I can do it
- Look at my muscles
- I've got this
- I already know how
- Watch me do this (**continued next page**)



We have the Holy Spirit in us giving us power to share the Good News.

(continued from first page) Children learn. Children grow. Maybe we must push and prod a little (or a lot), but most eventually figure things out. They can even begin to do things better than we ever could. Guidance helps. Encouragement helps. Sometimes we walk them into the shallow end; other times we toss them in at the deep end. Some of my greatest joy in life has come from watching my children “get” how to do stuff and grow and shine in it.

I’m pretty sure our Heavenly Father gets excited when we “get” how to do stuff. I know He hasn’t left it up to chance, either. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Power from and through the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. Power with promises like:

- You can move mountains
- You’ll do even greater things than these
- Ask for anything in my name and I will grant it
- You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth

We have the Holy Spirit in us giving us the power to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those around us.

Now here’s the question: Do you respond to that reality with the statements in the first list above, or the second? You have the power. His power is His gift to you. If you have been living with the excuses found in the first list, perhaps you could consider declaring the promises of God—first to yourself, and then to others. You have received power to be His witness.

We are here to keep equipping you, encouraging you, and inspiring you to live out the hope found in Christ. We’ll be using another simple tool to do so during the season of Lent called *Thru the Bible*. Similar to *The Discipleship Journey*, it helps you guide someone through eight major themes of the Bible while also teaching you how to study the rest of it in eight short weeks.

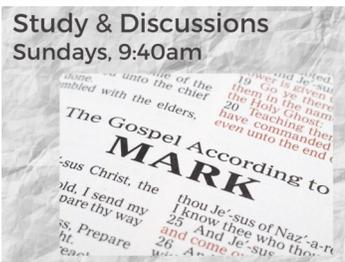
You’ve got the power.

Pastor Dan

Meeting in Groups

Gospel of Mark

Study & Discussions
Sundays, 9:40am



Charlie Johnson is leading a Bible study on the Gospel of Mark each Sunday morning at 9:40. Drop in when you can or join us each week.

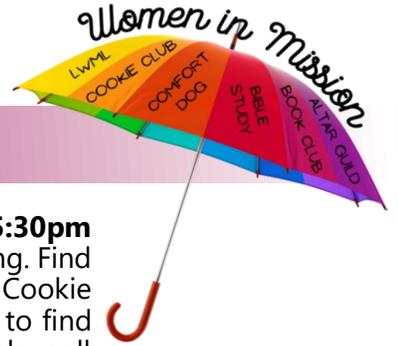
College-Age Group

On **Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm through March 15**, the college and career group will be going through a video series from John Ortberg on recognizing and exploring opportunities God has for each of us. Bring your own dinner if you like and discover doors God is opening for you!

Caring Partners

Being a caregiver or grieving the loss of a loved one can be overwhelming and exhausting. In the Caring Partners group you'll find love and support during your journey of processing and healing. Meets at St. Andrews from **12-2PM on February 16**. Pizza is provided (a couple dollar donation is appreciated).

Women in Mission



January 29 Dessert & Movie Night



Women ages 10-100 only! Join us in the fellowship hall at **5:30pm on Sunday, January 29** for a chick flick and a little pampering. Find out about The Greeting Card Club, Jewelry Crafters, Dayle's Cookie Club, St. Andrews Strollers, and other groups—you're bound to find someone who has similar interests as you! If you need a ride, call Deb Johnson at (209) 481-1570.

Bible Study

Ladies, join us on Mondays at 9am for a fascinating walk 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



Our February LWML meeting will be on Valentine's Day, Tuesday, **February 14 at 1:00pm**.

For fellowship time in February please bring up to five photos of people you love.

During journaling time, we will be including our favorite "love" Scriptures (in addition to John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 13).

We will be delivering gift bags to our preschool staff and to any homebound folks Deacon Kirk has not yet reached.

Come join us in a celebration of love!

Spring Rally

Save the date! St. Andrews is hosting: *A Spring Rally*—Theme: Emerging Faith. **Saturday, March 18, 9:00am-2:00pm**. More details to follow in the March Fishhook.

Serving Stockton and Beyond

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 your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."



Breaking news: As of this publication, Rahab is deployed in Monterey Park with four other LCC Comfort Dog teams to bring comfort and support to the community after the mass shooting on January 21. Please be praying for peace and restoration. You can follow the dogs on Facebook: [@k9comfort](#) and [@rahabcomfortdog](#)

Welcome to 2023: rain, hail, wind and tornado warnings. "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." Matthew 7:25 ESV

Team Rahab with Teams Genesis, Ruben, Micah, and Aaron attended the pre-deployment ceremony for Co C 1st Battalion 184th Infantry (California Army National Guard). The comfort dogs enjoyed spending the morning with the families and service members. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil." Ephesians 5:11 ESV

Teams Rahab, Genesis, Aaron, and Ruben with their military handlers visited the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Petaluma for a second year. Many of the Coast Guard service members are unable to go home during Christmas and New Year's, so the comfort dogs were welcomed and loved. Many of them have dogs at home they miss. One service member just held on to Rahab for more than 30 minutes. "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7 ESV



On Dec. 9, Rahab attended a Victims of Violent Crimes vigil in Stockton. There was a Christmas tree with ornaments with the names and photos of those lost to violence in and around our city. Rahab and her handler and ministry partner's hearts were broken for the families, but Rahab was able to bring comfort to them and show them how God's love is present in all things. "Finally brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you." 2 Corinthians 13:11 ESV



Rahab was invited to CAMLU Assisted Living Community in Stockton. Her first visit was received with delight! Team Rahab looks forward to visiting CAMLU in future visits. These senior citizens really embrace having a comfort dog in their facility. "Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days." Job 12:12 ESV

We continue to visit classrooms, students, and staff at Madison Elementary School. The students are really connecting with Rahab and her handler and ministry partners. So many of the families have never heard the Christmas, Easter, or other stories about Jesus, so this time with the students is a great way to plant and water the seeds. Rahab also visited August and Port City schools during December as well. "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4 ESV

St. Peter Lutheran School in Lodi has asked Team Rahab to continue visits to the school and classrooms. Rahab gets lots of great pets and hugs. The school even gave Rahab a toy for Christmas, which she enjoys during playtime. "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me." Matthew 18:4-5 ESV

Rahab brought encouragement and love to St. Andrews children as they got ready to perform their Christmas program in December. The encouragement worked as the children did a great job! "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." Romans 10:17 ESV **(continued next page)**

Rahab (continued)



Rahab's ministry is growing at University of the Pacific. She has been visiting often to give them comfort during their exams! Rahab has made so many friends and it's great to be able to show God's love to all of them. Team Micah also joined Rahab for University of the Pacific's "De-Stress Fest," giving a double dose of love to students and staff. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God."* Philippians 4:6 ESV

Rahab shares the mercy, compassion, presence, and proclamation of Jesus Christ to children, seniors, military, and crime victims. Her presence in the community is a way for St. Andrews to live out their mission statement, "Inspiring our community to live out the hope found in Christ."

We pray everyone had a wonderful Christmas and happy New Year with family and friends. Again, we are thankful for all of you! *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* Isaiah 9:6 ESV

Hosting the Homeless

SERVING STOCKTON

FamilyPromise

All are welcome to meet and discuss how we can serve the homeless of our community. We will evaluate plans and prepare for our upcoming February Family Promise rotation.

February 5, 2023, 12:15pm

Save the Date!



Mark your calendars for the not-to-be-missed Good Shepherd Talent Show, being held at St. Andrews on March 25, 12:30pm. We promise an afternoon that will bring you smiles and fun!

Family Promise Hosting Feb. 12-19



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 please call the office. We would love to see new volunteers!

- Van Driver
- Provide Dinner
- Dinner Assistant
- Evening Activities
- Homework Tutor
- Overnight Support
- Clean-up



Worship

Family Wednesday Services

Your whole family is welcome to experience the truth and joy of forgiveness this Lent and Easter season. Each Wednesday service includes a special activity to help all ages connect with our Savior's love.

Ash Wednesday, noon & 7pm: Begin the season of Lent by taking an hour to reflect on God's great forgiveness of our sins. The service includes time of confession and forgiveness, Holy Communion, and marking our foreheads with ashes to remind us that without life from the Lord, we are but dust.

Lent Midweek, Wednesdays 2/29-3/29, 7pm: Plant a seed, carry a rock, and create art to help learn more about our relationship with God. Each service includes Scripture, singing, and a message from our pastors as we continue our journey through the Bible.



Altar Flowers



We worship God with all our senses on Sunday mornings. Altar flowers are a neat way of creating a beautiful space to honor the Lord! Our 2023 sign-up sheet is in the Narthex, or call Pam in the office to choose a date.

Kids' Church

Our preschoolers through 5th graders have been having a wonder time! Here are a few photos from their classes and their Christmas pageant in December. Kids' Church meets every Sunday *except* the 4th Sunday of the month. Drop-off is at 10:35, and children join their families in the Sanctuary after the sermon for prayer and Holy Communion.



Youth

All-Church Trivia Night, February 11, 6pm

Are you a know-it-all? Prove it! Sign up a team of 6 or come on your own. The evening includes 10 rounds of different topics, each with 10 questions. BYO snacks/drinks. Tickets available for \$12.50 each (\$75 per 6-person team) after Sunday services through February 5, or call the office at (209) 957-8750. *Proceeds fund the youth mission trip to Idaho this summer.*

December Outreach Project

In December, the St. Andrews high school youth group chose to do a service project to benefit the Gospel Center Rescue Mission. We wrote two Thrivent Grants, one for hygiene items such as toothpaste, deodorant, body wash, etc., and the other so that we could make blankets.

Josie Deuel and Chloe Marlowe took the lead for the project and did all of the shopping for hygiene items and blanket materials. On a Friday night in early December the youth group met in the library and watched movies while making tied fleece blankets. Many hands and over five hours of work helped to create 25 fleece blankets!

The blankets and hygiene items were delivered to the Gospel Center Rescue Mission on December 21 to benefit the residents there.



Confirmation (H2H) & High School

Our Wednesday night gatherings will pause during Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday on February 22. Please come with your families to our Wednesday night family worship services from 7-8pm, where we'll have activities to experience more of of God's love. Read about it on page 6 of this newsletter!

Newday Preschool

We cannot believe how fast this school year is flying by! The children are growing by leaps and bounds. They are learning so much each day and it is fun to watch them flourish. In February they will learn all about God's love for them.

Please look for our new Facebook page ([@newdaystandrews](#)) to "like" and follow us. You will get to see lots of fun activities we have at our preschool.

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.



A Note to the Suicidal Christian by Len Lantz, MD*

FIRST THINGS FIRST

God does not want you to die by suicide. More specifically, Jesus doesn't want you to kill yourself. **If you are having suicidal thoughts, please connect with a professional immediately.**

No matter what you are going through right now, I want you to know that it can get better. Your difficult situation may have been going on for weeks, years, or decades. I'm telling you that it can get better, and I'm happy to tell you how. Just keep reading.

WHERE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS COME FROM

Emotional pain is a real thing. Suicidal thoughts are usually driven by an overwhelming desire to escape a situation or emotional pain. When you feel overwhelmed, it distorts your thinking to the point that you are temporarily not thinking straight. When you feel suicidal, you begin to believe lies while at the same time believing that your thoughts are entirely rational. Suicide is a permanent, destructive reaction to temporary life problems. Suicidal thoughts are most commonly driven by deep sadness, severe anxiety, and even anger/rage. Common lies in suicidal thinking are:

- I'll always feel this way.
- There's nothing I can do to change how I feel or change this situation.
- Nothing will help.
- I might as well give up.
- I'll show them! They'll be sorry!
- I'd be better off if I was dead.
- Others would be better off if I killed myself. (This is the biggest lie of all.)

I can tell you that all of the above thoughts of suicidal ideation are factually untrue. You can feel better. There are professionals willing and able to help. The people who are most harmed by suicide are the people who love you the most. If you really want to push back against the people who have hurt you, the most effective thing to do is to deal with your problems, feel better, and live the life and future that God is calling you to.

GOD CALLS US TO LIVE

God calls us to perseverance, not suicide: Killing yourself is an act of trying to force your will on God. If you've read the Bible, you'll know that forcing our will on God never works. While there is a lot of suffering in the Bible, God promises to be with us through it all. God calls us to continue and persevere through the hardships of life. *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:9-10 NIV)*

Suicide harms everyone: If you die by suicide, you will be increasing the suicide risk of everyone who knows you. Medical research shows that children and teens have a **three times higher risk of dying by suicide** if their parent dies by suicide (Wilcox, et al. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry. 2010*). Also, *if you die by suicide, you will significantly increase the risk of suicide among your other family and friends who are grieving your loss (Pitman, et al. BMJ Open. 2016).*

BUILDING A TEAM OF EXPERTS TO HELP YOU

I want you to know that depression—the most frequent cause of suicide—is *treatable*. *It is also possible to improve severe anxiety. It might take time to get better, therefore, I want to encourage you to do something important.*

Don't face these challenges alone. Get help from your church. Reach out to your physician, find a therapist, or schedule to see a psychiatrist. There are many solutions—some of them quite natural for improving depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. You don't have to feel alone or be alone as you go through difficult times, and there are excellent professionals who you could add to your team of support.

YOU CAN DEAL WITH YOUR SUICIDAL THOUGHTS IN A HEALTHY WAY

God calls on us to persevere, and he is there with us in our worst struggles. I promise you that things can get much better. *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23 NIV)*

There are many strategies for improving suicidal thoughts and the situations that drive them. If you are having powerful thoughts of suicide right now, please get professional help immediately. You can call or text 988 to reach a suicide prevention lifeline helper, call 911, or go straight to your local ER. You are unique and priceless. You are needed. Hang in there! There is hope and help for you in your darkest times.

*Excerpted from Lantz, Len. "A Note to the Suicidal Christian — The Psychiatry Resource." The Psychiatry Resource, 18 April 2022, <https://psychiatryresource.com/articles/a-note-to-the-suicidal-christian>. Accessed 25 January 2023.