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# FISHHOOK

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May 2024

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In 1 Peter 4:7, St. Peter tells us a shocking thing: "The end of all things is at hand." This is something that has been true ever since Christ ascended into heaven and promised that He is coming soon. Yet because we oftentimes do not act as if Christ is coming like a thief in the night, St. Peter continues, "therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." It's an odd thing that after addressing the fact that Christ is coming soon, St. Peter points us not towards doing some amazing thing for God, but rather he points us towards those around us.

Luther was quoted as saying that our vocations are "masks of God." He also said, "God doesn't need your works; your neighbor does."

On the surface, when we are interacting with others or when they are interacting with us, we only see people. A mother, a father, a mechanic, a waiter, a pastor. But underneath these earthly appearances, God is using these people to minister to those around us, and even to ourselves. For those who have been given faith by God, we can see this reality firsthand. For those who do not have faith, they simply go about life oblivious to God's gracious hand and the work that He does for them. **[continued on next page]**

## *Jesus wears us like a mask.*

**[continued from first page]** St. Peter echoes this point. He says, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Here at St. Andrews it is often said that we are God's family. And that is because we are! Within this blessed truth, God uses each one of us in our vocations to care for one another.

So, when we give our time in service to God's people, God is the one at work within us. When we care for others as a child, a parent, a co-worker, a citizen, God is the one who is caring for others through us. In this sense, because we have been crucified with Christ we no longer live, but it is Christ who lives in us. Jesus wears us like a mask—a disguise even—so that He may be of service to those He loves. Thus, Christ is working in our lives and it is no longer us who work, who care, who love. It is Christ, working and caring and loving through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we embark on the summer of 2024, I know that there will be times of rest and relaxation. Yet, as we continue to be fed by Christ daily, and especially on Sunday morning, remember that Christ is at work within you, even if you don't feel like it. You have been baptized, and you are God's child. Have no fear, and do not doubt: For Christ, the Risen Lord, is our God. He is the one who will continue to use us to do His great work of proclaiming His truth to the world. Amen. Come soon, Lord Jesus. Amen.

*Pastor Brian*

*Soli Deo gloria; ad maiorem Dei gloriam*

## **How Is God Leading St. Andrews?**

### **Worship and Workshop**

We've learned who the community around our church building is and what some of their needs are. We've learned ways that the congregation of St. Andrews is already showing the love of Jesus...and ways we need to grow. Now it's time to put all that information together and brainstorm how God is calling us to meet those needs. And what kind of senior pastor leadership do we need to do those things? *Everyone's voice is important*, so don't miss this discussion from **11-12:30 on May 19!** (See the back page for a post-meeting lunch idea.)

**Correction:** We will not be able to offer childcare during the discussion, but kids will have some quiet activities to do at the tables.



## From Our Interim Admin Pastor

St. Paul wrote a powerful exhortation to a young pastor named Timothy to bring encouragement no matter what he had to endure. Paul wrote these words while he was in prison: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12 KJV). An old gospel hymn used that verse as a launchpad to encourage Christians. The tune and words are flooding my memory as I type. Each stanza expresses our lack of knowledge about the mysterious work of God. (1) I do not know why God would love and redeem me. (2) I do not know how God's Word can bring saving faith and peace to me. (3) I do not understand how the Holy Spirit can work in me. (4) I do not know what "good or ill" I will encounter in this life. (5) I do not know when Jesus is coming back.

The refrain after each stanza reminds us that even if we cannot fully know the mysteries of our faith, we are fully known by God and that God is true to his Word. "But I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day."

As we move through these preparations for calling a senior pastor, I thank the Lord for your church and the faithful pastors and members who have kept alive the Gospel message on this property. You and I have the faith today because of faithful people who were dedicated to Word and Sacrament ministry. In the "Know Your Church" report, many of you responded positively to these two statements: "I know what I believe, and why I believe it" and "I have grown as a Christian since being at this church."

May the Holy Spirit continue to lead you in the process of identifying and calling the right person as the next senior pastor. Please participate in the meeting and roundtable discussion on **May 19** as we move closer in identifying the character traits and gifts you want to see in the new senior pastor. To God be the glory.

*Pastor Ron Youngdale*

## Saying Goodbye

Our wonderful office administrator, Pamela Farley, will be moving to Alaska with her husband Mark and daughter Grace at the end of this month. She has been with St. Andrews for over two years and has blessed our church with her love, hard work, organization, and good humor. Please consider calling the office or writing an email of appreciation to Pam (office@stalc.org). We wish Pam, Mark, and Grace all God's blessings in their new adventure!



## Upcoming Vote

The Mission and Ministry Council has been working hard to discern God's leading as we all work together during this time of transition. All are invited to meet at **12pm on June 9** to hear proposals for how to move forward with calling a senior pastor. Members will be asked to vote on crucial decisions for St. Andrews, so please plan on attending.

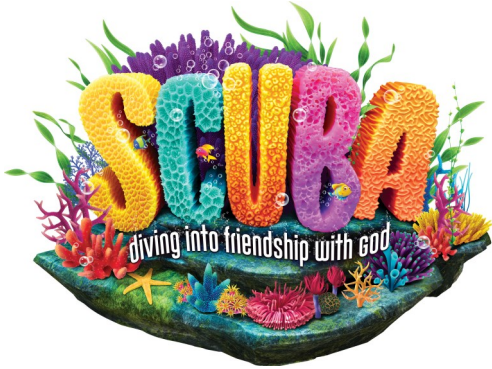
*Save the Date*

**Voter Assembly Meeting**  
**June 9, after 10:45 service**

**Approve budget and revised bylaws;  
updates on senior pastor call process.**

# Serving Stockton and Beyond

## Vacation Bible School

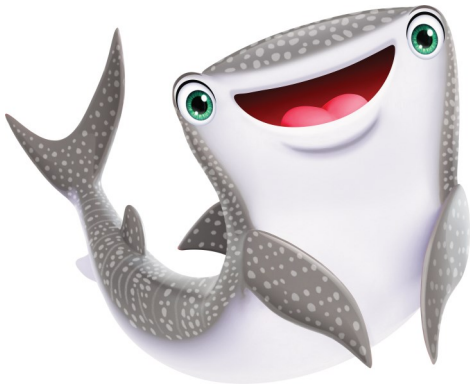


### 75+ Volunteers Needed

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

### Help Prep Crafts

Join a fun craft prep day on **May 18**, starting at 9am. All skill levels welcome!



*VBS will be here next month! We look forward to offering our community a week of free food, fun, and learning about the ever-flowing, neverending love of God. Check out these ways you can help.*



### Spread the Word!

Watch for emails and announcements about registration opening. Here are some details you can start sharing with neighbors, grandchildren, and co-workers:

**Dates: June 24-28**

**Time: 5:30-8:15pm**

**Ages: 3 years through 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Cost: FREE! (Option to purchase T-shirts)**



### 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: \$2,000 (Costco Cash donations welcome)

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*



## Rahab Comfort Dog



Rahab enjoys her walks and sniffing all the beautiful flowers that God created, especially before the rain comes! Rahab and her caregivers love all of God's creations including our church family!! *"I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing. I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing."* Ezekiel 34:26

Rahab had a chance to visit with her former top dog, Miriam Deuel, and Josie! They were in town visiting from their new home in Idaho. Rahab also spent time on Sunday during church that same week with Miriam holding the leash. A fun Sunday visiting with my church friends and my former top dog! An added bonus was enjoying the Easter lilies left over from Easter Services! *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience... And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* Colossians 3:12, 14

Midge, a friend of Rahab Comfort Dog, made her a beautiful blanket. Rahab enjoys this comfy gift, especially during the stormy, rainy weather over Easter weekend. What a nice Easter gift. *Let all that you do be done in love.* 1 Corinthians 16:14



Handlers Mike Rehbein and Cathy Pauley took Rahab to visit her friends at Oakmont of Lodi, an assisted living and memory care facility. The residents were so excited to meet Rahab and looks forward to the regular visits. Jenny, the person in charge of activities, gave the team a nice compliment. She shared that she loves having Rahab come because we are dependable. *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* Psalm 16:11

Rahab Comfort Dog and Handlers/Caregivers Mike and Ann Marie Rehbein continue to make monthly visits to Novellus Assisted Living in Stockton. Rahab has become a favorite "activity" for the residents. Many line up with their walkers, canes, or wheelchairs when the team walks through the front door. *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."* John 15:11

Rahab had a chance to play in the snow. She hasn't been around snow since her training in Chicago! After the snow day, she had a spa day and then came back to the Central Valley sunbeams! She was also blessed with new bandanas and playtime with her stuffed animal toys. *And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.* Mark 6:31



If you would like to purchase a Rahab Stuffie (stuffed animal with Rahab bandana), please email Top Dog Bobby Moore (not church staff) at [comfortcarek9@stalc.org](mailto:comfortcarek9@stalc.org). Cost is \$20 each and for every stuffie purchased, the team can buy another stuffie to give out at ministry events.



# Kids of St. Andrews

## Newday Preschool



Can you believe that the school year is coming to an end? We can't either! Only a few weeks until we say goodbye to our Pre-K class. It is always bittersweet at this time of the year as we say "goodbye" to those who have been with us since the 2's class and say "hello" to all the new students enrolled.

We have a busy and fun last month planned here at Newday. It'll start off with **Teacher Appreciation Week, May 6-10**. If you are around and see a teacher, be sure to show them how much they are loved. Our teachers go above and beyond, day in and day out, and truly are the epitome of love here at Newday.

Our Pre-K graduation will be May 17. The Pre-K class and teachers have been working tirelessly to learn their songs for their big performance.

May 22 and 23 are our end-of-school parties. We will have lots of fun and games for the children.

Newday will be closed for teacher in-service May 24-June 2. Summer program starts Monday, June 3. **Summer and fall registration is still open, but we are filling up quickly.** 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](mailto:newday@stalc.org).

## Kids' Church

Kids are having a great time learning stories from the Bible and having fun together. **Please note that during our combined worship service on May 19, Kids' Church will start at 9:50.** Class will break for the summer after May 19, so parents, please talk to Jamie if you'd like ideas for helping your kids engage during worship services!

### May Kids' Church Schedule

- ♥ Music, Crafts, Bible Stories
- ♥ Classes 3-yrs thru 5th Grade
- ♥ May 5, 12, 19\*

**Sign-in @ 10:35am. Kids join families in church for prayer & communion after class.**  
\*May 19 begins 9:50am

## Youth

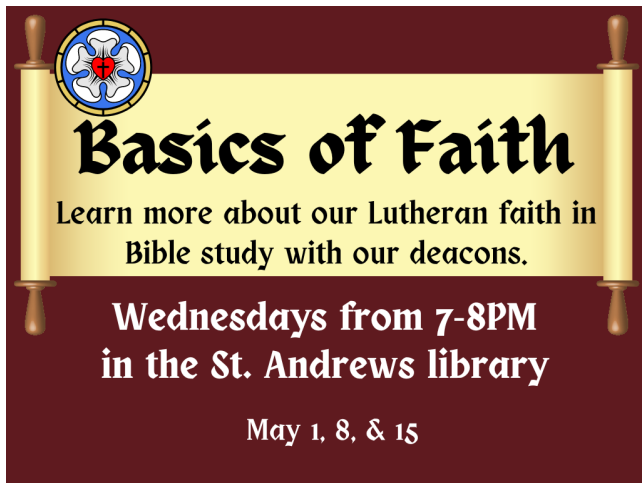


**H2H/Confirmation** will be finishing up in the middle of May this year, with our last Wednesday night being on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Those being confirmed will share their faith statements with the congregation on Mother's Day, **May 12**, at both services, and will be confirmed on **June 2**. We had a wonderful retreat working on our faith statements in April!

This summer the **high schoolers** will have a weekend retreat on **June 21-23** in lieu of a mission trip. The retreat will be held after the youth have had the option to serve in various ways around our community (more info on that to come). The retreat will be held at a cabin in Arnold and include fellowship, devotions, hiking/picnic at Calaveras Big Trees, games, and a pizza/movie night. And no need to be concerned—all involved will be back by 12:30 on Sunday to assist with VBS set up after church! Contact Pastor Brian or Bobby Moore ([bobbymoore209@gmail.com](mailto:bobbymoore209@gmail.com)) for more retreat details.

# Gathering in Groups

Did you know we have Bible studies and small groups almost every day of the week? Take a look at our website ([standrewsstockton.org/bible-studies-and-small-groups](http://standrewsstockton.org/bible-studies-and-small-groups)) for a listing of groups that meet at St. Andrews. Be sure to verify on the calendar page ([standrewsstockton.org/news](http://standrewsstockton.org/news)), since some groups may recess for the summer.



New to faith or to St. Andrews? Curious what this whole Lutheran thing is all about? This group is for you!

Our deacons will be continuing six weeks of discussions covering the following topics: Living the Christian life, living forever with Jesus, explaining the Lutheran church.

You are welcome to attend any or all of these weeks! Talk to Duane Lach for more information: (209) 715-0270



Pastor Brian, Pastor Ron, and Deacon Kirk have brought us Sunday messages on the deep generosity of God to His people.

If you'd like to talk through the questions presented in this series with a group, Pastor Brian is leading two Zoom meetings this month and would love to have you join. You can hop in during your lunch hour or settle on the couch with your cat on your lap.

Contact the church office for login instructions and mark your calendars!

## LWML

At our Lutheran Women's Missionary League meeting on **May 14 at 1pm**, we'll prep VBS crafts and elect new officers. This will be our last meeting with Deb Johnson, so come wish her well before her move to Colorado!

## Ladies' Bible Study

Join us on **Mondays at 9am** for a sweet time of Bible study and fellowship. Contact Jamie Eisenbeisz (916-230-4280) for more information. (No meeting May 27.)

## Art and Activity

Our ladies are crafting some beautiful creations and blessing people in their lives with them. Join one of these classes and discover new ways of showing someone you love them!


**Card Making** — **May 1 & 15, 1:30-3pm** in the fellowship hall. Karen Kleinert: (209) 406-9708; [hkleinert05@comcast.net](mailto:hkleinert05@comcast.net)

**Beading** — **May 7, 1:30-4:30pm** in the fellowship hall. Have fun with a diamond-painting project! Debbie Wilson: (209) 298-8451; [skydebbill@yahoo.com](mailto:skydebbill@yahoo.com)

**Walking** — Contact Joan Sykes for upcoming walks: (209) 931-0557; [jumblefromjoan@inreach.com](mailto:jumblefromjoan@inreach.com)



# Generosity at Work



**St. Andrews Coffee Cart:  
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\$3 Lattes, Mochas, Teas  
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**Open Sundays 9:45-10:45am**

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20 years



**Thank  
you!**

Thanks to your generosity, April's "Not so Noisy Offering" was a record \$347.28. You are doing a mighty work in supporting the Lutheran Women in Mission grants for 2024-2026. May God continue to richly bless the St. Andrews congregation!!!

~ Deb Johnson



## RUBIO'S FUNDRAISER FOR ST. ANDREWS LUTHERAN CHURCH

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