
FISHHOOK

December 2021 / January 2022



*At the end of the day:
Rome still ruled over Palestine.
Herod the Great (at being awful) was still “King” of the Jews.
The Shepherds were back watching their sheep.
Joseph had to figure out how to care for his family in a new city.
Mary had much to ponder (and a newborn to care for).
And the Word of God had become flesh and dwelt among us.*

For those toiling under the ignominy of Roman rule, nothing had changed. Very few people had any idea that anything would change at all. The few that did had over thirty years to wait. Rome would still be ruling, taxing, and executing in Israel for decades. Their puppet King Herod would leave a legacy of stunning edifices built across the land...and dead relatives he had murdered in his paranoid hold on his throne. One historian quipped it was safer to be a pig in Herod's household than a son. Those who would govern after him weren't any more beloved by their people than this tyrant had been. Cronyism and corruption and people using their political power for personal profit has always been, well, pretty normal.

The holy family knew something was up, but Joseph had to go find work in the days after the birth of Messiah. He would earn his bread by the sweat of his brow like every other blue collar husband and father before and after him. There would also be the time when he would flee with his wife and child to Egypt, only retuning after the death of Herod and needing to resettle once again (trying to keep his family off the radar of other tyrants).

And Mary held the hope of the ages in her arms. The long-awaited, prayed-for, sung-about, prophesied-and-preached-upon fulfillment of God's word. Who just soiled the swaddling cloths. That strikes me as being a bit incongruous, but that was Mary's daily reality moving forward.

Shepherds had been visited by angels. Had gone to see “a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord.” And they went out and told everyone they could, probably for many seasons to come. And people wondered, and hoped, and asked themselves what a bunch of lonely shepherds had really seen one evening so many moons ago. Yet the sheep needed shearing, guiding, and feeding; and each day soon became like every other.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Perhaps life being so normal keeps us from remembering how amazing this moment is. Perhaps the routines of work and rest, frustration and joy, sorrow and celebration cause us to question if anything has ever really changed. Perhaps the cycles of tyrants and tragedies and opportunities and bears and bulls and wars and peace make us wonder if there can be anything new.

Advent calls us to remember. It calls us to look forward. It calls us to the hope, faith, joy, and love found in the Savior —Messiah the Lord. It calls us to the Word made flesh, giving light, offering grace upon grace, and promising life abundant, life everlasting. It calls us to a new way of life defined not by who we think we are nor what is happening around us, but by the One who has redeemed us and made us into a new creation.

Jesus is the source and focus of Advent. He is calling to you in the normal. May His gifts fill you with hope in this season.

Pastor Dan

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.

Nurturing Children and Families

Newday Preschool



The preschool was super busy in November. The pre-k classes worked really hard learning their songs for their performance in church. We are very proud of how well they did! A big thank you goes to Ms. Rachel for helping us!

Thank you to everyone who purchased See's Candies through our fundraiser. We appreciate all the support.

The school will be closed November 22-26 for the Thanksgiving holiday, and December 20-January 3 to celebrate the Christmas season with our families.

We wish everyone a joyous holiday season and may God continue to bless you in 2022.

Sunday Cross+Gen



Cross+Gen

Have you struggled to explain yourself to someone else? You're saying words and they are listening but connection and understanding are not happening? Ever had that struggle when talking about your faith, what you believe, and why God and following God is important?

Well, you've come to the right place! Join us for Cross+Gen on Sundays at 9:45am and take the opportunity to practice speaking about and sharing your faith with others. Learn how to share your faith with multiple ages and how to encourage young ones in our congregation to articulate their faith. Join us as we pray for and bless one another and build faith relationships.

Upcoming dates and topics:

December 5:	Mary Visits Elizabeth and John the Baptist Is Born
December 12:	Simeon and Anna
January 9:	John the Baptist
January 16:	Jesus Changes Water to Wine
January 23:	Jesus Goes to Nazareth
January 30:	Teaching and Jesus Heals

Questions or thoughts to share? Contact Holly: holly.e.andersen@gmail.com OR 209.817.6984

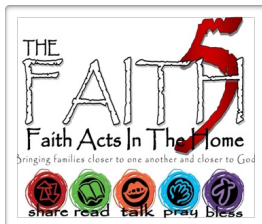
Staff Call Committee

With the departure of Tracy Krueger from our staff, we are forming a team to assess our ministry's current needs, create an updated job description for a staff position, and begin the search for qualified candidates. Members include: Bobby Moore, Bonnie Centers, Boni Hamilton, Luke Weber, and M&M President DeAnna Solina.

Tracy was qualified as a Director of Christian Education (DCE), a certified position in our church body. Most DCEs receive their training through our Concordia University system. We have the potential to recruit new DCEs from that system or consider others already serving in other congregations. Other options include those in the Deacon or Deaconess ministry with the gifts and abilities we are seeking.

Please keep the staff and call committee in prayer as we begin this process, which often takes at least 3-6 months. Ask God to bring the person he wants to St. Andrews, beginning a season of ministry with us that continues to build up our families and young people in the faith.

Faith5



Don't forget to continue the faith conversation at home! One great way is by going through the FAITH 5 every night in every home. Check out the church's Facebook each week for suggested readings, questions and blessings to use with your family and friends.

1) Share highs and lows of the day/week

Sharing your highs and lows opens communication and lets others see how they can be encouraging you and praying for you. You may start off

sharing more surface level, but hopefully over time you will grow to share things that are close to your heart.

2) Read a verse of Scripture together

Read a few verses or a story from the Bible and see how much you learn and grow.

3) Talk about how their highs and lows relate to the verse

Talk about those verses or story you read from the Bible and ask how they relate to your life. Where do you see God at work in your life or the world around you? This might also be a great time to think over your day and see if there is anything you might want to forgive or apologize for.

4) Pray for one another's highs and lows

Pray could be as simple as, "Dear God, Thank You for our highs and please be with us in our lows." Or come up with your own words as you pray for one another. Just start talking and don't forget to listen for all that God wants to share with you as well.

5) Bless one another

Blessing one another is a great way to share your hopes and dreams for another person. Let's remind one another that we are loved, valued and cared for by our God as well as by our Christian community. One way to bless each other might be, "(Name), child of God, may you know that you are loved and valued by God as well as by our small group." You might put your hand on the shoulder of the person you are blessing or make the sign of the cross on their head to remind them of their baptism.

Crossing Cambodia

Our Cross+Gen Sunday school continues to collect an offering each week to sponsor Hua through Crossing Cambodia. You can donate online through our website, choosing Crossing Cambodia as your designation, or give in person during Cross+Gen. To learn more about Crossing Cambodia check out crossingcambodia.org.



Gathering Together in Worship and Fellowship

Special Advent & Christmas Services

Advent Wednesday Services, 7pm: 12/1, 12/8, 12/15, 12/22 — *O come, O come, Emmanuel!* Gather for music, prayer, and the Word as we ready our hearts for Jesus' coming.

Christmas Eve Services, 5pm & 11pm: 12/24 — *Silent night, holy night!* The Christmas chronicle with carols and candlelight.

Christmas Day Service, 10am: 12/25 — *Come, all ye faithful!* Rejoice in our Savior's birth in song, Scripture, and Sacrament.

Combined Sunday Service, 10am: 12/26 — *For Jesus Christ is born!* Sunday morning worship with Christmas music.

Brighten Worship with Flowers



Weekly altar flowers enhance the beauty of the Sanctuary and are a great way to honor loved ones and show thankfulness.

You can order bouquets through Charter Way Florist (209-956-9087) or bring your own flowers before 8am. You'll receive a reminder and will be asked if there's a dedication message you'd like to include in the bulletin.

Sign up on the 2022 calendar in the Narthex or call the church office.

H2H (Confirmation) and High School

Wednesday night meetings will be on hiatus starting November 24th. We'll resume on Wednesday, January 5th.

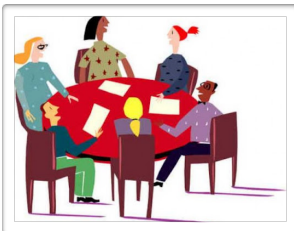
December 3rd: Movie Night!

Beginning in 2022, H2H will be covering the topic of Jesus' life as given to us in the Gospels, and H2H will finish out the year focusing on God's Word in the New Testament.

May God continue to bless our youth as they grow in their faith!

Small Groups

If you need help joining a small group, starting, or restarting a small group, we are here for you!



We have small groups ranging from traditional Bible studies to RightNow Media studies to quilting, prayer, college-age, early morning mens' group, and much more. Please find a group that meets your needs. It will truly be a gift to yourself and those around you.

We are very thankful for each small group and its leaders. Let's continue to connect as the 2021 holiday season quickly approaches and we enter into 2022. Stay tuned for more small group news as we begin the new year.

Please contact Kristin Winter at kristin@stalc.org or the church office for any small group needs or questions.

Enjoy the holiday season even more by being a part of a small group!

Women's Ministries



MOPS

Open to ALL mothers of preschoolers in our community! Please invite moms of preschoolers that 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. Most months' meetings will be the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays.

One December meeting, the 14th: 9-11am

Topic: "Imperfect Friendships" and Favorite Things Gift Exchange

January meetings on the 11th and 25th: 9-11am

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).



LWML

"Serving the Lord with gladness."

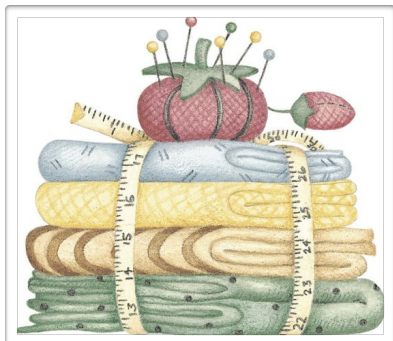
Our Christmas potluck will be held on Tuesday, December 7th at noon. All women of the congregation are invited and we encourage you to bring a friend. A hot dish or a salad would be appreciated. LWML members, please remember your Christmas stocking filled with dimes.

A special thank you to the congregation for our "noisy collection" in November. We raised \$95.61. We'll do this on the first Sunday of each month, so plan on bringing loose coins to church on December 5th and January 2nd. Your small change makes a big difference!



Women's Bible Study

Study the book of Judges each **Monday morning at 9:00** in the Fellowship Hall. *We will not be meeting December 20th or 27th.*



Prayers & Squares

Grab a needle and thread and come join us for fellowship and prayer! We make quilts for those in need of a little TLC, and we pray over them as we go. We will be taking a break for December, but will meet from 9am-1pm on January 6th and 17th. Please call Linda Kaufman for more information: (209) 406-8640

Serving Stockton and Beyond

Team Rahab



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."

Happy one-year anniversary, Team Rahab! We celebrated Rahab's first anniversary at St. Andrews on November 7th. There were treats and balloons and coffee for the congregation to enjoy as we all celebrated her ministry here in Stockton and outlying communities. Since the 2020 commissioning, we have two new ministry partners—Sue Gruber and Janice Sheen—and two ministry partners are now in college—Emily Deuel and Dustin Moore.

Rahab, along with the congregation, said farewell to Miss Tracy on Oct. 31.



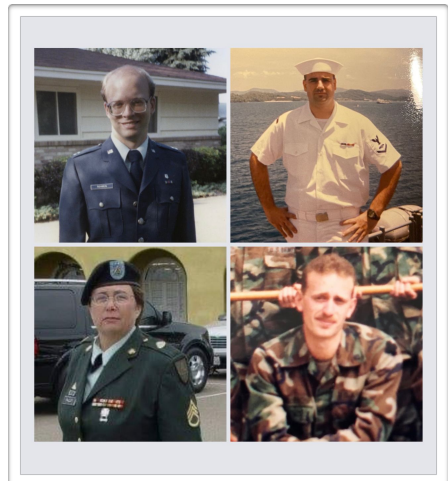
Team Rahab recognized the veterans for Veteran's Day—handler and caregiver Mike Rehbein (Air Force), handler Bobby Moore (Navy), ministry partner Jeff Kramer (Army), and ministry partner Cathy Pauley (Army Reserve).

Team Rahab offers golden retriever stuffed animals, personalized with Rahab's bandana! Each \$20 purchase gives you a stuffie *and* donates a second one to be given away at team deployments. Please contact Top Dog Deb Rider: comfortcarek9@stalc.org or (209) 817-3934

If you would like to follow Rahab on social media: Facebook - @RahabComfortDog; Instagram - @Lcck9rahab; Twitter - @LCCK9Rahab.

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Thank you for all the support you have given this amazing ministry.



Feeding the Hungry

Each month we collect a different food item to fill our church pantry, and then we give the over-abundance to the Haven of Peace Shelter for Abused Women and Children. **December is canned beans month and January is dried/canned pasta and sauce month.** Please bring cans or boxes to the food wagon in the Narthex.

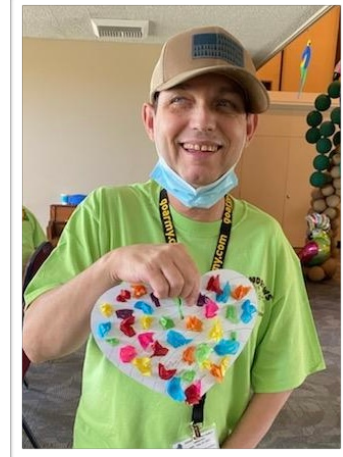
Bear Creek Water

St. Andrews continues to partner with Bear Creek Water to help provide life-saving water through recycling. 780 million people don't have access to clean water, so Bear Creek's goal is to fund the building of wells in communities throughout the world that lack clean water.



1. **Collect** your plastic bottles and aluminum cans that have a cash redemption value.
2. **Bring them** in to St. Andrews during the weekend services or during the week and drop them at the blue collection barrel near the kitchen. Bear Creek picks up all the recyclables weekly on Thursday.
3. The Bear Creek Water team will redeem the recyclables, and 100% of the proceeds goes to **SAVING LIVES** by **providing the funds to drill clean water wells**.

Good Shepherd Family



Please join Good Shepherd Family Ministry for their annual "Christmas Nativity" play on **Sat., Dec. 11, from 12:15pm to 2pm**. Enjoy hearing the amazing Christmas story through these special adults with disabilities as they act, speak, and sing.

A tamale lunch will follow the play. *Reservations not required but appreciated.* Call or text (915) 479-1060, (209) 298-5532, or (209) 298-5523.

The Good Shepherd family would like to thank the congregation for your support of this ministry and our recent Oktoberfest. Attendees said it was the best one yet! We are so grateful for your prayers, volunteering, and generous donations.

Give the Gift of a Gift!

This Christmas, why not give your children/grandchildren one less gift, and instead give them a gift card that they can give to someone else? They choose a charity that they would like the gift to go to and you donate that amount in their name.

This will remind them in a loving way that the true spirit of Christmas is celebrating the birth of Christ by giving to someone else.

The cards are in the Narthex "Postcard Holder," and all you need to do is personalize them with the name of the child you are giving it to, your name(s), and the amount of the gift.

Our Mission and Ministry

At St. Andrews, we want to inspire our community to live out the hope found in Christ. We strive to do this through abiding in Christ, acting in faith, and developing authentic relationships.

What Does Abide in Christ Mean? To Abide in Christ is to have a deep, personal connection to Him through the Holy Spirit. Our friendship with God grows through worship, prayer, time in His Word, and experiencing His grace and guidance every day as we Act in Faith. Connection with Jesus also deepens when we Develop Authentic Relationships with other believers.

Why Develop Authentic Relationships? When we Develop Authentic Relationships with other believers, we experience the trust, compassion, and forgiveness that comes from knowing Jesus. With deep friendships, we can “come as we are” and accept others for who they are, while encouraging and challenging each other to Abide in Christ and Act in Faith.

How Do We Act in Faith? Acting in faith is learning how to let the Spirit guide and empower us to do the works “God has prepared in advance for us to do.” Our faith grows through Abiding in Christ, Developing Authentic Relationships, and learning through experience that when we follow God’s leading, we can fully trust Him to provide everything we need.

Your ideas, needs, concerns, and questions are all very important to us. Please don't hesitate to contact anyone on this list. Phone numbers can be found in our church directory or by calling the church office.

DeAnna Solina	President
Clive Snedker	Vice President
Doug Wagner	Treasurer/Secretary
Tonya DeSpain	Council Member
Michael Rehbein	Council Member
Craig Santos	Council Member

Next meeting: December 20th at 6:30pm