

The Newsletter of Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church

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In October, I got an invitation from Bishop Middleton to be part of PEG (pastoral excellence groups). These groups are by invitation only and are formed by our district superintendents in each district to allow excellent pastors to meet and discuss ministry challenges and advise one another; it is a privilege to be part of this group. We meet monthly and spend 4 hours together; we have a curriculum that we are studying together and we pray for one another; each day we identify a 30-day goal that we must report the next month.

At my first meeting I was eager to share my ministry challenge. I wanted my colleagues, who had more experience than I, to advise me on to how to use my time more effectively. How can I organize so I can do more and better? How can I be the best pastor, the best wife, the best mother, the best daughter, sister, and friend in 24 hours a day.... Not much to ask, right?

Once I finished presenting, one of my colleagues asked me, "When is your Sabbath day?" To which I proudly answered, "Friday is my day off...." He looked at me and said, "When is your Sabbath day? Not day off." It was at that moment that I knew I was in trouble. Yes, I do have a day off from church work, but that day is when I do laundry, clean the house, and try to complete my never ending to-do list..... I did not have a Sabbath day. In my compulsion for perfection, I had managed to fill every second of my waking day. No wonder I was exhausted all the time.

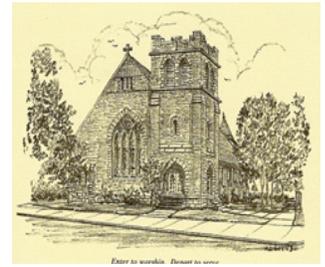


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So I made a goal. I knew going from a 0 to 24 hour Sabbath was not going to be realistic, but I could start somewhere, so I set my Sabbath to be on Fridays, from the moment I woke up until 1:00 pm. Sabbath is defined as a day set apart for rest and worship. It's a time to be with God, to replenish energies and to give thanks, just to sit at the feet of Christ in whatever way is needed.

My first Sabbath Friday arrived and I have to say it was pretty easy to do; I was exhausted so I slept pretty much all morning.

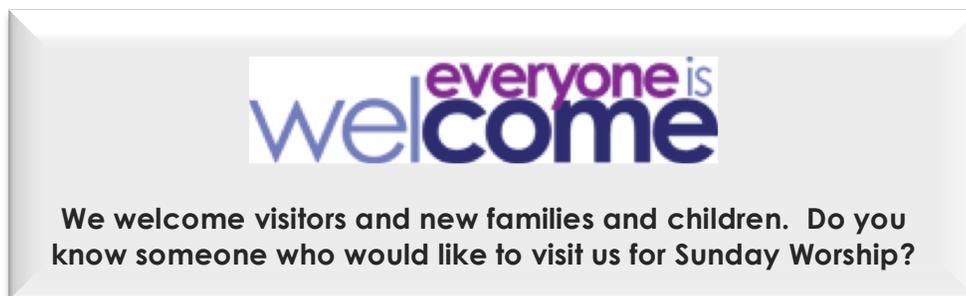
Now the second week was not as easy. I woke up early like every other day, and in no time, my head started to think on all I had to do..... Incidentally, I came across to a picture of my daughter working on Operation Christmas Child and I thought.... Let me send a quick text John Quimby and thank him for all his hard work at OCC; so I did. In a few seconds, I got a text back.... "Thank you, isn't Friday supposed to be your Sabbath day?" You see I had shared my goal with John the week before and he called me on it! John not only cared enough for me to remind me of what I was supposed to be doing, but took a risk by correcting his pastor in a loving way. What a gift! I felt silly at myself for not keeping my Sabbath day, but I felt blessed I have people around me that care enough about me to make me accountable.

You see, that is the blessing of ministry together. God in his amazing wisdom meant for us to walk this journey of faith together. God put in our path people that we can learn from, people who learn from us, and people who can make us accountable to do what is right.

I know in January we all look back to the previous year and embark on new resolutions. My hope is that this includes your spiritual life. What is it that you need to do better this year? Do you need to set a Sabbath day? Do you need to enhance your prayer life? Maybe you need to come back to Sunday service? Or join our Bible study class? Whatever it is, let me tell you, I know you can do it! Even more, you are in luck because you have a whole community willing to travel this journey with you. Once you decide what your goal is, then tell your brothers and sisters in Christ so we can pray for you and help you to keep you accountable for it.

I continue my efforts to keep my Sabbath day, as I know that it is not only a commandment from God, but that it is good for me physically, emotionally and spiritually, and I know all of you will keep me accountable! And I give thanks to God for that.

Ximena



IMPORTANT NEWS



We serve God by serving others; here is what you can do:

Connectional giving — Connectional giving — all of us giving together — allows United Methodists to do together what we cannot do alone. We join in with United Methodist around the world in 6 special collections through the year. The money collected goes 100% to a specific mission designated by the general church. For more information go to UMCGIVING.com. Our Next collection is January 17, 2016 Human Relations Day.

Every first Sunday you can donate to the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund**; this money is used by the pastor to help with immediate needs in the community.



Food Pantry

Donations Needed **Food Pantry Collection**, non-perishable items are collected during the month. Every first Sunday of each month all the collected food items will be taken and be delivered to a local food pantry. Fall and winter months are always difficult and food pantries are always empty!



With your donations we were able to join our district in **PROJECT CLEAN WATER FOR NICARAGUANS**. ACCION MEDICA CRISTIANA (AMC) is a Nicaraguan faith-based, nongovernmental organization and one of the country's leading health and development agencies. AMC, as a partner of the United Methodist Church, is an approved Advance Project # 14846A and a Volunteer Host Partner. Since the development of Filtron ceramic filters in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch (1998), AMC has had ample experience in distributing the appropriate technology to communities in the Caribbean Regions. It is anticipated that the ceramic filters will not only improve the quality of drinking water for these households but will have a direct impact on the prevention of water and food-borne diseases, improved nutrition and better health for these families. Our church sent the money for 3 families! Praise God.

Remember!

Clean Up day every First Saturday of the month

Rhythms of Grace worship Service, January 18, 2016 & February 22, 2016 at 5:30pm

Administrative Church Council January 5, 2016 7:00pm at the parsonage

Pastor away at Bishop Convocation from January 12 to 14, 2016

District resourcing days: Sunday, January 31 Westport UMC 49 Weston Road, Westport, CT 06880 2:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

CT District UMW will hold their Winter Gathering at First UMC Shelton on Feb 6. For details and the registration form, please talk to the pastor

Saturday, February 6: Woodbury UMC 4 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798 9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Ash Wednesday: February 10, 2016 service at 12:00pm and 6:00pm



Are you interested in becoming a member of our church, or do you want to learn more about us?

Please contact the pastor!

MORE IMPORTANT NEWS



The mission of The United Methodist Church is to “Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 22:36-40). This mission is achieved through vital congregations that equip and empower people to be disciples of Jesus Christ in their homes and communities around the world.

Our Vital Signs

The Vital Signs Dashboard is a tool developed by Brick River through GCFA. This tool allows you to track your weekly worship attendance, professions of faith, small group participation, missional participation and financial giving for your congregation. It is a tool designed to help congregations follow their progress on the goals that they set for each year, based on the goal-setting challenge initiated by the Vital Congregations work. It is in response to the Call To Action to focus on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in the mission of The United Methodist Church.

Date	Worship Attendance	Small Groups Attendance (week)	Pledges & Offerings	Charitable Giving	New Members
12/13/15	40	15	861	0	0
12/6/15	44	17	1255	132	0
11/29/15	47	0	1031	28	0
11/22/15	41	15	565	0	0
11/15/15	46	29	1034	82	0
11/8/15	30	13	1096	126	0
11/1/15	53	7	1349	279	0



Children 4 years old and older are invited to join Sunday school class the second, third and fourth Sunday of each month. Nursery available for Children under 4 years old.



Youth Group will start meeting again in January 2016. Dates will be announced soon!

Image taken from: © 2015 Fun At Church - Wordpress Theme by Kadence Themes



Join us for Bible Studies each week! We are switching the class to TUESDAYS at 6:00pm in the parsonage starting January 19. Our Class meets for 1 hour to learn together and pray for one another. **ALL ARE WELCOME.**



Once again this year, Saint Andrew's was a sponsor for Operation Christmas Child -- also known as the "Shoebbox" program. Our challenge was to fill 60 boxes (10 more than the last couple of years) and provide the \$7.00 shipping cost for each one.

This program is a longtime project of Samaritan's Purse, an organization providing help for people around the USA and worldwide. Shoebboxes filled with personal hygiene items, candy, school supplies and more were sent to over 9 million children in 112 countries last year. Since 1993 Operation Christmas Child has reached more than 124 million children in over 150 countries and territories – almost three quarters of all countries in the world. In 2015, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect enough shoebox gifts to reach another 11 million children. Shoebbox gifts are collected in the U.S., Australia, Finland, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Canada, Spain and the UK. More than 500,000 volunteers worldwide, with more than 100,000 in the United States, are involved in collecting, chipping, and distributing shoebox gifts. The United States has eight processing centers to help get all those boxes ready to send to the children. More than 4.7 million children have participated in The Greatest Journey, the follow-up program that is offered to many children who receive shoebox gifts. The Greatest Journey is implemented through a global church network to help children learn how to know and follow Jesus.

On behalf of my family and all those children that will receive our boxes we want to thank you to all of the people that donated money and gifts to this program. We raised enough money to support the shipping of all 60 boxes. We also received 3 boxes from a small Girl Scout Troop which made the total of 63 boxes. We fell short on certain items, as we have in past years, but through God's blessing, and additional monetary donations we were able to purchase the items we needed to complete the boxes. I hope the "boxing party" we had was fun for all. It certainly saved a lot of time for my family packing them. Next year I'd like to have 2 "boxing parties" and if everyone that is able to help out again it should be even smoother. I challenged the church to up our goal from the 50 boxes and you responded with the passion this church has. I'd like to challenge the church to up our 60 boxes this year to 70 next year. Please help us meet this goal and you can start now by purchasing items at after Christmas sales. I know I will be looking for those deals as I do my shopping.

Thank you again and God Bless you all.

John, Jocelyn and John M. Quimby



December 17th 2015



(L to R) John M. Quimby, 2 Workers, Pastor Bob (Gateway Bible Church), another Worker



Dear St. Andrew's United Methodist Church family,

I've been selected to take part in UB's Norge W. Jerome Alternative Spring Break service trip from March 12th 2016 to March 20th 2016. I'll be spending my spring break in Haiti working closely with youth affected by poverty, homelessness and gang violence in an attempt to spread love, hope and peace throughout their communities. During the week, I hope to complete several projects with at-risk youth of Haiti including planting a tree, building a latrine and building a house. I may be able to complete all of these projects (and more!) depending on how much money I'm able to fundraise before March.

The trip is mostly funded through generous donations from UB and surrounding communities. I have a personal deposit fee of \$300 that's due on January 20th 2016. If you're able and willing to donate any amount in support of me on my journey to Haiti I would truly appreciate it. All donations may go out to Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church with "Nicole's Haiti Trip" in memo. The church will later send one check to UB with the total amount.

Community service is more than just making physical change throughout communities, but provoking change within people (especially youth) living in those communities, and that's what I hope to do through this service trip to Haiti.

The entire UB Alternative Spring Break group, which consists of 15 members (including me), must raise \$20,000. If you're feeling generous enough to help out as a whole ASB would greatly appreciate it! We're working with Mission of Hope Haiti. You can find the agency online for more information.

Kindly,

Nicole Morales

Journal of John Wesley

Week 1: January 3rd: In 2016 we will be starting a short newsletter study about John Wesley (1703-1791) the founder of the Methodist movement. He was English born and during his adult years preached more than 1,000 sermons every year and travelled on horseback more than 8,000 miles each year. He visited the most out-of-the-way districts of England again and again saying the world was his parish. He came from a family of 19 children (13 died as infants or very young). He was "plucked as a brand from a fire" at an early age when his home at Epworth burned to the ground. Samuel and Susanna Annesley Wesley, his parents, both came from a heritage of clergy so Wesley was well educated in religious practices of the times. He was considered a scholar and a gentleman, received a sound classical education -- home schooled by Susanna and then Oxford University. It was never his intention to found a new denomination. His greatest desire was only to share the gospel message with everyone he met.

He was a prolific writer. Wesley's journals comprise 26 volumes and have never been printed. (Four were published and are still in print today.) He was "one of the most strenuous ethical figures in history, and literature has none other such record of personal endeavor as that contained" in his journals. We would like to share some excerpts from his writings with you and hope you will learn and understand a little better how Wesley lived out his life in his service to Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior.

Each week there will be a short excerpt for you to read and a study question for you to think about. It is a great opportunity to explore the roots of Methodism and how Wesley's practice of 'religion' has continued over the centuries or maybe how has Wesley's practices changed.

Our first excerpt describes the calling of God on Wesley's life. Date of journal entry---Tuesday October 14, 1735. Wesley and his brother Charles set sail to Georgia from their native England--- Wesley's reason to go was "not to avoid want ---nor to gain the dung or dross of riches or honor; but singly this--- to save our souls; to live wholly to the glory of God."

Question for the week: Do we as Methodists today live wholly to the glory of God?

Week 2: January 10th: Date of journal entry: October 21st, Tuesday 1735. Here we learn about 'the method' Wesley practiced while on ship--- what his normal, regular day would look like. "From four in the morning till five each of us used private prayer. From five to seven we read the Bible together. At seven we breakfasted. At eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve was time for personal study. (Wesley learned German---Charles wrote sermons.) At twelve we met to give account to one another what we had done since our last meeting and what we designed to do before our next. About one we dined. From the time of dinner to four we read to those whom each of us had taken in charge. At four were evening prayers where the children were catechized and instructed before the congregation. From five to six we again used private prayer. From six to seven I read in my cabin. At seven I joined the public prayer service. At eight we met to exhort and instruct one another. Between nine and ten we went to bed."

Question for the week: Just how disciplined are we in our service to Christ?

WEEK 3: January 17th: Wesley, after numerous storms at sea and discovering he was afraid to die finally arrived in Savannah, Georgia where he had this conversation with a German pastor (a Moravian) he met onboard ship.

Date of journal entry: Saturday, 7--- Moravian Pastor: "My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Do you know Jesus Christ?" Wesley paused and said, "I know He is the Savior of the world." "True." replied the pastor; "But do you know He has saved you?" Wesley answered, "I hope he has died to save me." The pastor added, "Do you know yourself?" Wesley said, "I do." But he feared they were vain words."

Question for the week: Do you doubt your salvation? What would you answer if asked these questions?

Week 4: January 24th: Wesley, now in his Georgia surroundings, has an interview with Chicali, a gray haired old man, the Chief Indian---a savage. They discuss the 'Good Book'.

Date of journal entry: Thursday July 1, 1735-- Wesley: "If red men will learn the Good Book, they may know as much as white men. But neither we nor you can understand that Book unless we are taught by Him that is above; and He will not teach unless you avoid what you already know is not good." Chief: "I believe that. He will not teach us while our hearts are not white. And our men do what they know is not good: they kill their own children. And our women do what they know is not good: they kill the child before it is born. Therefore He that is above does not send us the Good Book."

Question for the week: Even the most uneducated and possibly savage human beings, within the depths of their hearts, have a God given gift of knowing what is right and/or wrong. Do we as practicing Methodists and more so as followers of Christ, choose right over wrong?

Week 5: January 31st: After leaving Georgia being home bound for England, Wesley says his farewell to America and begins to witness and minister to those aboard the ship.

Date of journal entry: Monday December 26, 1736 and Saturday January 7, 1737--"I began instructing a Negro lad in the principles of Christianity. I began to read and explain some passages to the young Negro. The next morning another Negro who was on board desired to be a hearer too. From them I went to the poor Frenchman, who understanding no English, had none else in the ship with whom he could converse. And from this time, I read and explained to him a chapter in the Testament every morning."

Question for the week: If Wesley shared the Word without exception, why do we hesitate to tell everyone about the saving work of Christ and the Cross?

Week 6: February 7th: Although Wesley shared the 'Word' with everyone on the ship, he was also once again fighting fear of death and dealing with doubts whether the gospel was true. On January 24, 1738 he wrote, "I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh! Who shall convert me? Who, what is He that will deliver me from this evil heart of mischief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say to die is gain."

Wesley answers his own questioning in the same entry. "Be still and go on. Perhaps this is best, to look upon it as my cross; when it comes, to let it humble me and quicken all my good resolutions, especially that of praying without ceasing and at other times to take no thought about it but quietly go on in the work of the Lord."

Week 7: February 14th: Just like God sends people to help us in our needs, Peter Bohler, a Moravian, was sent to Wesley to help him. These entries record a conversation between them.

Date of journal entry: Saturday February 18, 1738 "At this time I conversed much with Peter Bohler, but I understood him not; and least of all when he said, "My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away."

Saturday, March 4th: Wesley, clearly convinced of his own unbelief, of the want of faith whereby alone we are saved writes: "Immediately it struck into my mind, Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?" I asked Bohler whether I should leave it off or not. He answered, "By no means." I asked, "But what can I preach?" Bohler replied, "Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith."

Monday March 6th: Wesley "began to preach this new doctrine."

Question for the week: Do we have the assurance that we have salvation by faith alone in the blood of Jesus?

Week 8: February 21st: Continuing from Wesley's 'new doctrine' of preaching faith, on Wednesday May 24th Wesley knew without any doubt that he was accepted in the beloved. Early that morning in his 5:00 a.m. prayer time, the Lord gave him two scriptures: "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4) and "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." (Mark 12:34) Later that afternoon he preached at St. Paul's and the anthem that was sung directly spoke to his soul about God's mercy and redemption. Then he unwillingly went to Aldersgate Society that evening. It was in this place, about quarter to nine in the evening, that he felt his heart "strangely warmed". He writes, "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Question for the week: Do you know without any hesitation that Jesus has taken away ALL your sins and that you are accepted in the beloved? If you have any questions, please talk with Pastor Ximena. She is always available to answer any questions and to help you in your journey of discipleship.

Week 9: Feb 28th: Up to this time, Wesley had confined his preaching to numerous churches (most asked him never to return). But on March 15, 1739 Wesley made the decision to leave his brother Charles in London and to go to Bristol. In his own words Wesley writes, "In the evening I reached Bristol and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me and example on Sunday. I had been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious at every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church."

Question for the week: Are you stuck as Wesley was? Are you open to change even if it means you might be uncomfortable? Are you willing to give up something old for something new? It could, as it did for Wesley, make not only a difference in the world but the whole world different.

Worship Series Season after Epiphany
(The Holy Spirits reserves the right to change things as the Spirit moves)

The Season after the Epiphany is a season of Ordinary Time, which includes four to nine Sundays, depending on the date of Easter. It is called "ordinary" because its Sundays are given ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc.) after the Feast of Epiphany. It stands between the two great Christological cycles of Advent-Christmas- Epiphany and Lent-Easter-Pentecost. Its central theme is the calling of disciples and the early ministry of Jesus. The First Sunday focuses on the Baptism of Christ and the Last Sunday on the Transfiguration.

First Sunday after the Epiphany- 1/10/16

Baptism of the Lord

Scriptures

Isaiah 34:1-7

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Second Sunday after the Epiphany -1/17/16

Human Relations Day/ Martin Luther King Day

Scriptures

Isaiah 62:1-15

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Third Sunday after the Epiphany -1/24/16

Scriptures

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Third Sunday after the Epiphany -1/31/16

Scriptures

Jeremiah 1:4-10

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Transfiguration Sunday-2/7/16

Scriptures

Exodus 34:29-35

Luke 9:28-36

Lent Sermon Series: The Way

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. - Isaiah 43: 19

Lent is a time of reflection and there's nothing like a pilgrimage to conjure that up. Inspired by passages in the scriptures that talk about the journeys, roads and pathways of life, we will make our "way" together through this poignant season.

The Wandering Way- 2/14/16

First Sunday of Lent

After Jesus' baptism, he went on a pilgrimage into the wilderness. A common practice among spiritual leaders of his day, this was a time to dig deep into the humanity of his soul. Along the way he encounters what we all encounter along the paths of life—temptations to stray from the path that God has intended for us. But "all who wander are not lost"—for it is in the wandering that we find our true selves.

Scriptures

Psalm 91 1-2,9-16

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

The Way Around- 2/21/16

Second Sunday of Lent

We are not always understood. Jesus found this out, just like so many others whose closest family, friends and neighbors have created an idea of who we are and cannot imagine the possibilities God has called us to. Sometimes we must go ahead and do what we dream, claiming who we know we are, taking the way around what others think we ought to do and be.

Scriptures

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13:31-35

The High Way- 2/28/16

We are taught that everything costs. But our ways are not God's ways. There are higher ways. We are all invited, without price, to the table of God's grace. This is the high way that we are invited to embody to others. Hospitality is the way... even though we do not agree on everything, we are still one family at one table.

Scriptures

Psalm 63:1-8

Isaiah 55:1-9

Luke 13:1-9

The Way Home- 3/6/16

No matter what we call "home" in this physical world, we yearn for a spiritual home within that offers serenity, acceptance, and belonging. The extravagant acceptance of the father for the son in Jesus' parable of the wandering son is difficult for us to believe sometimes... that no matter what we have done, who we are, how far we are from what we want to become, and we are welcomed home by the Loving Parent.

Scriptures

Psalm 32

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Luke 15:1-13,11b-32

**Join us for Ash Wednesday on
February 10, 2016
services at 12:00pm and 6:00pm**



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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

JANUARY

- 02 Charlton Tobias
- 18 Jim Copeland
- 19 Briannah Morales
- 26 Angelique Smith
- 29 Brenda Herrmann

FEBRUARY

- 09 Ralph Pickup
- 09 Carmen Tobias
- 10 Lucille Clancy
- 14 Adrienne Goodson
- 14 John Michael Quimby
- 23 Brenda Burgos
- 25 Irene Diaz

Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church

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January/February 2016

