

November 2014

Issue 59

# Saint Andrew's Messenger

The Newsletter of Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church



*"I am a witness."*

I am a witness. I am here to share with you I am a witness of God's love and Grace. I am a witness of his miracles and wonders. I am not just saying that because I have to say it as your pastor but because I am a witness.

This weekend alone I have observed two miracles!

I sat in awe looking at my son perform in his college theatrical production. My shy 21 year old son, on stage, in complete control of himself, overcoming one of his major fears, and giving an outstanding performance. What is the big deal you may ask? Kids do this all the time right? And all the time you have parents bragging about it! As I sat in that theater, I saw the 8 year old that I used to hug each time he had a panic attack. The same little child that once was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, a social disorder, making his childhood a very difficult one. That child that I was told by specialists he would never be able to do such a thing as stand and perform 5 shows for a full house. That child, my child, had conquered all prognoses and stands tall. I am a witness of God's love and Grace and transformative power. Moses still has Asperger's but Asperger does not have him; as a young man of faith he gave his trust and struggles to his Creator who has helped him to accomplish everything he put his mind to.

I AM A Witness of God's transformational power and Grace.

My second story started with the news that my youngest uncle had been sick with kidney stones. Painful, awful kidney stones that came out of nowhere and disturbed his life... how dare they! To come without notice making him feel miserable. That little, annoying stone made the doctor do tests that otherwise would not have been done, and discover a tumor on his other kidney. Within a week, a speed that is surprisingly fast for the health care system in Chile, he was operated on to remove the tumor, which we now know was cancer, but was caught just in time. No other places, no nodules compromised, just the one tumor.

I am a witness of God's love and Grace. For I know my dear uncle still has a long road of recovery, God is walking this journey with him and with us every step of the way.

I am a witness, I am here to share with you that I am a witness of God's love and Grace, and each and every day I give Thanks to God that I am never alone in the difficult times, in the scary times, in the sad times.

And this Thanksgiving once again I will sit at the table with my family to celebrate all the blessings we have received, for I am a witness of God's love and Grace. It is my prayer that you will also be a bold witness of God's Love and Grace, and that you will share your good news with all that you may encounter.

Happy Thanksgivings!

Ximena Varas, Pastor



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## Remembering Our Saints



Lois Anderson  
Walter Barker  
Phyllis Boyd  
Evelyn Cerrotti  
Dolores Cerrotti  
Edward Green  
Helen Law  
Florence Wynne  
Shirley Paule  
Flora Peasco  
Blanche Wade  
Mary Ellen Morrison  
Bill Lawson  
Julia Lawson

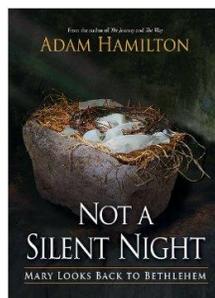
### A Prayer Meditation for All Saints Day

by Safiyah Fosua

We give you thanks, O God, for all the saints who ever worshiped you whether in brush arbors or cathedrals, weathered wooden churches or crumbling cement meeting houses where your name was lifted and adored. We give you thanks, O God, for hands lifted in praise: Manicured hands and hands stained with grease or soil, strong hands and those gnarled with age Holy hands Used as wave offerings across the land. We thank you, God, for hardworking saints; whether hard-hatted or steel-booted, head ragged or aproned, Blue-collared or three-piece-suited. They left their mark on the earth for you, for us, for our children to come. Thank you, God, for the tremendous sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.

*Starting October 30th at 7:00pm. Join us every Thursday night (except Thanksgivings week) for fellowship and learning.*

## Adult Christian Education



### Not a Silent Night by Adam Hamilton

Imagine Jesus from Mary's point of view—proud of her son, in awe of his gifts and mission, guided by love for him as a person and so much more. In this book, Adam Hamilton begins at the end, with Mary at the crucifixion and resurrection; travels back in time as she witnesses his life and ministry; and ends at the beginning, with the Christ child born in a stable, Mary's beautiful baby. This year, experience Advent and Christmas with Mary.

The five sessions are:

1. Beginning with the End
2. The Piercing of Mary's Soul
3. Amazed, Astounded, and Astonished
4. Mary, Full of Grace
5. It Was Not a Silent Night



### Saint Andrew's UMC Annual Conference

Tuesday November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 7:30pm. Join us to celebrate all that God has done for us and within us this pass year. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

## Bottles & Cans Drive



Did you know that in 12 years we have collected and process 235,660 cans and bottles and we have collected \$11,783.00? This money helps us to cover the cost of fellowship supplies, office supplies and others. Bring your cans and bottles and we will recycle them.

## Food Pantry



Every first Sunday of each month all the collected food items will be taken and be delivered to the Branford Food Pantry. Help us feed HIS sheep!

## Altar Flowers



Are you celebrating a special occasion or do you want to honor or remember someone special in your life? Bring flowers to our altar on Sunday mornings and we will all remember with you and give thanks to God for the occasion and the person you are remembering.

Altar Flower sing up will be located at the welcome table, write a short description of the reason you will be bringing flowers that day.



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.

#### **Vital congregations are:**

- Spirit-filled, forward-leaning communities of believers that welcome all people (Gal.3:28)
- Places where disciples of Jesus Christ are made through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20)
- Communities that serve like Christ through justice and mercy ministries (Micah 6:8, Luke 4:17-21)

#### **Vital congregations have:**

- Inviting and inspiring worship
- Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
- Gifted, empowered and equipped lay leadership
- Effective, equipped and inspired clergy leadership
- Small Group ministries
- Strong children’s & youth ministries

#### **Our VitalSigns**

The VitalSigns 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 upon 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	Pledges & Offerings	Charitable Giving*	New Members
10/19/2014	48	18	\$1415	\$7	0
10/12/2014	41	16	\$627	\$7	0
10/5/2014	48	9	\$4037	\$181	0
9/28/2014	39	20	\$800	0	0
9/21/2014	38	21	\$885	0	0
9/14/2014	40	0	\$553	\$267	0
9/7/2014	47	0	\$1083	0	0
8/31/2014	42	0	\$3824	0	0
8/24/2014	35	0	\$900	0	0
8/17/2014	44	0	\$743	0	0
8/10/2014	46	0	\$1559	0	0
8/3/2014	35	0	\$3726	0	0
7/27/2014	39	0	\$584	0	0
7/20/2014	30	0	\$661	0	0
7/13/2014	43	0	\$732	0	0
7/6/2014	49	0	\$3992	0	0

\*Operation Christmas Child and World Communion Sunday collections



Interested on  
become a member  
of Saint Andrew's  
UMC?  
Speak with the  
pastor

**“Why bother with church membership?”** Adapted from article written by Kevin DeYoung

I get that question a lot. Sometimes it's said with genuine curiosity—"So explain to me what membership is all about." Other times it's said with a tinge of suspicion—"So tell me again, why do you think I should become a member?"—as if joining the church automatically signed you up to tithe by direct deposit.

I think for many people membership sounds stiff, something you have at your bank or the country club, but too formal for the church. Even if it's agreed that Christianity is not a lone ranger religion, that we need community and fellowship with other Christians, we still bristle at the thought of officially joining a church. Why all the hoops and classification? Why box the Holy Spirit into member/non-member categories?

Well, believe it or not, membership matters. In addition to some very tangible benefits to membership (for example, only members can hold church office), here's five good reasons why Christians should join a church.

1. In joining a church you make visible your commitment to Christ and his people. Membership is one way to raise the flag of faith. You state before God and others that you are part of this local body of believers. It's easy to talk in glowing terms about the invisible church—the body of all believers near and far, living and dead—but it's in the visible church that God expects you to live out your faith.
2. Making a Church commitment makes a powerful statement in a low-commitment culture. Most bowling leagues require more of their members than most churches. Joining a church in such an environment makes a counter-cultural statement. It says "I am committed to this group of people and they are committed to me. I am here to give, more than get."
3. Church membership keeps us accountable to each other. When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are saying, "I am here to stay. I want to help you grow in godliness. Will you help me to do the same?"
4. Joining the church will help your pastor be more faithful shepherds. We take seriously our responsibility before God to watch over your souls. It's nearly impossible to shepherd the flock when we don't know who really considers this their flock and really considers us their shepherds.
5. Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make promises. When you become a member here, you make promises to participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness, and in so doing, invite the rest of the body to hold you to these promises—which would be missing out on great spiritual benefit, for you and for us. Think about why membership might matter more than you thought. And if you are looking to make a counter-cultural commitment and invite more accountability and responsibility into your life, why not join our church?

## November-December Worship Schedule

The Holy Spirit reserves the right to change this schedule as the Spirit moves.

### 02 NOVEMBER

All Saints Sunday

Scriptures:

Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm 34:1-10, 22 (UMH 769)

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

### 09 NOVEMBER

Twenty-Second Sunday after

Pentecost

Organ and Tissue Donor

Sunday/International Day of Prayer  
for the Persecuted Church

Scriptures:

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

### 16 NOVEMBER

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost

Scriptures:

Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

### 23 NOVEMBER

Christ the King or Reign of Christ

/bible Day

Scriptures:

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25:31-46

### ADVENT SERMON SERIES:

#### HERE IS OUR GOD

"Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!'" -- Isaiah 40:9

In this season of Advent we will herald the presence of God—the incarnation of the Holy—as evidenced in people, in the world, in the work for justice, in all generations, in the light, and in the Christ Child. We will lift our voices in praise for we believe what the scriptures tell us: "do not be afraid, I am with you."

Nov-Dec Worship Schedule continued...

### 30 NOVEMBER

First Sunday of Advent/*United  
Methodist Student Day*

God in the People: We Are All the  
Work of Your Hand

This Sunday introduces our theme and affirms that God is incarnate in the people. As Isaiah writes, "You are our potter, we are the clay; we are the work of your hand." When we "keep awake," as Mark admonishes, we are able to know God's nearness.

Scriptures:

Isaiah 64: 1-9

Mark 13:24-37

### 7 DECEMBER

Second Sunday of Advent  
God in the World: A New Heaven  
and a New Earth

The incarnation of the Holy happens each day. Events happen that speak of God's presence renewing us and moving us toward God's reign, "where righteousness is home," as 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter proclaims. What do we see in the world that affirms that there is away being prepared in the wilderness? This is communion Sunday and the table is a sign of a new heaven and a new earth.

Scriptures:

*Isaiah 40 1:11*

*2 Peter 3:8-15a*

### 14 DECEMBER

Third Sunday of Advent  
God in the Lowly: Looked upon with  
Favor

The Spirit of God is poured out upon all, anointing us to bring good news to the oppressed. "Those who go out weeping... shall come home with shouts of joy," says the Psalm. We hear Mary's magnificent this day—a song of joy and prophecy from a woman facing great challenge yet looked upon with favor by God. We acknowledge Christ's presence among the poor and recommit to "filling the hungry with good things."

Scriptures:

Isaiah 61:1-4 8-11

Luke 1:46-55

Nov-Dec Worship Schedule continued...

### 21 DECEMBER

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
God in the House: for all Generations

The ancient Hebrew writers spoke of God's covenant to build the people "a house." God's house—God's reign—is built in us from generation to generation. This day we praise God for the Holy incarnate in all generations of our community. The children, youth and chancel choirs and drama teams lead the congregation in praise and prayer.

Scriptures:

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

Romans 16:25-27

### 24 DECEMBER

Christmas Eve  
God in the Light: Do Not Be Afraid

We are no longer a people without light for "those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined." Light shone on a little town where an unlikely Savior was born—the incarnation of God in the flesh. We too walk in the light and so there is no fear for God is truly with us. Emmanuel!

Scriptures:

Isaiah 40:1-11

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

### 28 DECEMBER

First Sunday after Christmas Day  
God in the Child: Heirs to the Kin-dom

"You shall be called by a new name..." Isaiah declares that something new is being born. Indeed, as we continue to celebrate the presence of God in the new-born child, we affirm our own freedom and adoption in Christ—"you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God" says Galatians. We finish our "Here is Our God" series.

Scriptures:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Luke 2:22-40

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**Happy Birthday!**



**November**

- 11 Yvonne Lynch
- 15 Karl Derbacker
- 18 Ireland Miessau
- 26 Guillermo Morales

**December**

- 01 Joey Guthrie
- 02 Kim O'Hara-Penna
- 05 Addison Penna
- 12 Lois McDonald
- 12 Leanna Guthrie
- 14 Ximena A. Varas
- 14 Taylor Miessau
- 19 Morris Pennington

**Welcome!**

We welcome visitors and new families and children.

Do you know someone who would like to visit us for Sunday Worship

**Special Dates**

**November 18** at 7:30pm: Saint Andrew's UMC Annual Conference

**November 2:** Daylight Savings Time Ends

**November 3:** Election Day

**November 11:** Veterans Day

**November 27:** Thanksgiving

**December 24:** Christmas Eve

**December 25:** Christmas Day

**December 31:** New Year's Ev

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**November**

