

# Saint Andrew's UMC Newsletter

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*In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." Matthew 2:1-12*

They were distinguished foreigners who visited Jesus. They came from the East. The bible never tells us how many they were, just that they brought three gifts. They were not Jewish. They could not trace their ancestry to Abraham.

But they saw the star in the clear sky and knew they needed to follow it. That was not like any other star, that was THE STAR, the one of the true God. That Star would lead them to the true King.

King Herod also heard about this King, but he followed a different star. The star of greed, the star of self-importance, the star of power, the star of us vs. them. He called the Magi to find the child. When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under. He wasn't going to risk it. No other king was going to be allowed to overthrow him.

The star of ego—the need to be always right. How many time times do we turn ourselves over to God and God's direction for our life? Do we ask often enough, "What would God have me do to promote God's purposes here in the world?"

The star of greed— our self-worth may lay upon financial values. Nothing is enough. The commandment tells us not to be idolaters, but we have made idols of the pursuit of money, of pleasure, and of creature comforts. Greed is not simply enjoying life, it is when our decisions are based solely on our own gain. When we follow the greed star, we forget to share the blessings we have received.

The star of power—We all have some level of power in our lives. How do we use our power is what matters, do we use it for our advantage or to speak up for those who have none? When we follow this star our language changes, it is us vs. them. And there is always a reason to leave someone out.

The good news is that in the midst of all the stars that lead us away from our true identity as God's children: ego, greed, and power, we can find the stars that lead us to God.

The Star of self-discipline—immersing ourselves in word and prayer and regular working toward the building up of God's Kingdom, not just in our life, the life of our family, but also the life of the whole world.

The Star of Justice— when we follow this star, we realize God wants all of God's people to flourish, not just a few. God justice is made when we all work together to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to respond to God's calling in their life. Everyone has access to the basic needs of life and everyone is welcome at God's table.

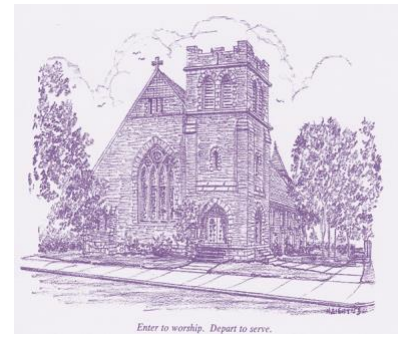
The Star of Love— This is probably the hardest star to follow. We live in a world where love is not encouraged, but God is love, and the only way we can be true disciples is to share the love we have received from God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16

Epiphany is defined as an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure. My prayer for each of one you this 2019 is that God shows you the star you need to follow this year. It may be a challenging star, it may be something you have been working on for some time or something that is completely new. I truly believe that when we discover and follow God's stars, they always lead to Jesus. The true King. They always build the Kingdom and they always bring joy.

Wise men and woman still searching for him, I invite you to follow your star all the way to Christ.

Let it be so.

Ximena



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### Dates to Remember:

**Clean-Up Day** every first Saturday of the month

**Administrative Church Council** January 8, 2019 at 7:00 PM

**Bishop's Clergy Convocation** January 16-18, Ximena will be away

**Human Relations Day** January 20, 2019  
Special Sunday UMC

**Souper Bowl of Caring** February 3, 2019

**Special Session of the General Conference of the UMC** February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri

### Connecticut District Resource Days:

Saturday, January 19, 2019 from 9:00 AM to noon at North Canton UMC

Sunday, January 27, 2019 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM at New Fairfield UMC

Please plan to join us for a time of information, inspiration and opportunities to connect with United Methodists from around our district. More details will be coming soon.

## Our VitalSigns



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.

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 (week)	Pledges & Offerings	Charitable Giving	New Members
12/16/18	36	11	\$1693	\$0	0
12/9/18	34	16	\$678	\$20	0
12/2/18	29	6	\$1550	\$87	0
11/25/18	37	10	\$979	\$72	0
11/18/18	40	20	\$707	\$177	0
11/11/18	38	20	\$1335	\$235	0
11/4/18	42	11	\$1535	\$260	0
10/28/18	27	3	\$746	\$0	0
10/21/18	29	4	\$590	\$0	0

## Pastoral CARE

Pastor Ximena is available for talks, prayers and visits. In fact, she would love for you to invite her to visit. Please call the office, her cell phone or email her to set up an appointment. Let her know if you or a loved one is in the hospital.



Are you interested in becoming a member of our church or want to learn more about us? Please contact the pastor.



Here at St. Andrew's, we believe in the power of prayer! If you or someone you know needs prayers, please contact Ximena by phone or email.



Receive updates, prayer requests and what is happening in worship every week, subscribe to our mailing list by emailing us, [office@standrewsnh.com](mailto:office@standrewsnh.com)

## A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition (Contemporary Version)

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you; praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it also be made in heaven. Amen.



Claire Webster for organizing amazing special brunches for our church!

Moises Varas and the choir for blessing us with the gift of music during Advent and Christmas season.

Trustees for keeping our building safe and beautiful.

All who donated beautiful poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary during the Christmas season.

Carol, Carolyn and Ralph for organizing, buying and decorating.



### January

Charlton Tobias 1/2  
Lynn Stowe 1/15  
Jim Copeland 1/18  
Briannah Morales 1/19  
Angelique Smith 1/26  
Brenda Herrmann 1/29

### February

Ralph Pickup 2/9  
Carmen Tobias 2/9  
Lucille Clancy 2/10  
John M. Quimby 2/14  
Brenda Burgos 2/23  
Irene Diaz 2/25



We serve God by serving others; here is what you can do: *Connectional Giving* — all of us giving together — allows United Methodists to do together what we cannot do alone. We join in with United Methodists around the world in 6 special collections throughout the year. The money collected goes 100% to a specific mission designated by the general church. For more information, go to [UMCGIVING.com](http://UMCGIVING.com). Next Special Collection is **Human Relations Day**, January 20, 2018.



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



**Hope Bags:** We are looking for items to fill Hope bags to share with people in a homeless situation around New Haven. So far our members have distributed more than 100 kits. Praise God! Some ideas are: 1-gallon zip lock bags, socks, cereal bars, water bottles, tissues, soap, deodorant, shampoos, etc. You can also donate money to this ministry and we will shop for you!



### 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (The Voice)

Just as a body is one whole made up of many different parts, and all the different parts comprise the one body, so it is with the Anointed One. We were all ceremonially washed through baptism together into one body by one Spirit. No matter our heritage—Jew or Greek, insider or outsider—no matter our status—oppressed or free—we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Here's what I mean: the body is not made of one large part but of many different parts.

We have several openings in our community to make St. Andrew's a vital congregation that makes disciples in Jesus' name. Consider serving in the following capacity or if there is another gift that you possess that is not listed, we invite you to talk to the pastor.

- Altar Care: in charge of decorating the altar depending on the season and theme of worship, change the colors of the Altar, buy and set the communion elements weekly
- Administrative Assistant: assists the pastor with administrative tasks like printing bulletins, inserts and other office duties
- Adult Group Leaders: organizes and facilitates small faith group formations that would meet at different places and times during the week
- Sunday School assistant teachers
- Sunday's PowerPoint presentation leader



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

Do you feel Called to be a substitute teacher? Please talk to Carol or pastor Ximena

### Sunday School News

The Sunday School spent December studying the birth of Jesus. The Children received gifts and did a craft project to celebrate the joy of Christmas. A nice time was had by all as we remembered the real reason for the season.

### Acolytes

We welcome Tish LaTulippe as our new assistant to the acolytes. Many thanks to Briannah Morales for her time of service in this position. Thanks also to Brenda Herrmann for her help with the acolyte program. Being an acolyte gives our young people a valuable opportunity to be an active part of their church. Anyone, age 7 or older, is welcome to participate. See Carol Tripp to become a member of the acolytes.

### Donna The Song of Life

Donna loved to sing,  
A soprano in the choir  
of life.

The song of life she sang to me  
How is your husband?  
How is your cat?  
How is your son?  
How is his wife?

The song of life she sang to Joy  
Where are you, Joy?  
How are you, Joy?  
God with you, Joy.  
Thank you, my daughter.

She sang the song of life in church,  
My God I thank you  
for breath and years,  
For music and friends,  
For lunch and dessert,  
Did you try my corn bread?

Her song of life she sang to the world,  
Her life a song of light!





December 13, 2018

Thank you to again to everyone in the church for the support both with items and money towards our Operation Christmas Child program. We met our challenge of doing 100 boxes and supplying the \$9 per box to ship them again this year. That's 100 children that received a box of items that wouldn't have received anything for Christmas and will have the chance to learn about Jesus. With God's help and all of us working together, including some money from the Bottle Fund we raised the additional money we needed for the shipping. Thank you to all that helped with our PACKING PARTY. On Saturday, November 18th Jocelyn and I delivered the boxes to Gateway Bible Church in Oakville. Thank you and God Bless You. Pastor Bob greeted us and again had a big Thank You to the entire congregation for our continuing support of this so important mission. He told me that donations sadly were down this year. With everyone's support we can continue this mission for years to come.

The Quimby family wishes to thank everyone for their help in this mission and may God Bless you all!



Packing the boxes



Another view of packing the boxes



Ralph with 100 boxes



Jocelyn at Oakville Bible Church with 100 boxes

Hello!

We have had a good year, and we hope that you too have fared well. We continue to do homebound tutoring for the school system in Hamden. I always feel like keeping up with science and literature and the new stories that kids are reading and thinking about today is a good part of our pay. The latest book that really reached me is *The Hate U Give*, an inner city and "hood" teenager story by Angie Thomas, which brings back memories of our old three family house and various incidents involving tenants and their families while we owned the house. It is also a movie. Another from a past year is a biography of Tyrese Gibson, who grew up in the gang land of Watts in Los Angeles and rose to be an accomplished singer and movie star (*Four Brothers*). I enjoyed the movie. I discovered this through a brilliant young high school student who was so eager to learn that, given a text book and an assignment, would read the whole book almost overnight and answer all the chapter questions. Her sister and guardian was career military, and her family was expecting that through that route she would go to college. A judge insisted that she read this book, so I checked it out of the library and we both read it.

I'll stop at three. The third book that touched my heart was written by the now 63-year-old autistic son of a friend. The young man started to talk when he was in his 30's. He was considered profoundly retarded. He has written three books so far; he considers it his mission in life to generate understanding. Eloquent and sensitive, brought up with I love you and I care. About 40 years ago his parents organized and founded a group home for autistic young adults-- run by their families.

Ross and I are now doing two gigs, two music programs a month, one each at two very different nursing homes. We started a couple years ago. On the spur of the moment, I parked and walked into Arden House, a four story complex, and found the program director. I explained who I was and my background and asked if I could do a program for them. I didn't know who would be my partner, but when I got home, Ross said, "You can't go by yourself!" This is our third year. The last Tuesday of every month, 2:30-3:30. A friend volunteered us for the second venue, and they pay us! No kidding. This has evolved from thinking desperately the night before every performance, "HOW CAN I EVER DO THIS!" to looking forward to the HIGH we feel every single time. We do get positive feedback. At one place the parakeets in a cage just outside always seem to sing along while Ross plays his piano routine. It is obvious they are enjoying his music. This month we are due to give two presentations just before Christmas. Ross is practicing Christmas carols like never before in his life. This is not the first time he ever played a Christmas carol, although he basically plays only songs from the musicals of his teenage years.

We'll let you know when we are ready for you to find us on You Tube. Enjoy the not-so-silent and very holy night.

Love and Merry Christmas, Ross and Diana



In his recent visits to the six districts, Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton has been conducting a dialogue about the specially called session of General Conference, and urging a new round of daily prayer for the work of those who will gather in St. Louis. Inspired by the conference dates of February 23-26, 2019, the bishop has asked that members of the conference pause to pray for three minutes from 2:23 to 2:26 each day – that can be afternoon or early morning depending on your schedule. He has also asked for continued prayers for the NYAC delegation:

#### **Delegates**

Laity: Frederick Brewington, Gail Douglas-Boykin, Jorge Lockward, and Dorothea Benz  
Clergy: Timothy J. Riss, Noel N. Chin, Kristina D. Hansen, and Alexandre da Silva Souto

#### **Alternates**

Laity: Tiffany French Goffe, Ann Craig, Roena A. Littlejohn, and Karen Prudente  
Clergy: Vicki I. Flippin, Sheila M. Beckford, Martha E. Vink, and Sungchan Kim

The 864 delegates from around the globe will receive the report of the Commission on A Way Forward, and work on determining what direction the church should take in its longstanding debate over homosexuality.

If you have any questions or concerns about this conference, please talk to pastor Ximena. For more information visit <http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2019-special-session>.

Committee on Nominations & Leadership Development  
Saint Andrew's UMC 2019  
Administrative Council

<b>Chairperson</b>	Ralph Pickup	deer01@att.net	203-467-0241
<b>Pastor</b>	Ximena A. Varas	Ximena.varas@nyac-umc.com	203-278-1568
<b>Lay Leader</b>	Phillipa Blake	peb01@sbcglobal.net	203-887-8937
<b>Lay Member to Annual Conference</b>	Phillipa Blake	peb01@sbcglobal.net	203-887-8937
<b>Reserve Lay Member to Annual Conference</b>	Moises Varas	mleo93@hotmail.com	203-892-3564
<b>Board of Trustees Chairperson</b>	James Lawson	JLawson@hopkins.edu	203-430-1635
<b>Finance Committee Chairperson</b>	John Quimby	johnboat1@hotmail.com	203-248-1556
<b>Treasurer</b>	Brenda Burgos	brenda.burgos2012@gmail.com	203-214-6671
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Lucille Clancy	grammylu@att.net	203-988-6076
<b>Memorial Fund Chairperson</b>	Lucille Clancy	grammylu@att.net	203-988-6076
<b>Staff Parish Relations Chairperson</b>	Diana Grippen	djgrippen@att.net	203-281-4644
<b>Sunday School Superintendent</b>	Carol Tripp	c-tripp@att.net	203-865-8174
<b>Missions Team Chairperson</b>	Nicole Morales	nimorale@my.bridgeport.edu	203-922-2944
<b>Committee on Nominations &amp; Leadership Development</b>	Ximena A. Varas	Ximena.varas@nyac-umc.com	203-278-1568
<b>Music Minister-Director</b>	Moises Varas	mleo93@hotmail.com	203-892-3564
<b>Communications</b>	Diana Grippen	djgrippen@att.net	203-281-4644
	Brenda Burgos	brenda.burgos2012@gmail.com	203-214-6671
	Nicole Morales	nimorale@my.bridgeport.edu	203-922-2944
<b>Fellowship Coordinator</b>	Clair Webster	claire.webster67@gmail.com	203-606-6457
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	TBD		

**Finance Committee**

Chair: John Quimby  
Co-chair: TBD  
Treasurer: Brenda Burgos  
Financial Secretary: Lucille Clancy  
Diana Grippen, SPRC Chair  
Phillipa Blake, Lay Leader  
James Lawson  
Carolyn Pickup  
Ralph Pickup

**Board of Trustees**

Chair: James Lawson  
Vice Chair: Clair Webster  
Phillipa Blake, Lay Leader

**Class of 2019** – Lynn Stowe, James Lawson and Clair Webster

**Class of 2020** – John Quimby, Morris Penington and Brenda Burgos

**Class 2021** – Ralph Pickup, James Copeland and Willie Tart

**Staff Parish Relations Committee**

Chair: Diana Grippen  
Vice Chair: James Lawson  
Phillipa Blake, Lay Leader

**Class of 2019** – Carolyn Pickup, Diana Grippen and Brenda Herrmann

**Class of 2020** – Willie Tart, Lucille Clancy and Ann Penington

**Class 2021** – James Lawson, Nicole Morales and Rawle Lynch

**Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development**

Chair: Ximena A. Varas  
Phillipa Blake, Lay Leader

**Class 2019** – Ross Grippen, Yvonne Lynch

**Class 2020** – Norma Ryan, Briannah Morales

**Class 2021** – Jorge Varas, Clair Webster

**Child Care Center Board Members**

Al Paolillo, Chair, Community Member  
John Ferranti, Co-Chair, Community Member  
Ralph & Carolyn Pickup, Administrative Council chair  
Phillipa Blake, Lay leader  
James Lawson, Trustee Chair  
Sal Punzo, Community Member  
Riana Labastida, CCC Director  
Ximena Varas, Pastor

**Certified Lay Servants:**

Jorge Varas  
Norma Ryan  
Brenda Burgos  
Moises Varas

## PART I: GREATER GIFTS

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 (January 6). 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.

### **1/6 Epiphany Sunday**

*Epiphany is a time to call the congregation to jump into the crescendo of the history of salvation. The light of Christ will become more intense as we progress into the Epiphany season. This particular Sunday, however, the main attention should be placed on the homage, the adoration that we owe our Savior.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-12

### **1/13 Baptism of the Lord – Greater Gifts Worship Series: YOU ARE BELOVED**

*Baptism, as a "first gift" from God, leads us in life toward paths of discovering and rediscovering God-given gifts, activating those gifts through the Holy Spirit, understanding how our gifts are interrelated to the gifts of other disciples in the body of Christ, and how important it is to stay true to the heart of our God-given gifts — the love of God in Christ.*

**Scripture:** Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

### **1/20 Greater Gifts Worship Series: GIFTED FOR OTHERS**

*As we move from baptisms and remembering our baptism, we recognize that the gift of baptism is only the beginning. We should begin to discover, or if it has been a while, perhaps rediscover our God-given gifts — equipping us for a lifelong journey as disciples. We were redeemed for a reason, and we are given gifts to fulfill a greater purpose.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

### **1/27 Greater Gifts Worship Series: BEING NEEDY**

*Conventionally, the idea of being needy has negative connotations. However, we'd like to look at the idea of being needy from a different perspective: we need one another. Just as God arranged the members of our bodies, so God arranged the members of our communities. So this week, we put a positive spin on being needy.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

### **2/3 Greater Gifts Worship Series: LOVE**

*Now that we are discovering and activating our gifts, understanding how we are dependent on one another, will we let love – love of God and love of neighbor guide us?*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

## SEASON AFTER EPIPHANY 2019, PART II: #SeeAllThePeople

### **2/10 See All the People Worship Series: BEING NEEDY**

*The story in Luke 5:1-11 is about the beginning of a life-changing journey for Jesus and his future disciples, including you and me.*

**Scripture:** Luke 5:1-11

### **2/17 See All the People Worship Series: THE EXPECTANT CROWD**

*Like Jesus, we are called to accept people as they are and to strive to develop a Christian relationship with them. Not only did Jesus heal people, he also taught the people. Jesus perceived their unexpressed needs. Looking into the eyes of his disciples, he taught them about the many ways in which they were blessed.*

**Scripture:** Luke 6:17-26

### **2/24 See All the People Worship Series: THE QUESTIONING CROWD**

*Both our culture and our church have become increasingly divided; we demonize the "other" and cease listening to one another. In the CEB, verse 27 begins, "But I say to you who are willing to hear: Love your enemies." Jesus challenges the crowd to hear. Then he says the shocking phrase, "Love your enemies." What?! He doesn't just tell us to listen to them. We are to love them!*

**Scripture:** Luke 6:27-38

### **3/3 Transfiguration Sunday – See All the People Worship Series: THE ASTOUNDED CROWD**

*Jesus embodies what many of us seem to forget. He shows us the importance of setting apart in prayer before coming back to see all the people informed in the fullness of God's glory. In him, we are reminded to trust in the essential directions we have been provided to pray, listen, and care for the holistic needs of people.*

**Scripture:** Luke 9:28-43

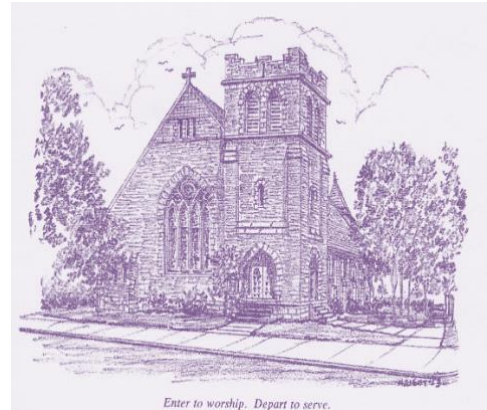
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