

January, 2016

# THE VOICE

ST. ANDREW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*But to each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, 'When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.'*

*(When it says, 'He ascended', what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?... ) Ephesians 4:7-9*

Christmas is real.

The Messiah came to the world in the flesh. God "descended" to us because that's how God is. God's love never quits seeking out the lost. In our humorous "Christmas at the Movies" series, we learned that in Buddy the Elf we also see God, on a quest to bring us back to the 'Nice List.' Not because we are naughty, but because we are broken.

With Christ at the center of the church, will we, too, descend? Will the church follow the path Jesus set before us, I wonder? See if you can locate on your GPS where Jesus tells our patriarch, Peter, to go. *"I tell you, you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."* Did you catch it? Did Jesus say, "take my church to heaven?" No, Jesus tells Peter to take the church to "Hades." Hell.

**"Go to Hell, Church!"** Who says this? Our Lord said it! You know that gates don't travel. Where would the church need to be in order that the gates of Hades fail in prevailing against it? Jesus wanted the church to be on the edge of Hell. Jesus declared that he came for the sinners, the sin-sick, not the healthy. He called sinners like me to the Gospel feast, and the Great Commission is for us to do likewise.

Friends, the church is supposed to be on the offense. Jesus never said that our gates withstand Hell, but that Hell's gates fall under our invasion. With 90% of churches in decline, I wonder if we need to check our playbook and see how our offense is doing. Is this decline because there is no hell on earth to rally against? Is there no brokenness? Is no one hungry or suffering? Let's stop messing around with God.

There are 78 million young adults in the Millennial Generation, and only 15% of them go to church. Who will put together a game plan to reach them?

Never believe that we're too old for this. Psalm 71:18 declares, "Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come."



The psalmist inspires us to pray, "Lord, make us still effective to reach the next generation with your good news."

If you want to be playful about God's vision, remember that it is like the 'Code of the Elves' that states, "There's room for everyone on the Nice list." If you want to get serious, remember that God promised Abraham that "all nations" would be blessed through him. God promised Isaiah that he would be "a light to the nations." If you need hopeful encouragement, recall that Simeon said of Jesus that he would "bring all to salvation." If you need a rebellious message, recall that the Old Testament forbade astrology, yet that old rascal, God, goes and uses a star to proclaim Jesus to the Magi of the East. God never stops seeking us, all of us.

Jesus carried out God's game plan of salvation. The work of inviting those who aren't here yet is ours to continue. Some will sign up for this effort in pencil and in six months erase their names. Others will sign up in pen and after a year or two decide that St. Andrew Church's vision isn't theirs and leave. But others of you will sign in blood. You will be God's "F.A.T. people" (Faithful, Available, Teachable) who stay and do great things. May God bless your commitment in 2016.

*Pastor Biel*

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Jan. 9	Feed My Starving Children	10:00 a.m.
Jan. 16	Winter Warming, 1st UMC, Arlington Heights	2-8:00 p.m.
Jan. 18	Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance	
Jan. 20	Church Council	7:00 p.m.
Jan. 23	CSD Leadership Training, Faith UMC, Orland Park	9 a.m. -3 p.m.
Jan. 24	Reconciling Luncheon and Program	After Worship

### **Mark your calendar**

#### **All-Church Visioning Retreat**

Looking ahead, mark your calendar for the All-Church Visioning Retreat on Saturday, March 5th. Your input is valuable as we identify our core values and name the direction God is leading us in 2016 and beyond.



## The Brief

The bold, interactive worship experience known as "The Brief" resumes its regular Sunday night schedule on January 10 at 7:15 p.m. Led by Pastor Biel, this uplifting service lasts 30 minutes. In its pilot phase, "The Brief" was packed with prayer, praise, and great discussion.

We're looking for participants to worship, of course. We also welcome you and your friends who would like to sing, play an instrument, perform in readers' theater, or just move some furniture. We need helpers to bring "The Brief" to life in this preview stage of its development. Please contact Pastor Biel if you or someone you know would like to get involved.

## Do you love to sing upbeat, contemporary Christian music

(Top 40 on Shine.FM or K-LOVE 94.3)? If you are in sixth grade or older, **WE NEED YOU** in the Brief! Please sign up on the sheet in the narthex, or meet Victoria Biel before the Brief at St. Andrew this Sunday, November 1, at 6:40 p.m.



## Chicago Southern District Leadership Training

### **Who Is My Neighbor? Inner Strength for Greater Outreach**

Saturday, January 23, 9 am- 3 pm (registration and check-in, 8- 8:45 am) at Faith UMC, Orland Park, 15101 80th Avenue, Orland Park, IL 60462

This event is for lay members and clergy. Bring a team and encourage youth to come, to...

- √ Revitalize your Congregations
- √ Engage your Communities
- √ Empower your Leaders
- √ Reach New People and Younger People

Registration is \$10 per person and includes lunch and refreshments; write checks payable to Northern Illinois Conference.

There are three ways to register; please register by Jan. 19. Online Registration: <https://www.umcnic.org/?p=8800> Or use the form below to email or mail. Email: [drogers@umcnic.org](mailto:drogers@umcnic.org) Mail: Debbie Rogers, Chicago Metro Regional Office, 77 W. Washington St., Suite 1820, Chicago IL 60602.

Morning worship will include special music by Sounds of Judah, the children's choir of St. Mark. The plenary/practical shared learning topics will include Discipleship Ministry Systems (in-reach and outreach), Missions Panel (hands-on local, national and international), Archives and History. The laity and the clergy will dine in separate areas to engage in a time of lively discussion and fellowship. Afternoon Workshops: Staff Parish Relations, Trustees, Lay Leader, Church Council, Finance, Missions.

## St. Andrew Reconciling Task Force

On Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, the Reconciling Task Force will host an all-church luncheon and program following worship. The program will include speakers on the topic of inclusiveness and an introduction of our own Welcoming Statement to be considered for adoption by St. Andrew's members.

If you have questions, feel free to speak with members of the Reconciling Task Force, including Mary Lee and Russ, Deacon Regina, Jessie, Tom D., Lorena, Anna J. H., Waneta M., Kyah, Carolyn F. and Karen.

## Therefore, Love— 2016 Winter Warming

On Saturday, January 16, 2016, from 2- 8 p.m., the First United Methodist Church, Arlington Heights (1903 E. Euclid Avenue), will host an equipping event for Reconciling United Methodists in the Midwest. "Therefore Love," a gathering in support of a fully inclusive church, will feature workshops, fellowship, networking, and worship with guest preacher Bishop Minerva Carcano.

Register online at [www.WinterWarming2016.eventbrite.com](http://www.WinterWarming2016.eventbrite.com), and sign up on your attendance sheet or call the church office if you wish to carpool.

## **Cookie Walk & Bazaar**

Our Cookie Walk and Bazaar was a success. Our total proceeds were \$1,686.35.

On the day of the event our total was \$1,153.55. This was broken down as follows:

- ♦ Bazaar (handicrafts) Table: \$192.50
- ♦ “Second Chance” (white elephant) Table: \$187.70
- ♦ Bistro (desserts and coffee/tea): \$40.00
- ♦ Cookies and Candies: \$633.35
- ♦ Vendor Tables (rented for \$20 each): \$100

On the following two Sundays and at the Christmas party on December 17<sup>th</sup>, more items were sold, adding a total of \$532.80. This was broken down as follows:

- ♦ Bazaar (handicrafts) Table: \$190.00
- ♦ Second Chance” (white elephant) Table: \$115.30
- ♦ Cookies and Candies: \$227.50

A BIG THANK YOU to all who brought cookies and candy and items for the bazaar and “second chance” tables. And THANK YOU to all the volunteers who not only made things go well; they made the event possible. Also, THANK YOU to all who purchased cookies, candy, handicrafts and/or second-chance items. This was a wonderful all-church effort.

We hope to have a repeat next year. However, Lucy will not chair it again, though she will help the new chair or co-chairs. We won’t be able to schedule this event until we have someone to head it up, so consider whether you could possibly be a co-chair and who might do it with you.

## **Christmas Collections—We Did It!**

**Congratulations—we did it!** Our final Jello count was 849 packages for the 400+ families who received Respond Now’s Christmas boxes this year. We also had a good collection of toys, gift cards and new coats for the children. THANK YOU for your generosity!

## **Medicine Bottles**

The District UMW has taken on the project of collecting and shipping medicine bottles for the Malawi Project, so we are continuing to collect them here. When you remove the labels, please remove as much of the sticky residue as possible. Then bring the bottles (with caps) to the container reserved for them in the narthex. No over-the counter bottles, please.



## **Can You Donate an Hour?**

Churchill School is looking for more after-school tutors. This is a wonderful way to develop relationships with a couple of children over the course of the semester!

If you can donate one hour a week between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., please call the church office at (708) 798-8904 to let us know. Homework Club meets Monday through Thursday and will begin after the winter break.

## **Volunteers Still Needed for Our PADS Ministry**

Our PADS Site Coordinator struggles from week to week to fill our volunteer roster for each Wednesday night, and now another volunteer position is needed. We need someone to go to South Suburban Hospital each Wednesday morning to bag up the clean linens for our site on Wednesday night.

Lucy has been picking up the linens in the past, but now the system has changed so that each site has to bag up their own linens out on the dock of South Suburban Hospital. Lucy doesn’t feel she can add this burden to the already extensive duties of the Site Coordinator. Call Lucy if you are willing to do this job (which is not likely to be an easy one and has to be done out in the cold). Lucy has expressed her dissatisfaction with this situation to the Board and to the Director of PADS in hopes that a better system can be worked out. THANK YOU for stepping up and helping PADS provide shelter for the homeless.

## **Pizza With The Pastor**

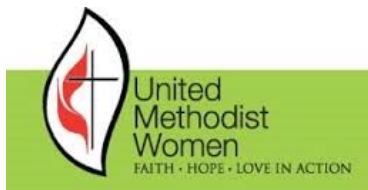
If you are new to St. Andrew Church, considering membership, or looking to just find out more about us, consider yourself INVITED on Second Sundays after worship to "Pizza with the Pastor," upstairs in Fellowship Hall. January 10, February 14, and March 13.



## **United Methodist Women**

Our United Methodist Women sponsored the Christmas Party for the entire congregation and many guests on December 17. What a joy it was to hear the choir from Millenium School sing their Christmas repertoire. Mary Lee and Pastor Biel did a super job of telling their Christmas stories. Good food and fellowship added the final ingredient for a great party to get us all in the Christmas spirit.

Our United Methodist Women will not meet in January, but we will resume our program meeting and our Circle meeting in February. The Program Book will be out in January and can be picked up at church.



## **St. Andrew Renews Its SWIFT Membership**

Our congregation has been a member of SWIFT for several years now. SWIFT (Southwest Inter-Faith Team) is an organization of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations. SWIFT sponsors several events each year where members of the different congregations come together for learning, fellowship, and service. If you haven't yet participated in any of the events, watch for publicity on the next one. The SWIFT events are very worthwhile.

Each member congregation pays a fee to cover various expenses. We have paid our 2016 membership fee of \$125. We hope some St. Andrew members will contribute something toward this fee. During times like these, our membership and participation in SWIFT shows our solidarity with our brothers and sisters of other faiths. If you can contribute toward this fee, indicate on your envelope "SWIFT Membership Fee."



## **Attention Confirmation Families**

We begin a new curriculum on January 24th called "Echo the Story." Students will examine the major faith stories from Genesis to Acts in 12 weeks. On February 14 be ready to **meet early**, at 5:00 p.m., to celebrate Valentine's Day. Remember, there are no classes on January 3rd or January 17th.

Confirmation Mentors: please join us Jan 10, February 7, March 6, and April 3.



## **Adult Studies**

On Friday evenings, "Dare to Dream" will be offered at the home of Deacon Regina and Lee beginning January 8th. Books can be purchased from Rev. Biel while supplies last.

Rev. Biel will offer "Creating a Life with God" during Lent. This six-session class begins Wednesday, February 17 at 3:30 p.m. The book by Daniel Wolpert is available online.

## Caring Crafters

Crocheters and knitters are welcome, but so are other crafters. We'd love to have you come and share your projects and ideas with the group. We are making prayer shawls as well as other hand-crafted items.

Caring Crafters meets in the narthex on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Come join us!



"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



## International Folk Dancers

The South Suburban International Folk Dance Group meets downstairs below the Fellowship Hall on Monday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. The group does ethnic dances from around the world, mostly line and circle dances, so a partner is not required. If there are new dancers, the group will do beginner dances during the first hour and then they will do advanced dances during the second hour. Newcomers are welcome. Participants pay \$3 each time. For more information, please see Lucy.



## TOPS

TOPS invites you to check out the local chapter that meets here in the Wesley Room every Thursday morning between 9:30 and 11:00. Take Off Pounds Sensibly!



## Chair Yoga Classes

Yoga is a great way to reduce stress, increase endurance, and feel better overall. Even better, participating in yoga can help you burn calories, increase core strength, and improve posture and balance.

A gentle form of yoga in which students do not get onto the floor is now being offered in Fellowship Hall on Monday and Wednesday afternoons at 2:30. The class is taught by Jeffrey Lippert, certified instructor. It is free for Silver Sneakers members and available at a nominal fee to others. So come, join the fun!



# January 2016

SUNDAY

MONDAY


TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			FH = Fellowship Hall LF = Lower Fellowship SC = South Classroom Blue = Private Meeting		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> 10:30 am-Worship Holy Communion Food Wagon No Confirmation No Brief	<b>4</b> 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF	<b>5</b> 1:30 pm- Reconciling TF 1:30 pm-C Crafters	<b>6</b> 9:00 am-Men's Coffee 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 6:00 pm-PADS	<b>7</b> 9:30 am-TOPS 6:00 pm-Cub Scouts, SC 6:30 pm-Bell Choir 7:30 pm-Chancel Choir	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 10:00 am-Feed My Starving Children
<b>10</b> 10:30 am-Worship 6:00 pm-Confirm. 7:15 pm-The Brief	<b>11</b> 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF	<b>12</b> 1:30 pm-C Crafters 7:00 pm-SPRC	<b>13</b> 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 6:00 pm-PADS	<b>14</b> 9:30 am-TOPS 6:00 pm-Cub Scouts, SC 6:30 pm-Bell Choir 7:30 pm-Chancel Choir	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Noon-Leadership 2-8 pm- Winter Warming, Arlington Heights.
<b>17</b> 10:30 am-Worship Loose Change No Confirmation 7:00 pm-Scout Leadership, FH 7:15 pm-The Brief VOICE Deadline	<b>18</b> 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:00 pm-Trustees 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF	<b>19</b> Pastor in Barrington- Order of Elders 1:30 pm-C Crafters	<b>20</b> 9:00 am-Men's Coffee 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 6:00 pm-PADS 7:00 pm-Church Council	<b>21</b> 9:30 am-TOPS 6:30 pm-Bell Choir 7:30 pm-Chancel Choir	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 9 am-3 pm- CSD Leadership, Orland Park
<b>24</b> 10:30 am-Worship After Worship— RECONCILING LUNCHEON 6:00 pm-Confirm. 7:15 pm-The Brief	<b>25</b> 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF	<b>26</b> 1:30 pm-C Crafters	<b>27</b> 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 6:00 pm-PADS	<b>28</b> Pastor in Oak Lawn 9:30 am-TOPS 6:30 pm-Bell Choir 7:30 pm-Chancel Choir	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 10:30 -Worship 6 pm Confirm. 7:15 pm-The Brief						

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#### Mission Statement

St. Andrew seeks to be a community of  
faith that is  
Christ-centered  
compassionate  
and inclusive,  
sharing gifts and resources  
while spreading the gospel  
and serving others  
locally and globally

Worship with us at 10:30 am  
Child care provided