

May 2016

THE VOICE

ST. ANDREW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

—Esther 4:14

These words of encouragement, spoken to Esther by her uncle Mordechai, still cause us to consider how we participate in the world. We could place ease, comfort, and security above the public good. But only to our detriment. The world’s peoples (even creatures and habitats) need Christians to speak up, live right, and to act in love.

God’s will, Mordechai suggests, will get carried out one way or the other. Instead of being a spectator, young Queen Esther chose to act in the face of extreme prejudice. The phrase “...for such a time as this,” recalls God’s providence, God’s guiding hand in human affairs.

Do you ever feel like you were “specially placed” in a position, or in someone’s life, or into a situation? Do pieces of information seem to find you at just the right time? Does it ever feel like things “worked out” so that you were present at something important, such as a need you were particularly suited to address? It is worth considering God’s timing for our lives, looking back (and forward) to those times and places where our presence made a difference. This gives us an opportunity to say, “Thank you,” and “Use me, Lord.”

God, who designed our souls, also directs our lives. When we commend our lives to God, we find ourselves in service to the kingdom. We discover opportunities to speak to individuals and crowds alike about matters of the heart and spirit. Even dangerous situations, dreamed up by the world’s Hamans, will be confronted with the power and presence of God. By whom? Those sturdy dreamers who answer, “Yes!” to God’s call on our lives.

Following a call to be Jesus’s witnesses can be intimidating. There is great temptation to remain quiet to injustice, safely at home when our neighbor is in need, and unable to find the time for inward or outward disciplines. Esther was afraid to come before the King. She feared for her life were she to speak up on behalf of the persecuted. We, too, may be afraid of casting ourselves upon God’s free mercy.

Let us have the courage of Esther, with earnest prayer and commitment, to make love manifest where there is evil today. Even if it makes us tremble, let’s do the work of ordering our lives for God, so that everything we do and say can be an expression of divine love. Our work of uniting with one another, especially because we are different and diverse, is a bright light to a deeply divided world, “for such a time as this.”

Deep Blessings,
Pastor Biel

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | | |
|--------|---|------------------------|
| May 15 | Day of Pentecost | during worship |
| | Bible Presentations to Youth | |
| May 11 | Brookdale Study Begins—"Stories of Faith" | |
| | | Wednesdays, 10:00 a.m. |
| May 22 | End-of-Year Celebration Luncheon | after worship |



Rev. Timothy Biel, Jr.,

We would like to thank you and your congregation for supporting our unique ministry. Your \$243.80 donation will be used to teach and encourage the incarcerated at Logan County jail, Logan & Lincoln Correctional Centers.

*—Billy Erickson
Crossroads of Life
Prison Faith Community*

“We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion.”

—Max de Pree



Springtime (Re)Planting for St. Andrew

I don't know about you, but I've been looking at my yard over the past couple of weeks and thinking about how much work Russ and I need to do if it is ever going to look like something other than the disheveled sight it is now. Midwest winters are hard on landscaping, and it shows. First and foremost is doing some reseeding of the grass and replanting some growing things into the empty planters and flowerbeds. It strikes me that there is a parallel to this moment in the life of St. Andrew.

The larger United Methodist Church has a number of initiatives directed to "planting" new churches. But maybe the task facing St. Andrew is "replanting." It seems to me that, in theory at least, this ought to be an easier task. After all, it is easier to spruce up an already established flowerbed than it is to dig up and plant a new one from scratch. But, whether first planting or replanting, there has to be a vision of what the desired outcome will be.

It is up to us to identify how and where we are going to use the resources of our church – our time, our talents, our dollars – to nurture our church's growth and regrowth. Our members have already made some important first steps. In early March many of us gathered to update our broad vision for the church. In April, we reconvened over a working lunch to consider what actions can lead to a realization of our vision. Members self-selected into areas of interest as they explored five "task areas" for St. Andrew: Worship and Spiritual Growth, Child/Youth Ministries, Finance/Physical Plant, Church Growth/Outreach, and Adult Ministries. We talked about the current status, needs and achievable goals for each category. Many wonderful ideas were shared across the tables and it is rewarding to know that so many members and friends are committed to our church and its nurture.

In May, the Church Council will be synthesizing the members' input from these discussions, with the goal of identifying and naming priorities for the immediate future, as well as considering how tasks might best be undertaken by church leaders, committees, and individuals. Many of you have volunteered to be a part of the actual work it will take to make our vision for St. Andrew a reality, and the Committee on Lay Leadership will be contacting individuals to further explore their interest in serving St. Andrew.

The Council is excited that so many members of St. Andrew have participated in planning for our future, and we hope to keep that momentum moving forward. Let's think about the present moment as our "spring" here at St. Andrew, and our ideas as the "seeds" to be planted. We will only be able to "harvest" what we plant and tend. So, when YOU are asked to do some part, be it large or small, of replanting and nurturing, please try to say "yes." We already know that St. Andrew, with our diverse and committed core congregation, is good soil in which to plant.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches." May we be witnesses to His calling.

Luke 8:15

"But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."



Church Council Meeting

The next Church Council meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 25, at 7:00 p.m. (one week later than the normally scheduled date). Please remember that all members are invited and encouraged to attend. Also, if there are any issues you would like the Council to address at the May meeting, please contact Chair Mary Lee or Pastor Biel.

Annual Conference - Walk by Faith

The 177th Northern Illinois Annual Conference will be held June 5-7, 2016, at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Ill.

This year our Mission Challenge is to collect school kit items for the Midwest Mission Distribution Center, which is our United Methodist disaster relief supply center just south of Springfield, IL. Our district has been asked to provide erasers and pencil sharpeners, about 50 per church. (Pencil sharpeners can be bought in bags online at a much cheaper rate than individually in stores.) Let's help make ALL schools a place to learn and thrive.



Prayer Bookmarks

Please help us update our prayer card by sending additions, deletions, or changes to Mary Lee at maryleeruss@aol.com or to Karen at standrew@ameritech.net. If you write a prayer request on the back of your attendance sheet that you would like to have added to the prayer card, please mark that option to let us know.



St. Andrew T-Shirts

Soon we will have an opportunity to order T-shirts with our new St. Andrew logo—a great way to show our church pride at summer events around town. Polo shirt or denim shirt options will also be available, or you might wish to have the church logo embroidered on a bag or hat. Watch the weekly announcements for more information.

Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation

Your Spirit Calls!

August 1-6, 2016

**Bellarmino Jesuit Retreat House
420 W. County Line Road, Barrington, IL**

The Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation is a program of Upper Room Ministries, providing an opportunity for clergy and laity to deepen their relationship with God through a daily rhythm of prayer, worship, learning, and reflection.

The teaching faculty are Daniel Wolpert (*“Creating a Life With God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices”*) and Jane Patterson (*Keeping the Feast: Metaphors of Sacrifice*).

The Five-Day Academy is sponsored and supported financially by the Spiritual Formation Committee of the Northern Illinois Conference and in partnership with the Upper Room. Both Pastor Biel and our former pastor Lora Zink are on the leadership team.

The registration fee is \$700, due before June 20, 2016. There are limited funds available for scholarships. Please contact Judy Pohlman, Registrar, at pohlman.j@comcast.net for the application. More information is available on the brochure on the kiosk.



PADS Ministry at St. Andrew

Our Overnight Shelter season for PADS has come to an end until it opens again at the beginning of October. **As a shelter for women and children this past year, we are grateful to the many volunteers who make this ministry possible.** We had 49 volunteers who came on a regular basis this season to host our PADS guests.

In addition, two people do telephone reminder calls. Another hems our cut-up towels to a size appropriate for our PADS guests. Still another helps me with various “heavy” tasks, like putting away the boxes of PADS supplies when they are delivered and loading up all the blankets at the end of the season to take them to be washed and then picking them up again.

In addition to these volunteers, we have five other churches or organizations that provide food for our site. On week one of each month, the Progressive Missionary Baptist Church (south side of Chicago) provides the food, and a member of St. Andrew, with youth helpers from United Christian Church of Country Club Hills, does the serving and cleanup. Week two is Peace Memorial UCC of Orland Park. Week three is New Hope Christian Community Church, and they also provide the food for the breakfast and lunches. Week four is the First Presbyterian Church of Homewood.

When we have a fifth Wednesday (two or three times each year), a catered soul-food dinner is provided by the South Suburban

PADS Ministry (cont.)

Chapter of the LINKS Club. They also provide the breakfast and lunch food on the first Wednesday of each month.

Breakfast and lunch food for the second week is provided by Salem Lutheran of Homewood. Breakfast and lunch food for the fourth week is provided by St. Joseph Catholic Church of Homewood. Our congregation supplies the breakfast and lunch food when we have a fifth Wednesday.

All this is in addition to the boxes and boxes of supplies provided by PADS. And, of course, our church foots the bill for extra heat, lights, and water used on our shelter nights.

This is a big undertaking for our congregation and our volunteers. But those of us who are there to welcome our guests and help them make the best of a bad situation, as well as those who provide for their needs, can feel greatly rewarded in knowing we have done it for, as Jesus put it, “the least of these.”

May God continue to bless our congregation as we strive to be a blessing to others! I personally have been doubly blessed—to know all these wonderful volunteers and to get to know many of our guests and their children.

—Lucy, Shelter Site Coordinator



Respond Now Food Collection

This month's food collection for Respond Now emphasizes potato products in a box (scaloped, instant mashed, etc.), spaghetti sauce (can or jar), canned fruit (especially pears and peaches), canned tuna, and canned chicken—but any non-perishable food items are much appreciated. You can leave your donations in the cart near the front door at any time.



Some News from United Methodist Missions

From Jonathan and Donna Baker, missionaries in Lusaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo—

Our calendar for 2016 is full already! We have arrived in Congo as of January 14 to continue and strengthen relationships with our loved ones here. A team from our church in Florida will join us in February and we have a major cataract surgery mission in July. Our last mission provided eye care for over 4000 patients and truly modeled our partnership working side by side with our Congolese sisters and brothers! We're so excited about sharing an opportunity to witness God's work in this country we adore!

The Congolese are such faith-filled and faithful people and continue to teach us so much about life and faith.

We pray that the advent of our Lord will bring enduring blessings for you and those you love as well as our world: love, hope, joy, and peace. Despite all the uncertainties of this world, the advent of our Lord is certain. The message of the gospel rings clearly. Do not be afraid. Be prepared! As we sing of peace on earth and goodwill to all people, let us open our ears to hear the mournful songs of a war-torn world and the cries of ordinary families, whose losses are beyond our ability to comprehend. As we opened gifts on Christmas morning, let us open our hearts to the countless children for whom Christmas was yet another day to survive. Open our eyes to see those neighbors nearest to us who are lonely, afraid, sick

(Some News from United Methodist Missions (cont.))

and suffering. "O come, O come, Emmanuel (God with us)."

Dr. Lester and Debbie Dornon, missionaries serving with the United Mission to Nepal's Tansen Hospital, in Tansen, Nepal—

Some reflections excerpted from their January 2016 newsletter: They have experienced many changes since their first term of mission service in Nepal, which began in 1990. Tansen Hospital has grown from 121 beds to 169 beds, adding five major buildings, water tanks, and other improvements. Today, they are training doctors and other hospital staff, more so than when they first arrived. And the churches have grown, from one small church to seven, two of which have more than 100 people attending each week.

—excerpted from World Outlook Magazine

Collection of Bottle Caps Resumes

The Western Springs United Methodist Church is now saving bottle caps to acquire a bench, so we can collect them here again. There is a container on the table in the narthex. Lucy will take what we collect to Kathleen when she sees her at Mission U in July, so we can collect bottle caps until then. Plastic caps such as those from peanut butter and mayonnaise jars and milk, juice, water, detergent, and medicine bottles can be used.

Environmental News

In 2015, due to the work of environmental organizations, beekeepers, and save-the-bee activists across the nation, Home Depot and Lowe's, the world's two largest home improvement retailers, committed to stop selling bee-toxic neonicotinoid pesticides, a leading driver of global bee declines (bees are essential for the pollination of many crops, as well as for honey production). The two DIY giants joined more than thirty garden retailers, nurseries and landscaping companies in making this commitment. Environmental organizations and activists also pushed the EPA to restrict bee-toxic pesticides in agriculture and advanced or passed resolutions and bills to protect bees from Massachusetts to California. [We can help by not purchasing bedding plants that have been treated with neonicotinoids.]

In late 2015, the FDA approved GMO salmon, the first genetically engineered animal approved for human consumption, based on a likely flawed assessment using company data. GMO salmon threaten wild salmon and its approval paves the way for other poorly assessed GMO animals, such as pigs, chickens and cows, engineered to fit within a factory farming system. After this announcement, and in response to pressure from environmental organizations, Costco, the world's second-largest grocery chain, joined more than 60 grocery store chains nationwide—including Kroger,



(Environmental News--cont.)

Safeway, Trader Joe's, Target and Whole Foods—in making a commitment to not sell GMO salmon.

Regarding mandatory labeling of GMOs—a bill written by the junk-food industry that would preempt state labeling laws via federal legislation was passed in the House of Representatives, but environmental activists successfully pressured the Senate to reject attempts to attach this bill as a last-minute rider on a must-pass spending bill.

—Information excerpted from
"Friends of the Earth" 2015 Annual Report



Caring Crafters

Crocheters and knitters are welcome and 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 handcrafted items. Caring Crafters meets in the narthex on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Come, join us!



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 offered in Fellowship Hall on Monday and Wednesday afternoons at 2:30. The class is taught by Jeffrey Lipfert, certified instructor. It is free for Silver Sneakers members and available at a nominal fee to others. So come, join the fun!



International Folk Dancers

The South Suburban International Folk Dance Group meets downstairs 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 advanced dances during the second hour. Newcomers are welcome. The fee is \$3. For more information, please see Lucy Kokal.

May 2016

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|--|-----------|-----------|
| 1 9:00 am-Bible Study 9:45 am-Choir 10:30 am-Worship Confirmation Holy Communion | 2 No Yoga 7:00 pm-SPRC 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF | 3 6:00 pm-UMW Potluck | 4 9:00 am-Men's Coffee 1:30 pm-Caring Crafters 5:00 pm-Missions & S.C. | 5 9:30 am-TOPS 6:00 pm-Cub Scouts, SC | 6 | 7 |
| 8 9:00 am-Bible Study 9:45 am-Choir 10:30 am-Worship Ascension Sunday Mother's Day Sunday School | 9 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF | 10 | 11 10:00 am-Brookdale Study 1:30 pm-Caring Crafters 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH | 12 9:30 am-TOPS 2:00 pm-Finance 6:00 pm-Cub Scouts, SC | 13 | 14 |
| 15 9:00 am-Bible Study 9:45 am-Choir 10:30 am-Worship Bible Presentations Loose Change Sunday School | 16 2:00 pm-Lay Leadership Devel. 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF | 17 | 18 9:00 am-Men's Coffee 10:00 am-Brookdale Study 1:30 pm-Caring Crafters 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH | 19 9:30 am-TOPS | 20 | 21 |
| 22 9:00 am-Bible Study 9:45 am-Choir 10:30 am-Worship Last Day of Regular Sunday School After Worship-End-of-Year Celebration Luncheon | 23 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:30 pm-Boy Scouts, FH 7:30pm-Int'l Folk Dance, LF | 24 | 25 10:00 am-Brookdale Study 1:30 pm-Caring Crafters 2:30 pm-Chair Yoga, FH 7:00 p.m.-Church Council | 26 9:30 am-TOPS | 27 | 28 |
| 29 10:30 am-Worship | 30 MEMORIAL DAY | 31 | FH = Fellowship Hall LF = Lower Fellowship SC = South Classroom | | | |



the Voice
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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

***Jesus said, “This is My commandment,
that you love one another, just as I
have loved you.” John 15:12***

*St Andrew UMC prayerfully strives to be a
faith community of open hearts, open
minds and open doors. We believe all
people are of sacred worth and dignity as
part of God’s creation and as demonstrat-
ed by the life and ministry of Jesus
Christ. As God’s love extends to all, we
therefore welcome everyone into partici-
pation and membership regardless of age,
race, ethnicity, gender, family structure,
socio-economic status, marital status, ed-
ucational background, sexual orientation,
gender identity, physical or mental ability,
faith history, or life experience. We
acknowledge that no two of us are alike,
except in God’s love for us. We believe
that our differences make us a stronger
community of faith as we worship together
and as we grow in our relationship with
God and one another.*

***Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes you
welcomes me, and whoever welcomes
me welcomes the one who sent me.”***

—Matthew 10:40

