



## GOOD NEWS - March 2023

### Pastor's Message

Dear Friends,

It is helpful to remember the early roots of the word **Lent**. It refers to the lengthening of days. Springtime. We are leaning into the light, emerging from the long nights and lingering shadows of winter. The promise of new life unfolds in the warmth of longer days.

And so through these Lenten days we join the journey from darkness into light, the light no darkness can overcome.

In a remarkable way the Gospel readings we will hear in March during Sunday worship (and then discuss in our Lenten Bible Study), illuminate the way of the Lenten journey through the darkness into the light of God's promise of new life for us and the whole creation...

- To begin with (March 5) there is the story of Nicodemus who slips through the darkness of night to explore who Jesus is, this Jesus who has been stirring things up on the holy city of Jerusalem, puzzling those who were convinced they had all the right handles on religious correctness. But when Jesus says that in order to really get it, you've got to be born again, that God's Spirit blows right into and through us in ways we can barely imagine and opens our eyes to see light we cannot see for ourselves, Nicodemus slips back into the night, back into the mystery that will continue to swirl within him until one day it transforms him. Sometimes it can be a long journey through the shadows into the light.

- Then there is that Samaritan woman at the well, the woman with whom Jesus had absolutely no good reason to even talk with but did, stunningly violating long held right religious barriers as he did. Walls of division and suspicion come tumbling down. Light breaks out and the woman is given to taste of the water from the well of life Jesus offers, the well which will never run dry, the well that offers the promise of abundance of life only God can provide. When the journey is long and dry, Jesus offers to quench our thirst, opening our eyes to lean into tomorrow with trust.

- Then there is the extraordinary story of the man born blind who is not only given 20-20 vision to see the world in all of its color and beauty and fullness, but who is even more graced with the vision to see and know the astonishing truth that Jesus not only breaks the darkness of our days but is the source and provider of all that is good and lasting, of all that mends and makes new, even in the face of stubborn doubt and resistance.

- Then finally in this series of holy, light giving stories comes the account of Jesus' refusal to allow death to have a final and lasting grip on life. We need to ready our ears for the way Jesus, despite the grave uncertainty and protests of those around, shouts his death-bound friend Lazarus into life. "Lazarus, come out of that tomb," Jesus cries. The earth shakes and Lazarus steps out among them, now unbound, free to live a new life. Into and through and beyond the darkness of our deepest depths Jesus calls us into the life of his unfailing light.

So the lengthening days Lent lead us toward the light. Lent delivers us to the very doorstep of the defining story of our life together, to the crucifixion of Jesus when darkness covered the whole earth and all was lost, to the eerie silence of death and utter heartbreak, to those stunning echoes from an empty tomb still transforming our lives, calling us, leading us, accompanying us from the darkness into light.

Come, join the journey through these lengthening days! Pray that you will know the life giving grace and healing power of the light no darkness can overcome.

Bless, O God, our journey.  
Pr. Les Swenson

*Dear Friends,*

*I am deeply grateful for your prayers and patience as I have been working through the medical issues that caused my needing to step away from being with you on Sunday mornings. I have missed you all greatly. The good news is that a clear diagnosis has emerged and the doctors who have been tending to me have determined a course for the days ahead. I have a rather rare condition called vasculitis which can take multiple directions. Fortunately for me at this stage the direction ahead seems very manageable and positive. I am being treated medically and will begin a new medical therapy sometime in March. Even more, I have the green light to resume my Sunday mornings again, so I hope to re-join you on Sunday, March 19. I may not be back to full energy by then but I am eager and excited to move forward with you through this time of transition at St. Andrew Church. In the meantime I welcome your continuing prayers for me just as I will continue to hold you all in mine that God will shepherd us all into new life and promise in the days ahead.*

*With gratitude,  
Les Swenson*

## **From the President**

From the President...

When I spoke to Pastor Swenson last Thursday there was a different tone in

his voice. He sounded relieved that his doctors have finally come to a decision as to what is causing his lack of energy. Treatment has started, and yes, more will be needed, but I could hear in his voice his eagerness to be with us again. Tentative plans are that he will be back with us on March 19. On a more humorous note, if you think he could wow you with some lengthy theological words, you should hear his newly acquired medical vocabulary.

Thankfully, we have been blessed with several “supply” pastors in Pastor Swenson’s absence. We are grateful for the efforts of Pastor Geoff Sinibaldo, and Pastor Dewey Strohmeyer, and we look forward to seeing Pastor Linda Kraft who will be with us next Sunday.

Thanks to all of you who completed the CAT questionnaire. Thanks to the transition team for all of their efforts. The team shared with me that we exceeded the goal they set for completed surveys. Pastor Steven Wilco, Associate to Bishop Hazelwood, will share the CAT results with us in the near future – watch the announcements for the time and place. The next transition team activity will be held next Sunday, March 5. Please plan to be with us as we continue to examine who we are, where we are, and where we are going as a congregation in today’s world.

**Attention, All Thrivent Members:**

If you are a Thrivent member there is a good chance you have “Thrivent Choice Dollars” in your account. These dollars may be directed to a charity of your choice, and of course, St. Andrew would qualify. Log on to your Thrivent Account or contact your Thrivent Agent for more details. Directing your dollars is easy but the deadline for this round of grants is **March 31, 2023**.

By now, many of you know that we had a pipe burst after the February 4-5 cold spell. The pipe was located in the closet in the nursery room. There was minimal damage, but it caused much clean-up work. Thanks to Robin Landrette, Roy Ouellette, Owen VanBrocklin, and our sexton, Mary Boyed for their “clean-up” efforts.

Our Lenten experience will be a bit different this year. Because our Pastors are traveling from considerable distances to be with us, Wednesday evening services will not be possible. Instead, we are offering a “Bible Study / Discussion” after worship each Sunday. Join us as we explore/examine the touching Gospel texts of this penitential season.

Easter in sight!

## Bob

### **Transition Process Information for March**

#### ***A note from your Transition Consultant, Deacon Natalie***

March is an active and important month for St. Andrew’s Transition Process! Please mark your calendars now and plan to join your faith community in conversation and discernment of your future. YOU have agency in how you will move forward. St. Andrew needs everyone’s voice and participation in the process.

### **MARCH 5<sup>th</sup> after worship - Healthy Communication Workshop**

St. Andrew is in a time of transition, of discerning your future and preparing for the next stage of St. Andrew’s faith journey. Discernment requires critical

conversations and, although life-giving, difficult conversations are often met with resistance and anxiety. And, of course, along with anything new comes *change*. Change is all about new life and new possibilities. And yes, change can be hard ... But that's okay! We have an app for that! No ... not really an app, but we do have a tried and true, proven effective set of skills that till the earth and nurture the soil of communication.

*Healthy Communication is key to a church's health and missional vitality.*

**So, please join us on March 5 for the Healthy Communication Workshop.** It's a light-hearted approach and we'll have fun as we practice listening well and speaking with care – skills that are necessary for important conversations about St. Andrew's future.

**MARCH 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom - Synod Associate to the Bishop will present the Interpretation of St. Andrew's CAT results**

The link to the Zoom session will be sent to all St. Andrew members the week before. The Transition Team is working on plans to project the Zoom live in the church fellowship room so you can come to church and participate if you prefer not to do so at home.

**MARCH 26<sup>th</sup> after worship - Finding Your WHY event**

Why you are a part of St. Andrew? This question will lead us into the first stage of Finding Your WHY.

This event is the foundation and first step for articulating St. Andrew's WHY statement – a statement of who you are as a church: your purpose, your identity, your unique calling and reason for existing. Why does your congregation do what you do? Why do you exist? This statement is not only an important foundation for the work of discernment but also appears on the first page of the Ministry Site Profile of churches going into the Call Process.

**MARCH 27<sup>th</sup> – APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup> - Finding Your WHY Small Group Conversations**

During this two-week period, you will participate in a small group conversation with Transition Team members. The purpose of these conversations is to dig deeper and enhance the work done during the March 26 event. We need to hear more about your thoughts on St. Andrew's WHY so the Transition Team can draft statements for the congregation to consider.

There will be a schedule of in-person and Zoom conversations, including daytime and evening. As soon as the schedule is set, you will be asked to sign-up for a specific day and time.

So, mark your calendars! You don't want to miss out on any of these important opportunities to share your voice, experience, and perspective! EVERYONE is a part of the transition process.

## WORSHIP

*Return to the Lord your God, who is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

**Get into the rhythm of life and renewal, worship with us on the regular!**

As God's people, we gather together in the presence of God and find rest, solace, a bit of grace for ourselves and others. It's called worship. We worship in person **Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary.** Sunday's service is streamed on Facebook and YouTube:

<https://www.facebook.com/Standrewct/>; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL>

[SSna5Ti\\_WSwRJ\\_ySbMA3Q](#). Following the live stream, the video of worship will be posted so that you can worship as you are available any time after that.

## FAITH FORMATION

### **Children's Bible Story Time Continues!**

Attention parents, guardians, and grandparents of youth aged 18-months through grade 6! Our caring and dedicated team of volunteers are delighted to continue holding Children's Bible Story Time (CBST) during the 9:30am service in this new church year.

Join us each Sunday as children and a rotation of two adult volunteers read from a children's bible, sing songs, and participate in activities that help children comprehend the Sunday's gospel and connect it to their lives today. Children are invited to leave with our CBST leaders before the first lesson and return during the hymn of the day. On the fourth Sunday of the month, Pastor Les gives a Children's Sermon in lieu of CBST.

Children's Bible Story Time at St. Andrew is geared to children in preschool through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Our curriculum is built to accommodate a span of ages and development! If your child is 18 months to 2 years old (or simply shy!), they can still attend with a parent. Got a teenager in the household? We'd love to welcome them as a helper! Please contact Britt Lynch (860-302-6538) ([ray.britt.2015@gmail.com](mailto:ray.britt.2015@gmail.com)) or see her in church if you have any questions.

### ***A change in plans...***

#### **Lenten Wednesday Nights on Sunday Mornings!**

Yes, you heard it right ... we've moved Lenten Wednesday nights to Sunday mornings!

In order to meet in person rather than on Zoom (by popular demand), and to accommodate busy schedules, we are consolidating Lenten Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.

Here's how it will go ... Sunday worship at 9:30 a.m. as always, brief time for coffee and conversation in the hall, then at 10:50, gathering in the chapel for our Lenten Bible Study focused on the challenging, life giving Gospel readings we will be hearing during the season. Each Bible Study session will conclude with prayer and song by 11:55.

There will be one exception. On Sunday, March 5, we will all be participating in the next step of St. Andrew Church's transition process focused on "Healthy Communications."

It all begins the First Sunday in Lent, February 26. Then resumes on March 12.  
*Bless, O God, our journey.*

## OUTREACH & MISSION

St Pauly Shed: Our shed is such a blessing!. Many, many people in the community utilize our drop off, and the shed is an income generator for the church. What to YOU have that you don't wear any more?

Stuffies needed: our Soothing Stuffies team is busy with the upcoming Tag Sale prep, but after that they will be back to making blankets for Stuffies for the Bristol PD. New/like new stuffed animals are needed, please consider picking one up for the team.

Cozy Cover Ministry: Thank you to those donating new greeting card to be given to residents in local nursing homes. St. Andrew Lutheran Church is noted inside as the giver. Please leave cards in the COZY COVER BASKET on the small table in the Fellowship Hall near the door leading to the office lobby.

Do you knit, crochet, or quilt? Please join us crafters creating and gifting prayer shawls and lap coverlets for users in wheelchairs. You need to supply the yarn. We will supply the needles.

Call Trudi 860-583-0554 with questions.

**Food Outreach Update:** Gloria Dei food distribution is the *first Saturday of the* month. We will continue to support them in any way we can. Please continue to pray for this outreach.

## STEWARDSHIP



**Thank you** for your continued offerings, this year we will see unplanned expenses with costs related to transition and pastoral call. Things like covenants with stated supply pastor and transition coach, call committee expenses, pastoral compensation packages and moving expenses that are associated with a new pastor, etc. We appreciate all you have given St. Andrew and ask for your continued financial support at this time.

### **Service Stewardship:**

A huge thanks to Matt Stojanov for accepting the nomination for Parish Life Liaison, he will be a welcome voice to the Council. We look forward to working with Matt

If you've ever thought about serving but were afraid to ask, now's the time to take that step! We have opportunities to serve in the areas of worship, outreach, parish life, from one-time to short-term duties. Many hands make light work. Training is always provided See Bob H., Arlene C. or any Council

member for more details.

**Are you a Thrivent member?** If so, you can apply for two grants per year, for things like fundraising, educational events, or help for someone in need. Applying takes just minutes and we can walk you through it. Bob H., Arlene C., and Vicki T. have utilized grants for VBS and outreach for many years and can help you complete the application!

**P.S.** If anyone applies for Thrivent Grants, the Tag Sale Team is asking you to answer YES to the section where it asks if you'd like a Thrivent banner.  
Thanks!

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## PARISH LIFE

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### **GWYNNE'S NOTES**

The Saint Andrew choir will be singing in this multi-choir concert along with singers from other churches of the Waterbury Area Chapter of the AGO. Talented students from Avon High School will join in as well with their conductor Andrew Brochu who is conducting the concert. This is the third time our St Andrew choir has participated in the choir festival; and as always, it promises to be a wonderful program. Hope to see some of you there.

The Waterbury Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presents

## CHOIR FESTIVAL CONCERT

TO BENEFIT UKRAINE AND OTHER PLACES IN NEED



We are ***“Instruments of Peace”***

Sunday, March 19, 2023

(snow date of March 26)

**5 p.m. concert**

*no admission charge*

**St. Rose of Lima Church**

35 Center St., Meriden, Connecticut

*Featuring church choirs from around Central Connecticut, and choristers from Avon High School*

**Andrew Brochu, Jr. - director**

*Free will offering will be taken for Catholic Relief Services to benefit Ukraine and other places in need.*

The American Guild of Organists, Waterbury Chapter is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

### **MORE Notes from GWYNNE**

Several years ago Saint Andrew Church sponsored the *CitySingers of Hartford* in a performance of this unique musical program called ***Celtic Fire***, in which many of our favorite hymns are sung- Be Thou My Vision, The King of Love My Shepherd Is, and others. After a long hiatus, CitySingers is back, beginning with this popular program. (By the way, Gwynne remains a singer in this choir.)



# Celtic Fire!

CITY SINGERS  
OF HARTFORD

**Sunday, March 12, 4:00 pm**

West Hartford United Methodist Church  
1358 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford, CT

A Benefit for



Friendship  
Service  
Center, Inc.  
love made visible

The Friendship Service Center of New Britain  
No reservations or tickets (Suggested Donation: \$20)



[citysingers.org](http://citysingers.org)

# SPRING TAG SALE!

**Saint Andrew Ev.  
Lutheran Church  
1125 Stafford Ave  
Bristol, CT**

**Friday March 17<sup>th</sup>  
5 - 8 pm  
Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>  
8 - 2 pm**

Over 500 pieces of Jewelry!

\*Furniture   \*Clothing –most new with tags   \*Shoes  
\*Toys   \*Holiday Items   \*Antiques   \*Appliances  
And MUCH, MUCH MORE!

*Snacks & Drinks  
will be available  
for purchase.*



Try Roy's  
famous Hot Dogs!



Requested Entry Fee:

1 non-perishable food item per person  
(to be donated to local food kitchens)

**God's Work. Our Hands.**



## **March Birthdays**

1 Janice Jackson  
3 Noah Galvin  
4 Tony Pelow  
5 Paul Caron  
5 Laurie Harrison  
6 Bryce McMahon  
7 Harrison Dayton  
7 Randy Levine  
8 Luke Clark  
9 Sydney Adam  
11 Calvin Cruz  
11 Nancy Shaw  
11 Melissa Vertefeuille  
13 Gregg Vontell  
16 John Galvin

17 Alan Rindfleisch  
18 Robin Landrette  
18 Matthew Segreve  
21 William Wagner  
22 Terry Gustafson  
22 Nicole Treacy  
24 Molly Kalat  
24 Kelly Simpson  
25 Amber Marie Cruz  
25 Denise Martin  
26 Peyton Beaudoin  
27 Tamera Procko  
27 Zoey Rupert  
28 Nancy Glidden  
30 Ryleigh Hall

**HELP NEEDED** Easter Egg Hunt **Sunday; April 9** Volunteers needed for leading our Easter egg hunt for the children on Sunday morning April 9. Filling empty plastic eggs at home with eggs/candy supplied by St. Andrew. Helpers to spread eggs on Easter morning. Please consider volunteering to help with this event! The children really enjoy this special day. Please call the church office @ 860-583-5809 with your contact information. Thank you so much!

## Remember in your prayers...

**Those known to us in need of healing: We offer prayers of thanksgiving and supplication for:** Les, Bill, Dean, Jean, Shaun Corbett, Alex Massimino, Bill Murtha, Michelle O'Leary, Marge Pearson, Arthur Potz, Jim Prior, Callum Rescsanski, Paul Rescsanski, Charles Schissler, Steven Siecienski, Johanna Tessman, Carole Wedler, Trudi Wedler, and all those in nursing homes and the homebound: Marie Ouellette and Jean Wentland.

A gift was given, to the Glory of God, in memory of Ted Neumann, by:  
Bobbie Scoville  
Joan Strecker

A gift was given, to the Glory of God, in memory of Nick Ferro, by:  
Laura Bradigo  
Joan Strecker  
Scott Herold  
Lisa San Angelo  
Sal and Joe Labbadia and Family  
Katherine Stranieri and Ron Grabowski  
Kathleen Smith

**We re-set the prayer list monthly. If you wish to add someone to the list, contact the office at (860) 583-5809 or via email [churchoffice@standrewct.org](mailto:churchoffice@standrewct.org)**

## Purpose Statement

*We are committed to seeking out people for membership in Christ's family, studying God's Word together that we may grow in his grace, strengthening our lives with regular worship and fellowship and sharing our time, talents, and treasure that Jesus will be known to all people through our words and deeds.*

## About St. Andrew



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

### CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

**President:** Robert Herold

**Vice President:** Britt Lynch

**Secretary:** Ellie Miller  
**Treasurer:** Vacant  
**Faith Formation Liaison:** Jill Little  
**Outreach & Mission Liaison:** Arlene Creswell  
**Parish Life Liaison:** Vacant  
**Stewardship Liaison:** Don Zurell  
**Young Adult Council-at-large/Technology:** Abigail Griffin  
**Youth Council-at-large:** Kyle Galvin

**St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church | (860) 583-5809 |**  
**[churchoffice@standrewct.org](mailto:churchoffice@standrewct.org) | [www.standrewct.org](http://www.standrewct.org)**

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