



## GOOD NEWS April 2023

### Pastor's Message

Dear Friends,

During this Lenten season I have been reading through the Sabbath poems of Wendell Berry, a Kentucky farmer and brilliant writer whose love for the earth draws him onto long walks every Sunday morning.

One of his poems, appropriate for this season, begins this way...

*Lift up the dead leaves  
and see, waiting  
in the dark, in cold March*

*the purplish stems, leaves,  
and buds of twin leaf,  
infinitely tender, infinitely*

*expectant...*

From: This Day, Collected and New Poems, Wendell Berry, 2013

Yes, this is the expectant season. Winter is giving way to the growing light and warmth of spring. The birds can't help but sing their new songs. The daffodils in our gardens can't wait to follow the little purple crocus to break out into their own bright yellows and whites. The buds on the trees are budding. On my daily walks along the wetlands I eagerly await the return of the osprey to their nests. They'll be here soon I'm sure.

This is the expectant season. As we approach the final days of our forty day Lenten journey we find ourselves leaning more and more into the life giving promise of the One who leads us into the light no darkness can extinguish. We are being renewed and made new in the faith of our baptisms into the crucified-risen Christ in whom there is no darkness at all.

This is the expectant season. For we are once again on the verge of hearing and entering into the stories that remain vital and central to who we are ... the stories of death and resurrection, the stories that change everything and daily transform our lives and the way we live with one another in this troubled world, stories that insist that love is stronger than death, that we have been entrusted with a mystery of hope, a spiritual strength that is never withdrawn. We are a resurrection people...expectant people, knowing God is at work making all things new and good.

This is the expectant season for St. Andrew Church. As our transition process moves us into asking and exploring the fundamental question of "Why?" — that is, "For what purpose has God called us together in this place and in this time?" we are given the opportunity to be renewed and revitalized in ministry, to begin forging new paths of resurrected life. It is my expectation that a very large number of you are/will be participating in this process. The wider the participation, the deeper our sense of common vision and future life together as a community of faith will be. Continue to pray and be expectant in this time of discernment for the wisdom of the Spirit to stir and led us.

I am filled with great expectation to join you on the journey through these coming holy days when light breaks through the darkness and we are given to see and live in the glory of God's unfailing light that leads us all into

the promise of new life in the crucified-risen Christ. Come join the journey of story, prayer and song and feasting at the table! Be expectant!

Les Swenson, Pastor

### **From the President**

Even though the days are getting longer, I feel I have less and less time to get things done. I need to take a few moments for some special thank-yous.

First, I want to thank the transition team for all their efforts. While their lives are just as busy as mine, they have found the time to meet with Deacon Natalie, to encourage members to complete the "CAT" survey, and even to deliver and pick up "CAT" surveys. Now they are arranging meetings with small groups of congregation members as we attempt to determine our "WHY" statement. Their efforts are much appreciated as they undertake this important work.

Second, I want to thank everyone that worked so hard to make the Tag Sale the success it was. I counted close to thirty folks who contributed their efforts. At the risk of missing someone I won't name any names except for the leadership efforts of Robin Landrette. Robin claims that this was her last Tag Sale, but...we have heard that before...time will tell...we will see... watch for her announcement when the next one is scheduled. Seriously, the efforts of the workers and the generous donations of all the "treasures" we sold brought in close to \$ 3,900.00. Even more important than the funds was the sense of community that was experienced. We need to find more ways to do just that --- how can you help?

There are many worship offerings in the next weeks. Hope to see you there.

A Blessed Easter to all,

Bob

### **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/UCLSSna5Ti\\_WSwRJ\\_ySbMA3Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLSSna5Ti_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.

All these sessions will be via Zoom, and will conclude with a brief order of evening prayer.

**Join the journey to the cross, the empty tomb and beyond...  
from Hosannas to silence to Alleluias!**

### **Sunday of the Passion. Palm Sunday**

**April 2. Worship at 9:30 a.m.**

Gather outside the church's front doors  
for the blessing of palms and the beginning of the procession into church.

Children's Message. Bell Choir.

The reading of the Passion according to St. Matthew.

Holy Communion.

### **Maundy Thursday**

**April 6. Worship at 7:00 p.m.**

We bring to completion of the Lenten journey with the Confession of Sins and the invitation to receive individual forgiveness. Hearing Jesus' command to love one another as he loves us worshippers will be invited to participate in the ritual of washing one another's hands.

Holy Communion.

The stripping of the altar  
reminding us of Jesus emptying himself in love for us.

We depart in silence.

### **Good Friday**

**April 7. Worship at 7:00.**

The people of Zion Lutheran Church, Bristol, will join us for worship.

Our focus turns toward the glory of the cross  
revealed in the reading of the Passion of our Lord from St. John.

The ancient Bidding Prayers embracing the whole creation  
within the arms of the Crucified One.

Adoration of the Cross.

We depart in silence.

### **Easter Sunday. The Day of Resurrection**

**April 9. Worship at 9:30**

Light breaks the darkness. The tomb is empty.

Jesus appears. The news spreads to this day: "He is risen!"

And we sing with full throat and heart: "Alleluia! He is risen indeed!"

Children's Message. Choir. Joyous Song. Holy Communion.

We depart rejoicing, in hope, with new life!

And then... join the procession into the unending light and new life of the resurrection  
that unfolds for the full seven week season of Easter  
reaching Pentecost Sunday, May 29, when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit  
which enlightens our life as a people of resurrected life!

### **LIFE PASSAGES**

- We rejoice over the birth of Louis Luther, newborn son of Vicki Trudel and Brett Dube. Louis was born on March 4. He was warmly and cheerfully welcomed on his first appearance in church on Sunday, March 19. Baptism soon to come during the Easter season!
- Celebrate with Kimberly Sugrue and Thomas Boisvert who were married at St. Andrew Church on Saturday, March 25. May God bless their life together!

## FAITH FORMATION

### Children's Bible Story Time Continues

Attention parents, guardians, and grandparents of youth age 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 in Advent and beyond 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.

### Preparing to Receive First Communion... An Easter Season Invitation

Parents ... if you have a child (or children) eager to receive Holy Communion, Pastor Swenson is eager to meet with you and your children to prepare the way. A meeting to help plan special gatherings for parents and children at church and for learning times at home in the family will be held after worship on Sunday, April 23.

What is the appropriate age for children to begin receiving Holy Communion? The guidelines from our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America do not specify an age (in some congregations infants receive the Meal). Rather, "Baptized children begin to commune ... at a time determined through mutual conversation that includes the pastor, the child, and the parents..."

One helpful thing ... is your child curious about the meal, does s/he express a desire to participate? It's a good clue s/he might be ready. Remember, our appreciation and understanding of the meaning and mystery of the gift of the Meal grows through a lifetime of receiving it and sharing in the life of the gathered community of faith.

Parents... if you have questions ahead of the April 23 meeting, feel free to contact Pastor Swenson.

### News from Your Transition Consultant

Deacon Natalie Bloomquist

#### ***Now that the CAT is out of the bag ...***

How are you feeling about the results of St. Andrew's Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT)? The Vital Signs report gives an abundance of information and it can feel overwhelming when trying to understand what it all means and how it is relevant to the decisions St. Andrew's will be making about your future. Although I highlighted the most impactful findings at the beginning of the "Finding Our WHY" workshop and gave you opportunity to offer your questions and comments, I remain available to answer what questions I can and listen to your thoughts. We will be using this information and unpacking the results throughout your transition and discernment process.

All members received an email on March 16 with the link to view the recording of the Zoom CAT Interpretation. If you did not receive that email, please contact me so I can give you the link to the recording.

### ***The CAT says we need to identify St. Andrew's communal purpose. How do we do that?***

By finding your WHY! Because the submission deadline for your newsletter came before the "Finding Our WHY" workshop on March 26, I can only guess, as I write this, that it was a great event! I think it's safe to say so because you participated in our first two events with good energy and a positive spirit. By the end of the "Finding Our WHY" workshop, each table group drafted one or more potential WHY statements.

As a reminder, your WHY statement is a statement of who you are as a church: your purpose, your identity, your reason for existing. What makes you different from the myriad social and service organizations requesting your time and attention?

### ***Okay, we have some draft WHY statements. Are we done?***

Not yet. Now we go deeper into your WHY as you listen to each other's ideas and perspectives during the "Finding Our WHY Small Group Conversations." These conversations, which are led by Transition Team members, began on March 27. If you have not signed up to participate in one of the Small Group WHY Conversations, please email me at [natalie.bloomquist61@gmail.com](mailto:natalie.bloomquist61@gmail.com) before the conversations end on April 5.

The Transition Team will meet on April 12 to go over the notes and draft statements from the workshop and from the small group conversations. Using this information, we will draft three WHY statements that will be sent to the congregation for your consideration.

The congregation will gather after worship on April 16 to come to consensus on St. Andrew's WHY statement.

### ***Then what?***

The congregation gathers after worship on April 30 to take a first look at the Options for Missional Sustainability. We will look at each option (Call Process, Merger, Partnership, Status Quo/Maintenance Ministry, Holy Closure, and Radical Redevelopment). There will be time for questions and conversation. At the end we'll take a straw poll to gauge members' interest in each option.

The Transition Team will then meet to determine a date for coming together as a congregation to come to consensus on which option to EXPLORE. This is not a final congregational vote.

I encourage you to participate in each step of your transition process. Your voice and perspective need to be a part of St. Andrew's discernment. Leadership will not be making decisions for you. They need you to be a part of the decision-making process. They need your energy and your commitment to moving productively into your future.

## **OUTREACH & MISSIONS**

### **GROCERY CART CHALLENGE: "Tuna, turkey, chicken and ham, vienna sausages and even SPAM"!**

Confirmation students AJ and Connor are collecting canned meats for this month's challenge. The food items will be donated to Gloria Dei's food drive and will be delivered by the students and their families at the end of the month.

Please grab an extra can or two when you're shopping to help AJ and Connor end their confirmation year serving others!

### **St. Pauly Shed: TIME TO SWAP OUT YOUR SWEATERS AND BOOTS FOR SHORTS AND SANDALS**

Tired of packing away those same old fall clothes? donate them to the St Pauly shed at St Andrew. Clean out your closets of clothes, shoes and linens and help the church and people around the world. Time for some new fall/winter clothes this year anyway, right? Are your snow boots old enough to vote? Is your fall wardrobe bordering on being "vintage"? Out with old, in with the new! ...every item will help someone. Please donate!

Stuffies needed: Our Soothing Stuffies team is 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: A huge thank you to all who have left donations for the Cozy Cover Ministry and the Greeting Card Ministry. All will be used. Anyone interested in becoming part of these activities, please call Trudi @ 860-583-0554.

Also, will the crafter who created and donated the outstanding quilt with the pocket and cross , please call Trudi. May our Lord continue to bless these generous friends.

You may not be able to donate anything. Your prayers for the success of these Ministries are the **very** best donations and bring glory to the God we serve.”

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL COMING TO A FELLOWSHIP HALL NEAR YOU

VBS July 17-21, 2023 .....watch for details in next month's newsletter.....mark your calendars!

### OUR DAILY BREAD



### STEWARDSHIP

**Easter giving** - as we move through Holy Week toward the light of the Resurrection, take a moment to reflect on how we as a church are looking forward, toward new growth, new ideas, new life. Please consider a special Easter offering in thanksgiving for what we have and in anticipation in what is to come. Generosity is a spiritual discipline, thank you for your generosity!

**Electronic Offering:** are you ready to start using automatic electronic giving? We can walk you through it, it is incredibly easy and you get an email every week (or month, your choice) confirming your offering. Go to [standrewct.org](http://standrewct.org) and click the Donate button. You can make a one-time donation, set up weekly or monthly offerings, all in just minutes! See Bob H. or Arlene C. for info/assistance.

**Service Stewardship:** 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 :0) See Bob H., Arlene C. or any Council member for more details.

## PARISH LIFE

### April BIRTHDAYS

1 Kiernan DuBay	17 Kenneth Delkescamp
1 Daria Fournier	20 Keith Clark
3 Susan Provenzano	20 James Prior
5 Lee-Ann Mastrianni	21 Margaret Delkescamp
7 Nancy Carpenter	26 Jack Alling
9 Layla McMahon	27 Jack Beaudoin
15 Claire Lessard	28 Catherine Matulis
15 Britt Lynch	28 Doris Scherling
15 Avery Motta	29 Lillian Milbrandt
16 Elizabeth Hintz	30 Lucy Kalat
16 Giada Mazzarella	30 John Werner

### **Our Tag Sale was a Big Success** bringing in \$3,800.00 in profits!

Thank you to all the volunteers who donated their time and talents before, after, and during the sale, and to all of you who donated items for us to sell. I wish I could name you all, but I am sure I would forget someone and I do not want that to happen.

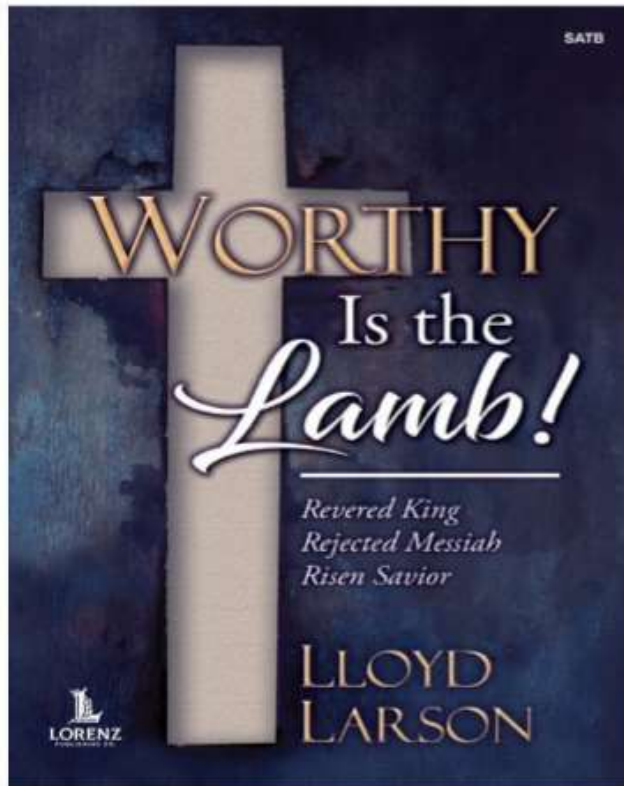
I am told we had over 25 volunteers work the sale. How wonderful it was to see so many of you willing to do whatever was needed. The sale could not have happened without your help. It is a very big event and takes months to prepare for and needs much help to execute.

We did it! Another successful event! Thank You ....Thank You....Thank You to All.

Robin

Thanks to our Easter Bunny Team for 2023, and thanks to everyone for donating the treat-filled eggs. Seeing kids excited at church, for ANY reason, is a very important part of being the Church. God Bless!

St. Gregory The Great Church  
Music Ministry  
Presents its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Sacred Easter Cantata – “A Musical Concert”



“Worthy Is the Lamb!” by Lloyd Larson, is a community-wide musical concert event featuring vocalists and musicians from the greater Bristol area. Directed by David Junko.

Directed by David Junko

**Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup> 3:00pm**

St. Gregory The Great Church

235 Maltby St. Bristol

Free will offering to benefit the music ministry



## **CARING FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY**

**Remember in your prayers...those known to us in need of healing: We offer prayers of thanksgiving and supplication for:**

- those known to us in need of healing: Bill Murtha, Arthur Potz, Jim Prior, Callum Rescsanski, Paul Rescsanski, Charles Schissler, Steven Siecienski, Johanna Tessman, Carole Wedler, Trudi Wedler, Marge Pearson, Anna Zurell, Owen VanBrocklin, Nancy Denehy, Andrew Alling, 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 Michelle O'Leary, by:

- Ken and Barbara Soden

### **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.***