



# FIRST THINGS

▲ SUMMER 2015

## upcoming EVENTS

### JUNE

- 12 Guess Who's Coming To Dinner
- 13 Guess Who's Coming To Dinner
- 14 Instructed Liturgy  
Evening of Prayer & Praise
- 22 Vacation Bible School
- 23 Vacation Bible School
- 24 Vacation Bible School

### JULY

- 3 Church office closed
- 5 No Sunday school classes
- 12 Evening of Prayer & Praise

### AUGUST

- 2 Evening of Prayer & Praise
- 8 Wilson Back-to-School Festival
- 28 Holy Spirit Retreat
- 29 Holy Spirit Retreat

### Dear St. Andrew's Family,

One of the highlights of my week is Wednesday night. On Wednesday nights, Kimberly and I meet with a group of men and women from St. Andrew's to discuss, talk and explore what it means to truly live as Christians. We have come to realize that it is only transformed hearts that lead to transformed lives. God, by his grace, transforms our hearts and makes us alive in Christ. Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The Lord your God is mighty to save, he will take great delight with you. He will quiet you with his holy love and rejoice over you with singing." A transformed heart is only a work of Christ Jesus, not ours.

As we come submitting to the Lord, we will become more of a culture that is living out our true identity in Christ. As lovers of Christ, we are declaring and demonstrating his grace

to those around us – our families, co-workers and neighbors. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are a people whose lives are being transformed, priorities reordered and habits reshaped around the person and work of Jesus – to love what he loves and be passionate about what he is passionate about.

This is what the life of a follower of Christ, a disciple looks like. Everything we do is to be intentional. Being a Christian is not a part-time calling, it's a lifestyle. Once we have transformed hearts, we can't help but want to live for him. But how? In light of the grace that we have received, how do we live our lives?

These are not just questions we ask in community group; they are questions that Kimberly and I asks as we raise teenagers. They are questions the staff asks as we serve the church. They are questions that we, as the church, need to ask collectively.

When we look at how Jesus lived his life, three things stand out: Jesus abided with his Father, he engaged in redemptive community with his disciples and he lived his life on mission.

First, we see that Jesus *abided with his Father*. Abiding is a deep connection with our source of life. In abiding, we experience the intimacy of our Savior. Throughout

Rev. Robert Cook, Rector



transformed hearts,  
transformed lives



THE LIFE OF A DISCIPLE

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the Gospels, we see Jesus abiding in an intimate relationship with his Father. Everything he did was a result of his abiding. In John 15:9-11, Jesus said "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept the Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full."

Jesus knew the Father's love through abiding with him and that informed every moment of every day he lived. Through abiding, we are not only reminded of our identity in Christ, but the priorities and habits of our lives also begin to be reoriented around the Gospel. We see our lives being transformed more and more into the image of Christ. For you and me, abiding is drinking deeply from the living water that satisfies our deepest thirsts. Are you thirsty? Are you running to the One who can quench your thirst?

Secondly, we see that Jesus engaged in redemptive community with his disciples. The community that Jesus cultivated was

a redemptive, life-giving and life-changing community. By God's grace, you and I have been brought into a new community.

As a community, we seek to live into our new identity in Christ by living each day out of the grace that we have been given. In community, we receive this grace and we extend this grace to one another. As you and I grow, we help others grow.

A redemptive community is the place where we are fully known and free to become more completely the unique expressions that God created us to be. Do you long to be fully known?

Yes...I know it can be scary, but there is but there is no greater freedom that you and I can experience than to be in community with one another where we no longer need to hide because grace has come.

Third, we see that Jesus *lived his life on mission*. He did not come with his agenda; he came to do all that his Father called him to. He submitted his life to his Father's agenda.

A life lived on mission is a life that is daily surrendered to Jesus. It is a life lived with purpose and intentionality. It is a life

where you and I are intentionally listening to and responding to God's gracious voice in the ordinary moments of life.

In living our lives on mission, we are participating in God's redemption of the world. It is about bringing Gospel renewal to those around us. Are you longing for more out of this life? Are you restless? If you really want more (and I know you do), then come and follow our Savior in building his kingdom instead of your own.

This summer we are going to take a closer look at what it looks like to follow Christ in these three ways. I want to invite you to the most soul satisfying journey in life in following our Savior as he transforms our hearts and lives. We can only respond by abiding in Christ, engaging in redemptive community and living our lives on mission.

In his love,



Robert+

## SPRING NEWCOMERS' CLASS



We have enjoyed getting to know those who attended the Newcomers' Class this winter and early spring. We are blessed to see how God is drawing people to himself and the body of St. Andrew's.

**Pictured (left to right):** Jay and Christina Snider, Marty Tucker, Regina Holtman, Liz and Adam Smitherman, John and Gloria Sewell, Lora Porter.

**Not pictured:** Amanda Cameron, Kara Tobey, Matt and Claire Foster, Sharon Pulla

# WHAT DREW US TO ST. ANDREW'S

By Matt Foster

Claire and I came to St. Andrew's in September of 2015. We had been married a little over a year, and in that time, neither of us had found a measure of peace about a church home. It took only one visit and a cursory examination of the gift bag for guests for God to clearly call us to St. Andrew's.

Claire and I came from decidedly different church experiences, but we had always known that we desired the same things out of a church. Claire grew up moving between churches of different sizes and denominations, but she was always rooted by her family's deep devotion to Bible Study Fellowship. Claire needed a church rooted in Scriptural truths that provided a structure for involvement and community through Sunday school classes and small groups. A critical part of Claire's teenage years were summers spent in Honduras on the mission field, and she was hungry for those same type of service opportunities either at home or abroad.

I grew up in the same church from birth until my first years out of college. I was heavily involved in this church; serving in whatever capacities there was need, from Vacation Bible School to student ministry, from the sound booth to ushering. I changed churches shortly after college in order to connect with more people my age, and I quickly found myself in another large church, serving in various capacities. I too longed for a church that valued missional opportunities, as well as a place where I could serve the body of Christ in different capacities.

Through my work as a high school Biblical Worldview teacher, I had grown to value sound Biblical teaching more than ever, and I recently completed a graduate degree where I had begun to apply my own views about Christian life to social justice in East Africa, specifically Rwanda and the Lakes Region. Claire was simultaneously interested

in medicine and public health because of her own graduate work and her past work on the mission field. We were both adamant



that we wanted a church that provided us opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus, as well as to be participants, not just spectators, in worship.

After our first Sunday at St. Andrew's, we got into our vehicle and sat in awe of God's providence. From the details of the liturgy to the focus of worship to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the message that day, every dimension of our experience humbled us and brought us to a place of spiritual awakening that we had craved since we began our search for community. As we talked through the visitor gift that afternoon, we were struck by how every element or article resonated with a part of our spiritual journey and reflected the church we had been praying for and hoping to find.

Shortly after our first visit, we began to discover the extent of God's goodness and

sovereignty. We began to see familiar faces who reaffirmed our sense of belonging and helped ease our transition into a new body of believers. The mission awareness month began a couple of weeks later, and we were blessed to see a myriad of opportunities to serve at free health clinics or minister to foreign students through IFO. We attended our first Kingdom Life class and enjoyed the study of Galatians. We were eager to begin the Newcomers Class and learn more about what it means to be a member of St. Andrews. In the spring, we found a small group to call home and have been richly blessed by the love and support of our friends there. More recently, we participated in confirmation and loved the opportunity to share that experience with our family and friends.

In St. Andrew's, we have truly found a community of grace and healing. God has tremendously blessed us with nurturing and authentic relationships with the pastoral staff. He has provided rich and meaningful spaces to serve his people both inside and outside of the church. We have experienced the love, kindness and faithfulness of his body through our relationships with members of St. Andrew's. Claire and I have seen and felt an abundance of spiritual growth both as individuals and as a couple through the church's faithfulness to Scripture and the traditions of the church. St. Andrew's has been the answer to so many prayers and we are excited to continue finding out the extent of God's will for us here.

## NEW KNEELER

*Feeding the 5000* was given in thanksgiving if Dabbs, Mary, Will & Kate Cavin by Sylvia & Jimmy Van Dover. It was designed by Kissy Blanchat and stitched by Karen Shires.



# NEW BISHOP EMISSARIES



On May 2, the Very Rev. Gerry Schnackenberg, of Epiphany Anglican Fellowship in Longmont, Colo., and the Very Rev. Carl Buffington, New Covenant Church in Winter Springs, Fla., were consecrated as Bishop Emissaries from the Dioceses of Boga and Kibondo.

A Bishop Emissary of a Mission Partner promotes their Diocese, brings awareness of its works and needs to other organizations and Christian bodies outside the geographical borders of their Diocese. Thus, +Gerry and +Carl will represent their respective African Mission Partners in North America. Additionally, Bishop Jones will occasionally ask them, under his authority, to share in confirmations, provide pastoral visits to churches and take counsel with him and the other bishops in The Mission.

## BENEVOLENCE FUND

Through your generosity, Robert+, Dustin+ and Seth+ are able to assist those in our congregation who are facing financial hardship. This fund is almost completely supported by congregants donations – a wonderful example of the body of Christ taking care of each other. The following are expenditures from this fund during the first quarter of 2015.

### January

Rent/mortgage – \$1,795

Automobile related – \$1,099

### February

Automobile related – \$500

Rent/mortgage – \$1,585

Household expenses – \$3,520

### March

Rent/mortgage – \$585

Medical – \$1,000

Household expenses – \$1,606

**Thank you for your continued generosity!**

SUNDAY,  
JUNE 14

INSTRUCTIVE  
EUCHARIST



Do you ever wonder why we do what we do in our liturgy on Sunday mornings or how what we do on Sunday morning can actually inform and deepen our worship of God through out the week? During our regular services on June 14, we will give a detailed description of why we do what we do and the richness of the Anglican liturgy. It will be not just an instructive Eucharist but an instructive liturgy.

# STORIES FROM THOSE WHO SERVE

Beginnings, the early childhood area at St. Andrew's, is growing! We invite you to be a part of what God is doing in the lives of our littlest ones by serving once a month. You will be paired with an experienced teacher; students as young as 14 may serve as a volunteer. For more information contact [Tongua@saclr.org](mailto:Tongua@saclr.org) or [Jessie@saclr.org](mailto:Jessie@saclr.org).

I have LOVED being in there on Thursday mornings! What a sweet time to spend with the little ones and my dear friends who also serve! Our precious time has been filled with new discoveries. I am privileged to get to work with all the lovely people in the Early Childhood area.  
 – Pat Dyer

I've heard it said that if you ever need a shot of encouragement or enthusiasm for life, attend a high school football game. Volunteering in the nursery or toddler area is an even greater shot of encouragement for me. Their pure unadulterated joy for life, inquisitiveness, sweetness and innocence overwhelms your heart with love and joy for what truly matters in life—encouraging the next generation “to love the Lord their God with all of their heart, soul and mind,” from the abundant love that God has given us.  
 – Pauletta Baxter



The nursery at St. Andrew's is a peaceful place—most of the time. I have helped with the babies on Thursday mornings for about two years. We, and one or two of the “grannies,” are there from just before ten until about noon. The room is warm and welcoming, with cribs, rocking chairs and lots of toys and books for infants (and grannies) to enjoy. It is a very well organized and comforting environment for the occasionally unhappy child. This might be the first time a young mother has left her child with anyone other than her family. Our job is to make it possible for the mothers to have an hour and a half of Bible study and fellowship without any worry or distraction. Seeing a newborn gradually grow into a sturdy toddler is a particular joy that I highly recommend.  
 – Caroline Pugh

Children are important to God and I want to serve in ways that are important to him. While Jesus was on earth, he made a point to welcome children and affirm their value. When serving and loving kids, you are investing in their future! Serving children builds humility and patience into our lives. As a grandmother, I'm honored to serve these precious ones at St. Andrew's. It is a joyous time of blessing! You never expect the overwhelming joy you feel when interacting with these little ones. There is without a doubt eternal value in serving children. More than anything it is pleasing to Lord!  
 – Elaine Frost

Originally I volunteered in the early childhood area so that I could stay relationally connected to my grandson, who lives in Wyoming. I now continue because of the blessings and joy that I receive by serving. I enjoy the creative playtime with the 3- and 4-year olds. I have loosely applied the command of Christ when he told Peter, “If you love me, you will feed my sheep,” as I helped a 4-year old feed a stuffed bear a meal of zebra and chicken meat purchased from the pretend grocery store. I was also sent back to the store by the preschooler to buy chocolate milk for the bear. C.T. Studd said “Faith adds, but love multiplies. It blesses twice – him who gives it and him who gets it.” This has been true for me as I serve in the preschool area. Plus, I have lots of fun stories of my time with the preschoolers to share with my wife over lunch on Sunday!  
 – Bob Baxter

I was selfish and a little envious of friends with grandchildren. Not having any “in-laws”, I had no “grands,” so I did the next best thing. I “borrow” four to eight little ones once month in the Toddler Twos! Seeing precious little faces full of inquisitiveness and wonder, little hands that create pictures of Jesus' love and life, and little voices that repeat knowledge of God's love for them blesses me. It's such a joy! Tongua and the staff make it so easy; the lesson practically teaches itself. Everything is prepared. Now I have a daughter-in-law and I'm storing up experience! I highly recommend it!  
 – Lisa Wilkins

# WILSON ELEMENTARY

By Carol Nichols and Carol McMath

At St. Andrew's we identify as a "Community of God's Grace and Healing." This description affirms our commitment to transforming lives, both inside and outside the church, through relationships that embody Christ's love and mercy, and reflect the power of the Holy Spirit.

Wilson School Ministry is a wonderful example of transformation inside and outside our church doors. When we moved into this building eight years ago, our leadership began to seek and pray for a way to be an agent of hope for those surrounding us. Since then, we have been sharing our time, talents, offerings and prayers with the Wilson Elementary School community. Wilson Elementary, just a few miles from the church, serves students in pre-K through fifth grade, the majority of whom are surrounded with needs from financial insecurity, unstable home lives and English language challenges. While St. Andrew's cannot begin to do all that may be required, we attempt to help students feel loved and respected, cared for

and encouraged that they are capable and worthy of success.

Relationships that we develop with students and families may only last for a season, but the resulting transformation, faith and love are gifts directly from God and last an eternity.

The different facets of our ministry to Wilson students are organized around our specific outreach efforts. The most widely visible events are our annual Back-to-School Festival and Christmas Blessing. Both of these events require much planning and an "all hands on deck" approach to volunteering.

Held early in August, Back-to-School Festival provides a morning of fun for students and families to help ready students for the start of school, including new uniforms and a backpack for each student attending, community services, lunch, games and medical/dental attention.

On the first Tuesday evening in December, St. Andrew's invites Wilson students and staff and their families to come to the church for

Christmas Blessing. The families join us for a great meal, a craft and a plate of cookies. The students also receive a gift of a new school uniform. The night ends with the Gospel message and a time of prayer. This is a joyous time of sharing and building community.

In addition to these two church-wide events, St. Andrew's is present at school throughout the year through mentoring, donations and financial assistance.

The Encouragers Program is designed to provide an opportunity for interactions between students and mentors. From October through April, St. Andrew's volunteers meet weekly for a "boots on the ground" program designed to develop relationships as we practice classroom skills.

Good News Clubs meet on Monday afternoons in the fall and spring. These six-week, fun-filled, after-school sessions provide the opportunity for children to hear the Gospel and learn the truth from God's word.

Partnership in Education (PIE) is a leg of



# SCHOOL MINISTRY

Wilson Ministries that attempts to bridge Wilson School needs and St. Andrew's resources that do not neatly fit into other categories. PIE responds to extreme financial needs that may arise. Working with the school's counselor, Ms. Norris, we have helped a family that suffered catastrophic loss due to fire and assisted with some household/rent payments. Other discretionary funds are used to meet student specific needs. This year, Ms. Norris purchased gifts for needy students and their siblings at Christmas and will help students whose families cannot afford for them to participate in the spring school outing. To encourage membership in the PTA and help them raise funds for their projects throughout the year, St. Andrew's provides a student or staff Wilson t-shirt for each membership sold. We support the schools local events, from cupcakes or a bouncy house for fall festivals to this year's Hero's Ball dance.

In December, we provide every student with a free Wilson sweatshirt. New and

slightly used coats are solicited through the general congregation and delivered to Ms. Norris for distribution. We also coordinate with Ms. Norris to include Wilson in our annual Christmas food drive, Boxes of Love with 25 boxes delivered to the school right before the Christmas break. In the spring, St. Andrew's likes to recognize teachers and staff during Teacher Appreciation Week with small gifts for faculty and staff. At the end of May, St. Andrew's Church is delighted to host Wilson School's Fifth Grade Graduation. And throughout the year we collect Box Tops for Education and Soup Labels.

So what have we seen in our years in service to Wilson School? We have become known as a consistent and caring partner for this school community. Christmas Blessing and Back-to-School Festival serve a large number of families. Test scores have improved; children have been clothed and fed. We are greeted in their hallways with smiles and hugs. They are transformed, and so are we.



## Wilson School Ministry Team Leaders

### Overall Team Leader

Mary Carole Young

[mc.crane@mrmblaw.com](mailto:mc.crane@mrmblaw.com)

### Back-to-School Festival

David Jung

[david.jung@comcast.net](mailto:david.jung@comcast.net)

Karen McKinney

[kmckinney@ascc.state.ar.us](mailto:kmckinney@ascc.state.ar.us)

Mary Carole Young

[mc.crane@mrmblaw.com](mailto:mc.crane@mrmblaw.com)

### Christmas Blessing

Mary Cavin

[mcavin@mountaire.com](mailto:mcavin@mountaire.com)

Kim Montez

[montezka@archildren.org](mailto:montezka@archildren.org)

### Encouragers

Carol McMath

[cbmcmath@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cbmcmath@sbcglobal.net)

Carol Nichols

[jlncbn@att.net](mailto:jlncbn@att.net)

### Good News Clubs

Mary Cavin

[mcavin@mountaire.com](mailto:mcavin@mountaire.com)



## WHAT IF I'M NOT "FEELING IT?"

This may come as a shock, but some Sunday mornings I just don't feel it. Sometimes when I pray, I'm not warmed by the nearness of God's presence. There have been many times while reading Scripture that my heart is not stirred. The fuzzy feelings just aren't there. I feel unenthusiastic and discouraged.

What should I do? Close my eyes tighter? Lift my hands higher? Read another chapter of Romans with more fervency? Fake it 'til I make it? Abandon emotions? Give up?

Although it can be disorienting, not "feeling it" is one of the most critical and common points on the long journey of following Jesus. Arriving at this point is not a problem that must be fixed or avoided. It is, rather, an opportunity, a gift, through which we can grow in wisdom and learn to abide in Christ.

The problem, however, is that many of us have never learned what to do when our spiritual enthusiasm wanes or when we feel discouraged. We never learned, more generally, the role emotions play in being and making disciples.

I have found that we are tempted to relate to our emotions (wanted or unwanted) in two different, but equally unhelpful, ways: **rely** or **deny**.

**Rely:** When we rely, we cannot see beyond our feelings. Feelings become the truest thing about us, and they dictate our reality. We might say, "If I feel it, it must be true."

When we feel unenthusiastic or disappointed in this posture, we often scramble to recover better feelings or slip into depression because the unwanted feelings overwhelm us. Many people who rely on their feelings become dependent on positive or comforting religious experiences to sustain their spiritual life.

**Deny:** When we deny, we are saying that feelings don't matter, or feelings are dangerous and must be avoided at all costs. Denying is often a knee-jerk reaction to relying, but it is just another version of control.

When we feel unenthusiastic or disappointed in this posture, if we notice our feelings at all, we often try to suppress those feelings by performing Christian mind tricks: convincing ourselves or others that we ought not feel the way we do – squashing the feeling with rationality. When we deny

### Feelings make terrible mirrors but excellent windows.

our feelings, we run the risk of barricading the most important areas of our lives from the intrusion of God's grace.

The good news is that God is *always* present and active, working salvation-life through Christ by the Spirit – even when we're not feeling the fuzzies. Moreover, God is not surprised or offended by "negative" emotions or dryness. This means we need not deny or rely; we can **surrender** our feelings unto God.

When we surrender, we are simply naming our feelings (wanted or unwanted) and offering them to God. This is part of what Paul means in Romans 12:1-2 when he exhorts us to offer our bodies (that is, every aspect of our lives – including our emotions) as a *living sacrifice*. By offering our feelings, we seek not to control them or let them

control us; rather, we are opening our hearts to receive whatever God has for us.

A wise friend of mine once told me, *feelings make terrible mirrors but excellent windows*. Feelings are not the *main point*, but that doesn't mean they are irrelevant. When surrendered to God, feelings can become the *access point* where we learn to see God and ourselves differently. They become a window into the raw places of our heart where the Spirit is inviting us to trust God and be transformed more into the image of his Son.

This means coming to the place in our devotion where our enthusiasm has run dry *might be a good thing*. It might be a sign that God wants to wean us off our dependence on positive spiritual feelings so that we can learn to be sustained by God himself. Milk was necessary for a time, the writer of Hebrews says, but God wants to mature us to solid food!

If we desire to grow in maturity and wisdom, then one of the biggest mistakes we can make when positive spiritual feelings wane is to desperately search for ways to re-introduce enthusiasm. This is a mistake because God desires to take us *through* the dryness or *through* the discouragement in order to grow a new confidence that comes from learning to enjoy God himself, not just fuzzy spiritual feelings.

Consider an analogy with marriage. The exciting feelings that accompany the early stages of marriage cannot sustain a long-term, healthy relationship. In fact, many marriages fail because one or both parties never learned to deal with the natural waning of honeymoon emotions. "We just don't love each other any more" is a common refrain.

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Because marriage is about enjoying and encountering the other person, not simply maintaining pleasurable feelings associated with a relationship, mature marriages are not measured on the basis of ever-shifting emotional states. Rather, the ability to be present through embodied acts of love during seasons of dryness or discouragement is a sign of a healthy, mature marriage.

Worship in the Anglican tradition makes plenty of room for this posture toward emotions. Neither corporate liturgy on Sunday morning nor personal devotion requires a specific level of enthusiasm or a certain kind of feeling in order to participate rightly and encounter Christ. The liturgy is a vehicle appropriate for both enthusiasm *and* dryness, *joy and* sorrow. Worship is our

opportunity to surrender any emotion to God.

Taking our cue from the Psalmist, we can bring our self to God *exactly as we are*. In fact, there is no other way of being before God except as we are. Why pretend? This means it is safe to pray, "God, this is where I am today; help me to receive what you have to give."

## BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION CELEBRATION

On Sunday, May 10, Bishop Philip Jones joined us as we joyously celebrated the baptism of seven children and welcomed 17 new members through confirmation.





# PLANNING, PREPARING AND PARTNERING TO PLANT CHURCHES

While Joy and I were dating we had many discussions about our past and our hopes and dreams for the future. Our premarital counselor helped us think through our plans for the future and take steps in preparations for married life. For example, we discussed how many children we wanted to have. We landed on three or four, Lord willing of course, with one of them being an adoption. Let's fast forward to the present.

As many of you know we have two wonderful boys and Joy is currently carrying our third child! The moment we found out we began making preparations for the baby's arrival. Some people have made it clear that they want to help us make ready for this new baby or plan to help once the baby arrives. Knowing that people are coming along side us in this new season of our family is such a blessing. Our story personifies the importance of planning, preparing and partnering with others to accomplish life and ministry goals.

St. Andrew's has a goal of planting a church in North Little Rock and is currently "pregnant," per-se, as St. Peter's is in the process of being formed. While a few things have been decided, there is still much to consider and do before birthing this church in North Little Rock. Let me share some ways the church-plant is implementing plans and preparing.

A few months ago, The Very Rev. Dr. Allen Hughes, my church-planting coach and the Rector General *pro tem* for the Anglican Mission, came to help lead our group through a launch team boot camp. He made it clear that church planting is not only biblical, but that it is the best way to reach people who don't yet believe the Good News. He also helped us see how far along we are as a church plant and what steps need to be taken to ensure

the church plant is healthy.

Recently a Gathering/Evangelism Team has been formed (with plenty of room for more people) to discern the best way to gather people in order to connect them with St. Peter's and, ultimately, to Jesus. Over the next few months we are planning to host block parties, game nights, BBQ's, pool parties, etc., that will open the door for relationships to be formed and the Gospel to be shared. It is our hope that by August 2015 we will begin preview services. We believe this will make it possible to hold our official launch around November.

I am convinced that discipleship is central in helping people know and follow Jesus. For that reason, we have already started Growth Groups, or discipleship groups, that encourage people to GROW in their knowledge and love for God and others. We are also leading our first Alpha Course and have discovered this is a great place for new people to learn about and discuss the core teachings of the Christian faith.

All of our Launch Team members currently worship at St. Andrew's and you may have noticed a few new faces attending services. That's because God is already using St. Peter's to reach people who live north of the river. For example, Bob and Angela Byrd joined us at the beginning of 2015. You can read some of their story in the side bar.

I want to personally say thank you to the Launch Team members and the member's of St. Andrew's who have welcomed and loved Bob and Angela with the love of Christ. This is only the beginning of what God is doing and desires to do north of the river. Let's keep planning, preparing and exploring ways we can partner together to go "Make disciples that are making a difference" in North Little Rock!

## BOB & ANGELA'S STORY

"We first visited St. Andrew's for our dear friend's, Ebbon Caldwell, funeral service. We felt like something very special took place that day. Roger and Kary Edwards (Ebbon's parents) invited us to attend the Sunday service later that weekend and we decided to attend. We had been discussing the idea of attending a church and were going to explore. We never felt the need to go anywhere else after visiting a few Sunday services.

Roger and Kary, also invited us to come to a Growth Group at their home, while Jamie+ had also invited us to join the one at his house. We went to both places because we enjoyed everyone. We learned a lot about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in those gatherings.

We are currently attending an Alpha Course at Jamie's+ house and they are really opening our eyes about God's love. They are also helping me understand who the Holy Spirit is.

After a few months, we both felt a special summons to be a part of this wonderful church plant team, in order to help plant St. Peter's in North Little Rock. I guess you could say it is a calling for us to join this church plant.

I personally get so filled with emotions during certain songs, sermons, discussions and a myriad of other things. I have never been a part of a church that made me feel this way. The people are so wonderful and we are truly blessed to be a part of it all."

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

# The WILD love of Jesus

During VBS 2015, we will take three days to journey through the jungle depths of God's love for us.

On the first day, we will discover how WILD it is that Jesus came to Earth as a real person. He was an infant, a kid, a teenager and young adult before he ever began his ministry. He had the hiccups and skinned his knee. He was like us—

THAT'S WILD!

On day two, we will learn how WILD it is that Jesus was fully God. He could heal people, calm storms and even feed 5000 people with 1 boy's "lunchable." He was more than a prophet, more than a good person ... he was God—THAT'S WILD!

On day 3, we will end our jungle

adventure with the WILD realization that this complete God/man died on a cross for our sins and was raised to live again three days later—THAT'S WILD!

You can register your children, grandchildren, friends and family on Sunday mornings in the Narthex (just look for the big green umbrella) or fill out the form below and mail it to the church.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade **entering in fall of 2015:** \_\_\_\_\_ Home church: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies and/or other medical concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency (if parents are not available), contact name and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt size (please circle):    XS (2-4)    S (6-8)    M (10-12)    L (14-16)

**COST: \$5 DONATION APPRECIATED**

Forms will be available at church on Sundays, on the website ([www.saclr.org](http://www.saclr.org)) or you can mail your registration to the church office: 8300 Kanis Rd, Little Rock, AR 72204.

For questions or additional information, contact Kay Michael (614-6061; [kay@saclr.org](mailto:kay@saclr.org)).

# SPRING PICNIC FUN

On Sunday, May 17, St. Andrew's held it's annual spring picnic. We didn't let a little (or a lot of) rain get in the way of our fun, food and fellowship!



# THANKFUL FOR KAIROS' IMPACT

Dear St. Andrew's Church,

We are grateful for your gifts to the Kairos Prison Ministry. Through your donations, the ministry is able to pursue its mission of ministry to those who are impacted by incarceration. Through the grace of God, and enabled by your gifts, we are working to bring people lost in shame, guilt and hatred to know the healing and saving power of Jesus Christ and a new way of life.

We hope you understand how much your support of this ministry means to the people with whom we come into contact. Lives are touched and new hope is born because God has put our work on your heart. We are eternally grateful and hope that your love for us and our mission in Christ's name might continue.

Please continue to pray for the men as they strive to live out their faith behind the wall of Pine Bluff Correctional Unit and in the free world when they are released. The letter below (to the right) shows just how much of an impact St. Andrew's Church is making in lives of the men in the Pine Bluff Correctional Unit and Kairos.

Thank you,

John Pownall  
*Pine Bluff Unit Financial Secretary*

To Everyone Who Cares,

I just want to say thank you for all the love you have shown us – from the AGAPE to the food to the love you guys have shown us. I just want you to know it us much appreciated. I've been down for almost five years and this is the best time I've had since I've been down. As soon as I walked through the doors Friday morning, I could automatically feel the love in the air. When all the AGAPE started arriving, I started to break down. To know that many people took the time to pray for us means the world. To know ya'll pitched in your hard earned money, thank you. When I get out, I want to help people the way ya'll have helped us.

Thank You,  
#137369

Walk #42

# ENDURING STORMS

By Kyle Hookstra

We all have a lens, or lenses, through which we view the world, ways to make sense of the joys and the tragedies, explain the juxtaposition of good and evil, justify our decisions and complacency. Some hold firm in the midst of adversity, while others waver and wane at the slightest hint of hardship.

And yet, hardship is guaranteed. One of the most common threads throughout humanity is grief and pain. No one is immune to it, there's no escape. If you haven't experienced it yet, it's coming. If you have, welcome to the club.

Recently, some acquaintances of our family really started focusing their ministry on helping to reshape the landscape of suffering in our world. Their effort, the Young Suffering Club, "seeks to re-narrate the story of suffering by sharing the lives and lessons of real people—their honest answers, vulnerable struggles and surprising transformations through enduring life's greatest storms." As we share the scars and even the yet-to-be-healed wounds that come with such territory, the questions remain: "Could we bravely wear our suffering as a badge of honor? Could what appears to be the greatest loss possibly offer the greatest gain?"

It's a tall order to offer openness about the very thing that causes the most pain and heartache, but if every person in every culture will come face to face with the aftershocks of a flawed and broken world,

then why does it feel so unfamiliar and unfair when it happens?

May 25, 2014, was the beginning of my family's entrance into the "club." Pamela's Vertebral Artery Dissection that day caused a severe brain stem stroke that rendered the left side of her body extremely affected. Most brainstem strokes are fatal, and those that aren't often leave the person in a paralyzed or vegetative state. By the mercy of a loving God, her life was spared.

We have since ridden an unrelenting roller coaster of emotions and what-ifs that often begin in anger and end in tears. Anger emerges from the interruption this has had on our lives, the trauma of our hospital stay or the unending discomfort Pamela is in. At the same time, tears of joy come from the fact that our family is still in tact, but also tears of anguish that what used to be a simple task for Pamela now requires intense focus and determination just to attempt. Finally, tears also come from uncertainty for what our future holds.

Over the last year, we have come to accept what happened and feel like we're able to breathe a little bit deeper now that we're starting to come out of the months-long survival mode. It's been arduous, to say the least. Fits and bursts of overwhelming grief have been soothed by a steady dose of outpoured love from the Body of Christ at St. Andrew's. We are in awe of the way we've been taken care of by those around



us, most of whom we've never even met.

The question has already been posed, "Could what appears to be the greatest loss possibly offer the greatest gain?" but until now, I'm not sure how confidently we would have answered the affirmative. As we approach the one-year marker, though, we look back in awe of the God whose praises must be sung:

*Never once did we ever walk alone  
Never once did you leave us on our own  
You are faithful, God, you are faithful.*

If the God of Abraham, Isaac and Moses is who he says he is, then he must be faithful. If Jesus Christ of Nazareth is who he claims he is, then take heart because our suffering is not in vain. And so, we rest knowing our future is secure, our trials are but a moment and our calling to follow in our Teacher's steps has never been clearer. We are "helpless to change our past but great was Elohim to redeem. There's no rewind, only redeem."

There continue to be opportunities to be present with and serve the Hookstras in the midst of Pamela's ongoing recovery. If you are interested in supporting the Hookstras in concrete ways, please contact Seth ([seth@saclr.org](mailto:seth@saclr.org)) for further information.

## SAVE THE DATE: HOLY SPIRIT RETREAT



Mark your calendars for Friday, August 28, and Saturday, August 29. Bishop Sandy Greene will join us for a Holy Spirit retreat. More details to come; be on the look out for them in the announcements.

# TO – AND FROM – PLATON BALAI, HAITI, WITH LOVE

By Sandy Chai

A St. Andrew's team of six traveled to Haiti in March to offer art camp for the kids of Sts. Simon and Jude and a mobile medical clinic. Art camp is becoming a beloved tradition among our school kids, both creating art and having their image sketched by "Mesye" (Mr.) Joe. Our medical experience was eye-opening. This was the first clinic we have offered there in 10 years. We treated almost 300 patients in three days and learned that there is no

substantive health care available anywhere within several hours' travel of our sister church. We saw almost 50 people with severe high blood pressure and identified a few people with other serious conditions, one of whom we evacuated off the island with us for care on the mainland. We were blessed to learn later that this young lady survived. We are now working to continue to send medicine for the people with high blood pressure, since they have

no way to obtain it locally. We were also blessed to see people in church on Sunday proudly carrying the Creole Bibles that our VBS kids donated last summer. And we saw the progress of the new sewing school, where more than 20 women have learned how to embroider over the past year. The people of Sts. Simon and Jude asked us to convey their warmest greetings, love, and deepest thanks to all at St. Andrew's.



Our Haitian-American medical and art team



Father Vil celebrated Holy Communion on Sunday



Medical clinic in progress



Art camp in full swing



An embroidered benediction from one of the sewing ladies



Church ladies and their new Creole Bibles



A young artist at work



Our pharmacists in action

# REFLECTION: AT THE TABLE

By Wayne Wilson

Dottie Rambo's 1970's rendition of Agnus Dei, "Behold the Lamb," rises from the silence as the priest pours the wine. He then administers the elements to himself and the other priests. He turns to serve the nearest Chalice Bearer, who in turn serves another. As all the members of the ministry team behind the rail are served they proceed to serve the prayer and worship team over the rail. The ushers move out into the congregation methodically inviting, row by row, all who wish to come and be a part of God's table receiving the product of our Savior's sacrifice. Many bow to the cross as they enter the aisle before proceeding to the table. And we sing ...

*How beautiful the hands that served the wine and the bread and the sons of the earth. How beautiful the feet that walked the long dusty roads and the hills to the cross ...*

What is transpiring at this moment, as far as I am concerned, is the Gospel compactly manifested in its purest, most wonderful and beautiful expression. This is a large congregation, and as the center aisle fills with souls of all ages, races, shapes, sizes and backgrounds, I am reminded of any downtown food kitchen where the vagrant line up for life-saving sustenance. But these here this morning (being no less needy, even more so) are waiting to receive the "bread of Heaven" and the "cup of salvation." In this queue there are families with children in arm and in tow; husbands and wives; friends pushing friends in wheel chairs; people with canes and walkers; there is a wife leading her blind husband; an older gentleman aids his young palsied friend; there are young people in shorts and jeans; there are older people in suits and dresses. All are one in purpose—to gather for that special presence around his table. No one walks away disappointed.

Up front at the rail which symbolically

separates the eternal from the temporal, Heaven reaches over through its ministers and serves all these needy with bread, wine, gentle touches, prayers, consolations and blessings as song gently wafts about:

*... that my God would welcome me into this mystery, say take this bread, take this wine. Now the simple made divine for any to receive. By your mercy, we come to your table. By your grace, you are making us faithful. Lord, we remember you ...*

At the rail, at heaven's threshold, Debbie and I (wife and husband) kneel together as one and are served the elements of our redemption. We make it a point to look into the face of the representative of our benefactor at which point there arises an eternal connection that transcends time and flesh so that we see the very face of Jesus handing us his body, his blood.

After receiving communion, I cross myself, we rise, pivot and walk back to our seat. And as I make my way down the aisle, two things become most apparent. First, I experience something akin to that first kiss. The one I love, loves me and has physically proven it beyond a shadow of a doubt! Second, I am awe-struck by the sea of kneeling souls praying at their pews preparing for and thanking God for being allowed (like Mephibosheth) to partake at the king's table. So as I slide into my pew, I likewise kneel and continue communion in conversation with God, thanking him for his blessing of introducing me some four years past to the sacramental life and pleading that I be led to think on it, approach it, receive it and surrender to its influence with all the reverence, honor and solemnity it deserves. Having knelt for the last time this morning (the redeemed must now celebrate), I sit back to soak in this divine symphonic ballet of sight and sound unfolding before me, and I cannot help but conclude, "This is how it was



meant to be."

I cannot help but recall with sadness the hollowness with which I formerly approached this highest expression of corporate worship as if it were nothing but a memorial. Memorials are for dead people and events long past. This is not a memorial! It is a holistic encounter with the living Christ in community.

As the last of the needy file forward, the congregation begins to rise spontaneously person by person, section by section. The scene mimics time-lapsed video of a field coming to life with all manner of color as the cold dead winter gives way to the warm vibrancy of spring. And as we rise, we sing, "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emanuel's [God with us] veins ..." The entire atmosphere is intentionally being led in crescendo for as the faithful conclude singing about the fountain they move into a more celebratory version of the Agnus Dei than which they began. The volume and the tempo quickens. Even the tree branches dance outside the windows up front ...

*Thank you for the cross, Lord. Thank you for the price you paid, bearing all my sin and shame. In love, you came and gave amazing grace. Thank you for this love, Lord. Thank you for the nail pierced hands, washed me in your cleansing flow. Now all I know, your forgiveness and embrace. Worthy is the Lamb ...*

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**How Beautiful**, by Twila Paris

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**Remembrance** by Matt Maher & Matt Redman

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**Worthy Is The Lamb** by Darlene Zschech

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# DASH

The first weekend in May, DASH (that's the name of the youth group) took a crazy trip to Six Flags. We could have made it an ordinary trip. We could have driven down to Arlington, Texas, stayed the night in some motel, made our way to the park the next day, stayed the night again and come home the third day. That is too ordinary for such extraordinary people.

What we did was ... On Friday night, May 1, 23 kids showed up at the church raring to go at 10:30 p.m. After everyone got checked in, we spent the next few hours hanging out, playing basketball, Ping-Pong, foosball, etc. At half past midnight on Saturday, we all competed in some ridiculous group and head-to-head competitions. At 2 a.m. we all loaded a charter bus and headed to Texas. Did we go to sleep then? Not on your life! We watched movies, listened to music, talked, danced, joked and cheered on our driver (whose name is Shabazz). When we arrived at an Arlington McDonalds, we hopped for a quick carb load and jumped back on the bus to head to our primary destination. I'm not sure if it was sleep deprivation or not, but Six Flags seemed to be beckoning us, even challenging us to come in and have

the time of our lives. We accepted the challenge like true warriors. We climbed on every ride, walked every path, ate the food, played the games, weathered the lines and met new people until each one of our band was weary. For nine hours we battled, but we weren't finished yet. With the collective heart of a champion, we once again joined up with Shabazz as he led us to the next stop on our adventure. At 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, we pushed through the doors to Hard Rock Cafe and ate a meal of victory. We had slain the giant. We had won the race. We had put Six Flag over Texas in a full nelson of fun and Six Flags tapped out. Entering our metal chariot once more, we finally gave in to the deep sleep we had been longing for. I'm not sure if Shabazz had fluffed each individual seat while we dined, but those seats were divine for the next 5 1/2 hours. As I kept watch over our young adventurers, I spent some time with Jesus and took full stock of the day. I heard clearly from our Lord, "It is good." It is good to play. Adventure is important. God never intended for us to play it safe. He sure didn't! Jesus said in John 10:10, "The Thief comes only to steal kill and destroy; I have come that they may

have life, and have it to the full." How we live life to the full is not clearly defined. But if Jesus came and died so that we could live full life, then in view of His mercy, we should live that life!

The memories we shared on that trip bind us together. It's amazing the fellowship that happens while waiting in a long line just to ride a roller coaster for two minutes of excitement. Here are some high points to ask the teens about:

- Cooper, on full vocal rest, responding amazingly well to open ended questions while only uttering two words.
- Alexander closing his eyes on every ride, but riding them.
- A bird leaving some unwanted treasure with Mary Helene.
- William's ability to talk to anyone anywhere.
- Adam and David posing all the way through the Texas Giant just to make sure they got the picture they wanted.
- SHABAZZ!
- All the girls riding the water ride, but not one boy





Beka LeMaster, Office Manager/Communications

## BISHOP SOSPETER NDENZA'S VISIT

Between bishop consecrations and deacon ordinations, Bishop Sospeter of the Diocese of Kibondo, Tanzania, was able to take a few short days to spend with us in Little Rock. We, as a staff, were greatly encouraged by the love and infectious joy that +Sospeter radiates. He is a true shepherd not only of his people in Kibondo, but also of us here in Little Rock.

During his visit, he had the chance to attend our Tuesday staff meeting and share with us how God is moving in Kibondo and rejoice with us in God's continued presence at St. Andrew's. Many of you have seen the requests for prayer from Kibondo in the monthly *Missions In Focus* email. What you may not know is that we also send prayer requests for St. Andrew's to the diocesan headquarters. +Sospeter told us that he and his staff pray over those requests and for us every morning before they get to the business of the day.

April 29 marked the third anniversary of the creation of the diocese of Kibondo. Despite it's recent establishment, it is doing a great work among it's people, both through

infrastructure and evangelism. The diocese has a Bible school to train catechists to lead local parishes. The permanent housing for these men and women is almost complete and ready for them to move in.

You may remember that we had been



in prayer for funds to build the science laboratories required by the government for the diocesan secondary school to continue. Two of the three laboratories have been completed and the third will be done soon. Not only were they able to complete these laboratories within the required time frame, but the inspector said the laboratories were top notch and would be used as models for

other secondary schools needing to build labs. The school is ranked number four out of 69 schools in Tanzania!

The local churches have begun small groups on each street throughout their towns. These groups are invited friends and neighbors and the Gospel is spreading. +Sospeter was excited to share that many Muslims are converting and believing in Christ as they see and experience the power of God.

+Sospeter meets with the leaders of other protestant churches in the area each month to be in prayer for their nation. The current Tanzanian president is Muslim, but this is an election year. He covets our prayers for this election and for the ability of these clergy to be able to speak to the nation with one voice despite their theological differences.

It was, as it always is, a delight to spend time with +Sospeter. We always look forward to his visits. He gives his love to the people of St. Andrew's and invites all of you to come and visit.



## THE LOW DOWN ON X.L.

EXtraordinary Lives (XL) is St. Andrew's ministry to children and young adults with disabilities. Each Sunday morning in 2nd service, XL students exit the service with the



KREW Cuts kids during the sermon to meet in their own small group and hear from God's Word. Each week, volunteer leaders teach a lesson that has been written specifically for these yougn adults. XL participants also enjoy community building during this time as they share with each other high points and low points of their week.

Kay Michael, Children's Ministry Leader

We also invite the young adults in XL to find their place to worship and serve with us. You may see them greeting, ushering or serving in other ways. At St. Andrew's, XL students are encouraged to be active participants that help complete the body of Christ.

To learn more about XL, call or email (kay@saclr.org) me at the church office.



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# Guess Who's Coming To Dinner

Sign up with Kathy  
Stephenson  
([kathys@saclr.org](mailto:kathys@saclr.org))

June 12-13

