

Summer
2016



ST ANDREW'S

LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CAMPUS CENTER

An ELCA Open and Affirming Congregation



Ash Wednesday 2016 at St. Andrews with new pastor, Amy Thoren.

FINDING OUR MATCH IN THE INTERIM

by Rev. Roger Digges, President of the Board

It's been an eventful 16 months since I was elected president of the Lutheran Campus Center Board. Kudos to former president, John Wariner, who set a great example for me and continues to serve St. Andrew's by sharing his knowledge of how buildings work.

Interim periods can be anxious and trying times for congregations (and Board presidents!), but we were certainly blessed by the interim ministry of Pastor Amy Thoren. Pastor Amy began serving as interim pastor in March, 2015. By that time we had formed our call committee and met with Bishop John Roth to discuss the process of how a unique campus ministry/congregation would go about the business of calling a new pastor. In the summer of 2015, we were delighted to hear that the bishop had recommended Pastor Amy to be that pastor. The Church Council, Board of Trustees, and people of St. Andrew's all had an opportunity to hear and respond to Pastor Amy's vision for our Congregation. On November 15, St. Andrew's voted to ask the Synod Council to issue her a call to special ministry. They did so in January, 2016, and Pastor Amy C. Thoren was installed as our pastor on February 28.

We appreciate the energy, enthusiasm, and passion Pastor Amy brings to her work as pastor/director of St. Andrew's Church and Campus Center. She is an outstanding preacher and leader.

In addition to its usual work of caring for St. Andrew's building and finances, the Board of Trustees has made

(Continued on back page, **Board**)



Pastor Digges graciously tears himself away from better things to serve as our board president.

WHY I BELONG AT ST. ANDREW'S

by Professor Emerita Esther Portnoy, Mathematics

I belong to St Andrew's because I belong *at* St Andrew's.

When my husband and I were looking for a Lutheran church in Champaign-Urbana, we visited several off-campus congregations. We didn't just attend one or two Sunday morning services; at each place, over a few weeks we participated in as many activities as we could. We found people who are faithful in worship and generous in serving the community. Many of them became and continue to be our friends. But at St Andrew's we found our natural habitat.

St Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center is, obviously, a student ministry. Although we are retired faculty, in an important sense we are, and will always be, students: people who study. The habits of scholarship do not stop when we close the door on our campus offices. In any scholarly pursuit, we begin a research project with an open mind, expecting that some of what we learn will be at odds with what we had believed to be true. Some church people

BEING AROUND BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE AND READY, LIKE ABRAHAM, TO START OUT ON A JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN, SEEMS TO KEEP US FEELING YOUNG.

seem to feel threatened when this attitude of skepticism is applied to matters of faith. We have no wish to challenge such people, but we thrive in an environment where open inquiry is welcomed, where we can discuss new ideas with (Continued on page 3, **Belong**)

Board of Trustees: William Adams, Rev. Ray Bowers, Rev. Roger Digges, pres., Jason Fisher, Rev. Peter Hinrich, Tiana Montgomery and Bruce Rhoads

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INTRODUCING PASTOR AMY THOREN: a short interview

Born and raised in the Chicago suburbs, Thoren earned a B.A. from St. Olaf College, an M.Div. from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, did an extra seminary year at the University of Munich, was ordained in 2004, and served two congregations in Minneapolis/St. Paul before coming to central Illinois.



Pastor Thoren was chosen as one of 35 clergy across the country to partake in a theological-ecological program at Union Seminary in New York City in June. Al Gore was among the leaders of the program.

What got you interested in the specialized work of campus ministry?

For over 20 years, I've worked with youth and young adults in my ministry, and my internship was at the campus ministry site in St. Louis, MO. I find the concerns and faith inquiries of young adults this age extremely edifying as well as challenging to me and to the church at large. The contributions of young adults to the church can't be underestimated, and I fear we often forget about this capable, thoughtful, and faithful age group. Youth and young adults keep us honest in the church. We have a lot to learn from them.

Many around here say that you are an excellent preacher.

What does preaching mean to you?

Well, I wasn't born to speak publicly. I'm actually terribly nervous in front of people. But preaching the Gospel is central to me as pastor for a lot of reasons. First, I've been changed by hearing good preaching. I know what good preaching does to a person; it's absolutely life-giving to be both confronted and freed by God's Word. I can remember being sort of blown away by good sermons in my life. Second, I love the prep. It's when I get to spend time with books and ideas and do my own Bible study and theological reflection. Yet I *never* do those alone. I preach best when I know my people and know what's going on in their lives and hearts and minds. The community is always part of the process, because the message is contextual and a gift for all of us.

What are you most looking forward to at St. Andrew's in the coming academic year?

One local project and one global project: Locally, I am glad to have the support of our Board to get this building accessible. We've had 5 students in wheelchairs come through our doors in my one year here, but we can use only half our building due to its inaccessibility. To me, becoming accessible is critical for a church that says *everyone is welcome*. We've started fundraising and researching, and I'm thrilled that we'll be able to get downstairs and use our kitchen "soon." Globally, I'm eager for our 2017 Spring Break trip to Germany. It's the 500th anniversary of Luther's Reformation, but I am most impressed with the fact that our students don't want to be merely tourists. They want to learn from the great witness of Reformation and apply it to the critical issues of our day. Specifically, they're interested in the refugee crisis and how the German church is responding. So we're calling our trip "Reformation and Refugees." ✠

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MINISTRY WITH, TO, AND BY STUDENTS



How would you reform the church? Our "Wittenberg" door on the Quad was a hit again this October.



On this campus, known for excessive drinking, St. Andrew's students handed out 300 leaflets they designed about alcohol awareness with a list of crisis lines.



In April, we made a promotional video thanks to Darrell Homann's generous contributions of time & equipment. See it on our face book page!

FEELING LIKE PETER DURING HOLY WEEK

This spring, Holy Week and our UI Spring Break collided in a powerful way for us. We planned a shorter service trip to the Good Samaritan Inn, Decatur, IL, so we might have a little spring break left over afterwards. While this Inn is so much more than a food line, it was working in the food line and organizing the food where we had our Maundy Thursday “Peter” moment.

Adriana, a supervisor of us volunteer groups, unbeknownst to us had told Milton, their amazing cook, to pull out all the stops and welcome us with a gourmet meal! Practicing our Christian humility, we had been expecting to get our meal in the food line like everyone else. Instead, we were stunned when they brought us out

into the main dining room, and in front of everyone else, served us a gourmet meal! On the one hand, we couldn't refuse; on the other, it was tough to accept. We were embarrassed and very, very confused. What would you do?

It really got us thinking. On the one hand, sadly, it wasn't so different from the normal unjust state of affairs. Those who have access to good food eat it while those who don't make do, though usually not in the same dining room! On the other hand, we were moved by what Milton and Adriana intentionally sacrificed in their lives for the joy of working with/for the needy. *They were like Jesus in the foot washing text read on Maundy Thursday.*

This meal was freely given to honor us. And we were like Peter, feeling unworthy, uncomfortable, very moved. To serve and to be served go hand in hand, we concluded. And freely given



gifts are to be accepted gratefully. Thus began a week of powerful learning through service with, as much as for, others; powerful enough, in fact, that we've decided that this is a place we will return to in the future, to continue learning and practicing Christian service. ✕

—Lisa Pogue, Ph.D student, Materials Sciences & Engineering (pictured helping at Mercy Gardens, a community garden run by the Good Samaritan Inn, Decatur.



Esther organized the 'Drew's Team' again this year. L to R: Pr. Amy, Esther Portnoy, Lisa Pogue, Brian Gibbons, Hannah Burson.



THE ST. ANDREW'S CONNECTION

Jean Montano visited St. Andrew's in February to see the place where her grandparents, Roy Emrick and Jean Pease Emrick, met. After meeting in the 1950s at what is now St. Andrew's they were married a couple years later by Rev. Roger Gobel. Jean shared this picture of them with us!

Pictured on the left, graduate students Lisa and Brian met at St. Andrew's and are heading off to get married as our newsletter goes to press!!



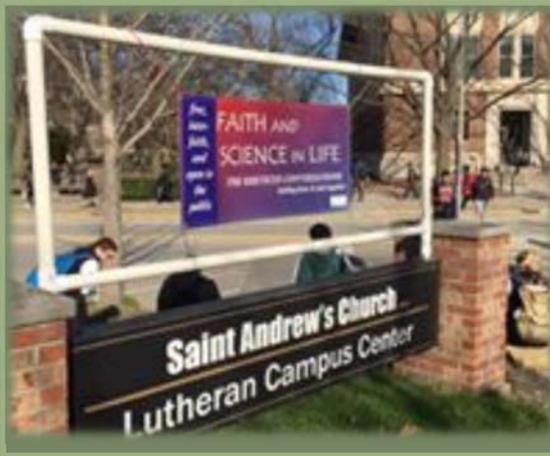
(*Belong*, continued from p. 1) others whose wisdom we trust. Besides, being around bright young people who are optimistic about the future and ready, like Abraham, to start out on a journey into the unknown, seems to keep us feeling young, too.

There are some obvious benefits seniors (faculty and others) can bring to a campus church. Sometimes our experience has taught us things that younger people haven't yet discovered. We are likely to be around during the holidays and over the summer, when most students are away, and we may be available to step in when students suddenly discover they have no time for a task they volunteered to do. We have the financial resources to contribute more than the typical student. Perhaps most importantly, we believe that it is valuable, especially on a secular campus, for students to have examples of older adults who are faithful Christians as well as committed scholars. Since we don't preach in the classroom, we think it is essential to be visible in church. So here we are, right where we belong. ✕

INTRODUCING NEXT YEAR'S COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

JUNIOR SOFIA GARFIAS-YI. Sofia has been a regular at St. Andrew's since 2014. She served on council last year. "I'm excited for all the changes that our church is going through, such as our initiative to make the basement accessible to everyone. I also look forward to welcoming and reaching out to new members and especially more undergraduate students. I dream that St. Andrews can continue serving the community around it, but also learn from it." Sofia also plays a mean viola at our worship services!





2015-16 RHETICUS CONVERSATIONS ON FAITH AND SCIENCE IN LIFE:

Oct 29, 2015 Rob Chappell, Assistant to the Honors Dean, ACES. "*A Cosmos Ruled by Love: Science, the Abrahamic Faiths, and the Medieval Worldview*"

Feb 8, 2016 Prof. Angus Rockett, Materials Science and Engineering. "*Energy Equity and the Environment*"

April 11, 2016 Prof. Gene Robinson, Director, Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology. "*From Me to We: Using Honey Bees to Find the Genetic Roots of Social Life*"

(Board, continued from p. 1)

broadening the congregation's financial base a top priority. As support from traditional sources declines, we are reaching out to alumni, local congregations and their members, parents and congregations whose students we have served to help us continue to expand our ministry to the campus community. What may seem like a little to most congregations means a lot to the continuation of our work.

Providing full access to all areas of the building is also a top

priority. The UI is well known for providing accessibility, and for having the national training center for paralympic athletes. Two members of the 2012 Paralympic team currently attend St. Andrew's as do other chair users, but they are restricted to St. Andrew's first floor. Its kitchen and gathering space downstairs are off limits. We plan to change that as soon as possible. We are in the initial stages of developing a project which will make all of the building accessible. We invite you to join us in making our dream of full accessibility a reality. ✕

CHURCH COUNCIL GRADUATES of 2016



ERIK KOUNTZ from Crystal Lake, IL, 2015-16 council president and choir member) heads now to Stanford University for graduate work in physics. Pictured here (L to R): Music director Martha Alwes, dad, Donald Kountz, brother Brian, Pastor Amy, Mom Linnea Kountz and grandfather, Jim Fant.

MORGAN CORBETT (council member, choir member) from St. Charles, IL. With a major in Business Process Management, and a minor in Anthropology, she heads next to Nashville, TN to begin work as an Accelerated Development Program Associate at Change Healthcare.



"My favorite thing about St. Andrew's is that it is a break away from the craziness of life. No matter what kind of day or week it has been, everything is better once I enter the center. I have great friends here who care about me and whom I care about and we are always there for each other."

THANK YOU FOR KEEPING THE FAITH WITH TODAY'S STUDENTS THROUGH YOUR SUPPORT OF ST. ANDREW'S LUTHERAN CAMPUS CENTER.

It's a crazy world and it's getting crazier.

College students *need* a church family to walk with them,

to be a safe space for exploring their doubts and hopes, and their deepening faith,

to be as vitally engaged in the issues of this world as their university classes are.

**THANKS TO YOU and YOUR GIFTS,
WE ALL ARE THAT CHURCH TOGETHER.**

Give online at www.lutherancampuscenter.org OR use the enclosed form.

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