

STAY Connected

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St. Andrew's, A Beacon of Hope

Victor Szabo,
Class of '23,
B.S. Computer Science

St. Andrew's has been a beacon of hope during this crazy year. Services at St. Andrew's provided a consistent reminder of God's love for all people even during the course of a pandemic and between police brutality and mass shootings. The positive attitude that the members of the congregation, the pastor, and the student ministers share has been heartwarming. I am so grateful to have been a part of this community of worship throughout the pandemic, even remotely.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God above all else and to love your neighbor as yourself, and I believe it is the church's mission to help people understand this and do this. As a member of the St. A's Council for the year ahead, I look forward to finding ways to serve our neighbors better.



An impulsive springtime, vaccination era picnic after worship, garden fresh radishes included!



Student Minister Brendan planned our own separate, unique CROP Walk to raise money for the hungry. We raised over \$1,200 for CROP!



Pandemic did not cancel our Halloween pumpkin carving!

I Serve Hoping Others Would Do the Same for My Kids

Heather Pierce,
Board Treasurer



Greetings from St. Andrews! My name is Heather Pierce, and I currently serve as the Treasurer on the Board of Directors here. I am in my third year as a board member, and am honored to be able to support the ministry ongoing at our little corner on the University of Illinois campus. When my youngest headed off to college, I saw the opportunity to serve on the board as a way to help create a safe, nurturing environment for the young adults at St. Andrews to come together and explore their faith, something I deeply hoped parents in campus communities elsewhere were doing to provide such a welcoming environment for my kids. As you read through our newsletter, I hope you are able to get a glimpse of the wonderful students we have here at St. Andrews and the amazing work they are doing on their faith journeys.



Our Student Ministers sent a strong message to campus in the fall!



A Word From The Pastor and Director

Amy Thoren

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, dear partners in our ministry,

By God's grace, we have remained vibrant in this strange pandemic year through online worship, outside worship, online Bible studies, online book discussions, faith and science ministry, bonfires, movie watch parties, and more. Our students have sent cards to the elderly, food to the hungry, and care packages to the COVID-19 positive. God has raised up new leadership in the younger classes, and our students are already planning for fall semester.

Due to the support of our Board and our Partners – that includes you! – we have exciting news. A generous gift from a private donor funded an air ventilation system in our sanctuary, we continue to improve our untapped outdoor space for gathering and worship, and we are getting concrete about one of our greatest needs: a first-floor accessible kitchenette.

"We trust that God will provide, so we can keep the faith on campus more sustainably".

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that our board opened a new staff position at St. Andrew's to meet the changing needs of campus ministry in the ELCA. Due to strong support of our ministry, we were able to expand the hours of our previous part time Administrative Assistant to become a full-time Assistant Director. The new position adds the critical work of development: building stronger relationships with our alumni, partner congregations near and far, and individual supporters. With this change to our staffing, we trust that God will provide, so we can keep the faith on campus more sustainably. Our new Assistant Director, Mary Corkery, has already been a great blessing. You'll get to know her in this newsletter.

We are grateful for UIUC's visionary and proactive pandemic response, which has allowed for the best and COVID-safest university experience possible for students. With you, we look forward to another year of life-giving campus ministry grounded in the Gospel. We give thanks to God for your partnership!

Grace and Peace, Pr Amy Thoren



Our yard was one of our greatest blessings this year and allowed us to worship and share fellowship around the bonfire almost weekly.

Running Towards Fundraising

Mary Corkery,
Assistant Director



Most people hear the word *fundraising* and they turn and run, but not me. I have had a passion for the work for many years. I have always been someone who enjoys helping others, and have felt particularly called to helping others through non-profit fundraising. Fundraising is an integral part of any non-profit work. Without it, the organization would fail and the good that that organization is doing would not happen.

Campus Ministry needs fundraising. We provide such an important ministry for college and grad students. We become a home away from home, shoulders to cry on, family to pray with, friends to laugh with, a place to ask faith questions, a place to grow, and a place to be authentically ourselves. We are a community. But just like any community, it costs money. We have a building to maintain, food to buy, worship and events that need materials. This is why our alumni network, our partner congregations, and our individual supporters are so important to helping to maintain this wonderful ministry. We are all here for the students, to support them, love them, and care for them. This work is so important and valuable to me. I myself found a home in campus ministry at Lutheran Campus Ministry in St. Louis, and I know what this place can mean to students. I want to see us thrive and share our talents and passions with the greater community. There is so much we can and will do.



What in the World is a Lutheran?

Kenji Patin, Doctoral Candidate
Social/Personality Psychology

I first visited St. Andrew's in search of some free food during one of its weekly Chat and Chow events. I learned that there was a need for more volunteer cooks, and as someone who enjoys all things food-related, I quickly volunteered. However, as someone who grew up in a nondenominational Church, I wondered to myself, "What in the world is a Lutheran?" What I know now after these years at St. A's is that the members have become some of my best friends. I feel as though I can be myself around them because there is no such thing as a perfect Christian. I can talk about my highs as well as my lows, my doubts, and my questions. The last time I was this active within a church community was over 10 years ago! So, I'm very appreciative of St. Andrew's for their support in strengthening my relationship with God.

On Dec 10, 2020
Alexander Tam
was baptized into
Christ Jesus!

Alexander attended St.
Andrew's as an
undergraduate.



Pandemic era worship at campus ministry!

Whenever we could, we set up sound equipment and chairs in our yard for our Sunday morning services.



Pictured: Luisa helping lead worship.

My Faith Lives Outside The Church Walls

Luisa Ruge-Jones, PhD Candidate
Group and Organizational Communication



I feel most connected to God and my faith through action and physical connection to the world around me. When I was a teenager, often that meant I felt most connected to God when working as a camp counselor in the summer or walking a prayer labyrinth or the CROP Walk with my home church. This is one of the many reasons that I love St. Andrew's. There are SO MANY ways to quite literally get my hands dirty' and truly connect with faith through action. I love helping in the gardens around Champaign and Urbana, learning about eco-justice and faith as they come together, and reaching out to different parts of the community that I am a part of. Through St. Andrew's my faith is alive and I can put it into action in everything I do beyond a one-hour service on Sunday. At St. Andrew's, my faith lives outside walls and through others, and that is so incredible.



A Place to Connect Even Over Zoom

Kate Henderson,
Class of '23, B.A. Dance

St. Andrew's has been a very supportive presence for me over the past year. Navigating the uncertainty of being on campus during a pandemic along with classwork was both daunting and exhausting at times. However, having a place to connect with others even over Zoom allowed for a moment of calm every week. I am very grateful to everyone at St. Andrew's who continues to make it a wonderful and inviting place. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone better next year on Council. I am also excited to participate in activities and events to help give back to the community at St. Andrew's that has supported me so much these past two years I have been on campus.

Most of the year saw worship by Zoom. Beginning on Easter Sunday, we were able to open all windows in our sanctuary and host inside worship with the assurance of a backup air ventilation system a gracious private donor funded.



God has been faithful to this campus ministry!



Our 2020-21 Graduates



Gaby Gladysz

B.S. Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Education



Maddi Vogel

*B.A. Music;
B.A. Business*



Anna Sekiguchi

*B.S. Earth, Society, and Environmental Sustainability;
B. Political Science;
Minor in Sociology*



Our Student Ministers each preach once a year. Here are Brendan and Emilie preaching from the pulpit in spring after we started gathering in person.



We put our hands to the soil at Champaign's Randolph Street Community Garden, where people don't have access to fresh food or grocery stores. To provide extra support, we grew our own succulents and sold them, raising \$492 for the Garden.



Starting in spring, we were able to gather inside in small groups. Here we are studying a brand new translation of the Gospels!

Student Minister Brendan holding part of the harvest from our Food Pantry February. Though we collect year round, February brought in 107 lbs of food for food insecure students.



Student Minister Brendan talking about native plants during the CROP Walk.

Board of Trustees: Steve Blanke; Don Block; Sally Duchow; Rev. Priscila Geerdes; Garris Graham; Heather Pierce, Treasurer; Michelle Rome, President; Cheryl Light Shriner

Council 2020-21: Molly Banwart; Brendan O'Shaughnessy, President; Emilie Schramer; Stephanie Tillman; Kayla Vittore; Maddi Vogel

Staff 2020-21: Mary Corkery, Assistant Director; Brendan O'Shaughnessy, Student Minister of Faith in Action; Emilie Schramer, Student Minister of Communications; Amy C. Thoren, Pastor/Director; Nathan Waterson, Music Minister



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