



STORIES OF FAITH & GENEROSITY

ST. ANDREW
LUTHERAN CHURCH



FAITH THAT WELCOMES. LOVE THAT REACHES.

Dear Friends in Christ,

As St. Andrew marks 50 years of shared ministry, we give thanks for the faith and generosity that have shaped this community—for all who have prayed, served, given, and trusted God along the way. We also give thanks that the Spirit continues to lead us forward. "We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

This booklet gathers stories from across our congregation's life together. Each one bears witness to love made real here and to the faithful response of God's people. These are not simply ideas, but lived experiences—moments when faith and generosity took shape in action.

These pages celebrate our past while also inviting us into the future. Again and again, faith experienced in this community has moved people to share their time, resources, compassion, and courage. The stories remind us that we belong to something larger than ourselves and gently ask: How has God met you here? How might you now be called to serve others?

That same spirit guides our 50th Anniversary Appeal, *Faith that Welcomes. Love that Reaches*. For fifty years, people have been welcomed into faith through St. Andrew, and God is already preparing us for those yet to come.

Rooted in gratitude, we look ahead with hope—strengthening the foundations of this ministry so that Christ's love continues to be known here and shared for generations to come.

As you read, may you give thanks, be encouraged, and see your own story of faith and generosity continue to unfold for the sake of God's ongoing work among us.

With gratitude,

Pastor Peter Johnson
Pastor Matthew Fleming
Pastor Kristin Skare
Pastor Jeanne Aamot



NATALIE HOST

St. Andrew has had a big impact on my life and where I am today. My family and I started attending St. Andrew when I was in 3rd grade and it quickly became home to me. When I was in high school and dealing with a hard time, St. Andrew was the first place I turned to. This led me to getting involved with camp counseling at Spirit in the Pines, attending weekly youth group, and participating in multiple mission trips. When Mitch and I were dating, he started attending St. Andrew with me and it became our home church together. It is where we got married and have baptized our three children. It will always be home to our family.

I experience God at work at St. Andrew in many different ways. From listening to sermons, hosting family dinners and community events, to mission work that not only impacts our own community but also those in other states and

countries. One of my favorite ways to see God at work is through the children and the excitement and curiosity they bring to the church.

St. Andrew has always been there for me no matter what is happening in my life and I love to be able to show up and give back to a community that means so much to me. I know and trust that the work that they are doing will have a positive impact on our community, and I want to be able to help support the mission.

When I imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead, I hope others get to experience the kind of loving and caring church that I have experienced. I want others to show up and feel welcomed and a sense of community. I hope the youth programs continue to grow and reach even more kids and encourage them to stay involved in the church as they navigate life.



PATRICK AABERG

Home is where you belong, feel welcome, and can be your authentic self. It's also where people welcome and care for you. That is what St. Andrew Lutheran Church feels like to me. The St. Andrew community truly loves and cares for one another and for our neighbors, showing the world we are Christians by our love

Being a part of St Andrew makes me want to be a better person to the people and communities that matter most to me. Engaging with the weekly service, pastors, and people at St.

Andrew inspires me to have a better outlook while I strive to put the most important things at the center of my life.

Looking ahead, I hope St. Andrew continues to be a place of togetherness for all the people who gather here to share faith and fellowship. In many ways we live in a divided world, but at St. Andrew we can, and should, come together as children of God and set an example for the rest of our community and world.





LINNAE STOLE

How did you know St. Andrew was your church home?

As a lifelong St. Andrew member, I didn't consciously choose to make this my church home. From Sunday school and youth handbells to confirmation and church camp, I had built-in friends and community without even realizing it as a child. But it was when I returned home after college and living abroad for several years that I really leaned into the life and ministry of the congregation in new ways. As a young adult, I built new connections in Bells of Joy, the Seeds of Support Leadership team, and various small groups. Over the years, this church and the people in it have woven themselves into the fabric of my life, and that's what makes it home for me.



How do you experience God at work here at St. Andrew?

Without a doubt, I see God at work in the youth, with all their joy and energy. There are big moments, like the Sunday school Christmas program, when all the work of several months culminates in young people sharing the story of the ages. There are also little moments, like one of my youth bell ringers excitedly showing off her loose tooth during a Wednesday rehearsal, or kids excited to tell me that they signed up for camp for the first time. Their stories may not be related to the music we're practicing, but they still want to share—and I want to hear! We are a church that welcomes these young ones, with all their questions, wiggles, giggles and more, and I see God showing up in them every week.



What is it about St. Andrew that moves you to show up—with your time, your care, and your generosity?

St. Andrew is THE place (outside my family unit) that has always been there—I really can't imagine how different my life would look without the roots I've put down in this place. I've engaged with other churches over the years, and none of them come close to the level of love and care for living out our faith as this one. I want every person who comes through our doors to feel welcomed, find ways to connect, and experience the transformative power of Christ-centered community.

When you imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead, what do you hope people experience here?

When I imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead, I hope it continues to be a place of belonging to everyone who enters. I hope young people will continue to feel surrounded by love and care, both from their leaders and their peers. I hope the wider community sees us as a partner and a positive example of what it means to be a church in the wider world. Above all, I hope we continue to be a place where people grow in their faith and go out into the world as servants of Christ.





It quickly became clear that St. Andrew was our church home.”



ROSS GILBERTSON

My first experience at St. Andrew came in 1997, when my wife and I attended the baptism of a friend’s newborn twins. At the time, we didn’t realize that the visit would become the beginning of a long and meaningful chapter in our lives. A few years later, after moving to Eden Prairie and welcoming our second child, we returned to St. Andrew in 2004 to have her baptized. Almost immediately, we felt a sense of connection—something that told us this was more than simply a place to attend church. It was a place where we could grow our faith and raise our family. Before long, we began attending regularly, and it quickly became clear that St. Andrew was our church home.

One of the most meaningful ways I experience God at work at St. Andrew is through the people and relationships formed here. Over the years, we discovered that friends, coworkers, and neighbors we already knew were also part of the St. Andrew community, and those connections deepened as new friendships formed. I see God at work in the many ways the church invests in children and families—through Sunday school, Vacation

Bible School, and especially Spirit in the Pines. Both of our daughters grew in faith and confidence through their camp experiences, and it was especially meaningful to watch our oldest later return as a counselor, helping younger campers experience the same joy and sense of belonging she once felt. Seeing our children invite friends from outside the church to attend camp, and later watching some of those families join St. Andrew, was a powerful reminder of how faith communities grow through simple invitations and shared experiences.

What moves me to continue showing up with my time, care, and generosity is the knowledge that St. Andrew truly lives out its mission of serving others. Over the years, I have had the privilege of serving as an usher for over 15 years, as a confirmation small group leader while both of our daughters went through the program, and now as a member of the Benevolence Committee. Each of these roles has allowed me to experience firsthand how the church’s generosity touches lives both within our congregation and in the wider

community. Being part of the Benevolence Committee is especially meaningful to me because it offers a direct opportunity to help steward resources toward causes that make a real difference. In addition, participating in the St. Andrew Dads Group for more than a decade has provided encouragement, accountability, and friendships that continue to shape me as a husband, father, and person of faith.

When I imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead, my hope is that future generations experience what our family has experienced—a welcoming community where faith grows naturally through relationships, service, and shared purpose. I hope that children and youth continue to find places where they feel known, valued, and inspired to live out their faith in daily life, and that adults continue to find opportunities to serve, learn, and support one another through every stage of life. Most of all, I hope St. Andrew remains a place where people discover that faith is not something we live alone, but something we live together—encouraging one another, serving others, and trusting that God is at work in our midst.





“This wasn’t just a place for worship; it was a hub of activity filled with laughter, kindness, and warmth.”

DENISE HOLTZ

Corey and I were both raised in ELCA churches in greater Minnesota. When our son, Ryan, was born, we were looking for a church for baptism and, more importantly, a church home with vibrant youth programming and a way to create a community for our family. This wasn't just a place for worship; it was a hub of activity filled with laughter, kindness, and warmth. In Ryan's preschool years, we experienced unforgettable moments through St. Andrew's Childcare program. The caregivers were nurturing and passionate, creating a loving environment where Ryan thrived with play, learning and laughter.

As a family with a school-aged child, we attended Sunday School together, where I taught through Grade 6. We experienced God at work through a wide range of programs, including Ryan's first overnight camp experience at Spirit in the Pines. We still remember the

smile on his [tired] face when he returned, and his determined declaration that he would be "a staff" when he grew up. He enjoyed youth group, confirmation group activities, mission trips, and camping trips, too. Our family felt that sense of community at St. Andrew, and Ryan formed bonds that would last a lifetime. The program directors, teachers, volunteers, and parents in the community celebrated his enthusiasm and further inspired him. In fact, following through on his Grade 2 dream job declaration, Ryan is returning to Spirit in the Pines as a staff member for a second summer in 2026, after serving as a CIT and Counselor for three summers in high school.

In this vibrant church community, we are moved to show up because St. Andrew isn't just a place of worship, but a nurturing home filled with love, service, and friendship. The opportunity to learn and grow, and the

connections we've made, contribute to a climate of kindness, inclusion, and dedication to service, locally and globally.

As I reflect on our family's connection to St. Andrew, I hope others experience the support of this community through life's challenges and the celebration of shared successes, all rooted in the foundation of their faith. Ryan grew into a strong, empathetic individual, surrounded by friends who shared his values and aspirations. Their shared experiences forged bonds that would define their youth, bring them closer and set the stage for lifelong friendships. And the training and leadership opportunities he's had as a Spirit in the Pines Counselor and staff member offer another strong foundation. As a young adult, he carries these values and experiences into the world, and we are forever grateful for the journey that began under St. Andrew's welcoming embrace, where we found community.





Learn more about Spirit in the Pines

Spirit in the Pines is an important place for youth to connect and build on their faith.

Hear stories from campers and counselors on their experience at camp.



JULIE AASGAARD

My family was introduced to St. Andrew 35 years ago after we moved to Eden Prairie. We were looking for a church home for our young family, and we were initially drawn to the early learning opportunities for our preschool children. As we experienced the love and care of their preschool teachers, St. Andrew's welcoming atmosphere, and the family-friendly activities, we knew that we had found our home.

I have experienced God at work here in so many ways throughout the years. As my kids grew and took part in Sunday School, camp, and church activities, I saw God's continued influence in their faith, friendships, and bonding relationships. I continue to see God at work here today in meaningful worship, in the care and love shown by all of the staff, and in the solid community He binds together.

We have received so much from St. Andrew through the years: enriching relationships, opportunities to examine and grow our faith, and a strong faith foundation and church home for our children. It is a privilege to try to give back. A bonus is that my life gets enriched and my faith gets stronger every time I volunteer or contribute in some way to God's work here.

In the years ahead, I hope that people continue to experience St. Andrew as a warm, welcoming place that they call home. I hope that families will grow closer here, and that all children will feel a sense of belonging and fellowship as they grow their faith. I hope that everyone will find this a place to see God, enrich faith, experience love and be encouraged to spread it to others.





ERIC WERLINGER

How did you know St. Andrew was your church home?

We knew St. Andrew was our church home when we found a place that truly cared about nurturing faith in our children while also supporting us as parents. When Kayden and Lilli were younger, we were intentionally looking for a church with a strong youth program—one that would help them build a foundation of faith and values that would guide them as they grew. From the beginning, St. Andrew felt welcoming and aligned with what we hoped for our family. We have developed many great friendships through the St. Andrew community over the years, not only for us as parents, but our daughters as well.

How do you experience God at work here at St. Andrew?

We experience God at work at St. Andrew through the people and ministry. We see it in the care given to the youth program when our kids were much younger through Sunday school and now with our youngest, Lilli, being a part of the high school youth program and part of the high school leadership team. I have seen God at work at St. Andrew through so many people in this community, from small groups, men's golf retreat, confirmation leaders, church council, youth program leaders and volunteers, community volunteering, and our pastoral team's actions within and outside of our St. Andrew community. I have also been lucky enough to be involved with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity builds across the Twin Cities with members of St. Andrew that volunteer their time to make sure there is more affordable housing for those that need it.

What is it about St. Andrew that moves you to show up—with your time, your care, and your generosity?

St. Andrew has consistently invested in our family, especially in our daughters, and that inspires us to invest back. Knowing that Kayden and Lilli are part of a community that values faith formation, kindness, and service makes us want to support that mission however we can. Showing up with our time and generosity feels like a natural response to a church that genuinely lives out its values and creates a space where people feel welcomed. We have especially loved the most recent additions of the high school youth podcasts and helping support this in a meaningful way. The high school youth have inspired us as people of faith and we are in awe of their vulnerability, thoughtfulness, and views of the world today.

When you imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead, what do you hope people experience here?

Looking ahead, we hope people continue to experience St. Andrew as a place of belonging where all are welcome to this community. We hope families feel supported, children feel valued, and youth feel empowered to live out their faith with intention. Most of all, we hope St. Andrew remains a community where people encounter God through meaningful relationships and a shared commitment to helping others inside and outside the St. Andrew community.



JAN & TIM MAUDLIN

Jan and Tim are grateful for God's amazing grace in Christ and the countless blessings felt by Eric, Laurie, and both of us. We joined St. Andrew in 1983. We are thankful for St. Andrew, including the blessings of Jan's inspiring 38 years of uplifting music ministry for Canticle Choir and Starlight Singers, while also being the longest serving St. Andrew staff member. We are grateful for Tim's many faith-filled St. Andrew experiences, including his work with Church Anew as the Chairperson of the Strategic Leadership Council, which includes Pastor Peter, Pastor Matthew, and other local and national church leaders.

We are thankful for St. Andrew's advocacy of Church Anew's vision, leadership, and programs. We are grateful for Church Anew's national impact and local and inner-city initiatives with Augustana Lutheran in the Phillips neighborhood, and Zion Baptist in North Minneapolis as part of the 50th Anniversary appeal. We celebrate that Church Anew produces ready-made resources for ministry, learning cohorts and experiences for Christian leaders, and incubates new models for Christian witness and belonging. Church Anew serves more than 1,500 congregations and 6,000 Christian leaders who have attended events or purchased resources, and reaches a global audience of more than 750,000 unique visitors to its website. We are thrilled that Church Anew has secured \$3.75 million in funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. in three separate initiatives: (a) Compelling Preaching Initiative with St. Luke's Episcopal in Atlanta to cultivate networks of

BIPOC preachers and inspiring preaching across the nation; (b) Thriving Congregations Initiative to transform the trajectory of twenty ELCA congregations through resource generation and intensive coaching; and (c) Nurturing Children through Worship in Prayer Initiative to help children grow in Christian faith by training Children's Ministers and producing arts-rich resources for worship.

We have enthusiastically provided initial financial support in 2026 for two new Church Anew initiatives. Church Anew and Lutheran Campus Ministry-Twin Cities have discerned a pathway toward sustainable models for Christian belonging, leadership development, and faith formation in a pilot program that will equip mainline students to reclaim the center of faith on college campuses. Church Anew hopes this program will be transferable to other campuses across the nation. Church Anew will sponsor a robust Preaching Festival that nurtures the proclamation of hundreds of preachers across the country. St. Andrew will host the festival in fall 2026 and spring 2027, convening prominent preachers and storytellers around a shared vision of the essential nature of gospel proclamation by ecumenical, diverse preachers for the current time.

We are grateful that St. Andrew will continue to be an inspiring example of a thriving faith community nourishing the body of Christ, as Church Anew also flourishes helping other faith communities to thrive in the future!



Learn more about Church Anew

Scan the code below to visit the Church Anew website.



AMANDA RICHTER

My family discovered the wonderful community of St. Andrew when we moved to Eden Prairie almost 13 years ago. After trying several churches in the area, it quickly became clear that the welcoming atmosphere at St. Andrew felt like home. For me, that began with forming an incredible bond with the women of Band of Sisters. From there, my sense of belonging grew as I became involved with Sunday School, Women of the Word, Dinner for 8, and various service opportunities. Over time, St. Andrew has become not just our church but truly our home, as our children grow up here and are embraced by this caring community.

I experience God in many ways at St. Andrew, especially through the beautiful worship music and heartfelt preaching. Most profoundly, though, I have encountered God through the people of St. Andrew—a community overflowing with love and compassion. When our family faced challenges raising our oldest son with special needs, God showed up through so many individuals who listened,

prayed, checked in, and supported us. From the Children's Ministry team to Women of the Word and Band of Sisters prayer warriors to the friends we see each week in our "usual service spot," the people of this church have walked beside us and embraced our son just as he is.

Because of the people who cared for us, I am continually moved to show generosity and compassion. When I see those values lived out all around me in this incredible community, I feel inspired to give back. Just as others have been the hands and feet of Christ to us through life's highs and lows, I am compelled to show up for others in the same way.

As I look toward St. Andrew's future, my hope is that it continues to grow so that many more people can experience the same outpouring of love and care that has shaped our family. I pray that St. Andrew remains a beacon of light to the wider community as well. In a world that often feels divided, may people always know they can find love, belonging, and a place to call home at St. Andrew.

“Just as others have been the hands and feet of Christ to us through life's highs and lows, I am compelled to show up for others in the same way.”





BRENT VENINGA

Joellyn, my wife, and I are relatively new to St. Andrew. We joined about 18 months ago after many years at other local churches. Similar to the ways of Jesus, what we found is that St. Andrew welcomes and supports all, and this truly resonates with us. After an enjoyable coffee and deep discussion with Pastor Matthew during our early summer months, I knew this place was for us!

I have experienced God at St. Andrew through the stories of spiritual journey shared here. By participating in both a Men's Group and a three week "digging deeper" series with our pastors, I see how God is working in the lives of each of us. I don't just see God in the event itself; I see Him in the vulnerable pauses and the brave honesty of the individuals surrounding me. These real and relevant faith-based conversations peppered with deep questions make me think: We are not alone in our questions and I have so much to learn!

I am moved to show up, get involved and give back thanks to the warmth of meaningful sermons, uplifting music and thought-provoking small group activities that bring all of us closer

to God. I am grateful for a community that consistently brings me closer to the heart of God.

In the years ahead, I hope that everyone that comes to St. Andrew experiences authentic transformation as we each become stronger in our faith. This would look like experiences and pathways that both resonate with how faith comes to life at an individual and collective level.



RHONDA & DAVE ALLEN

When we moved to Eden Prairie about 30 years ago, our primary focus in looking for a church home was one that had robust children's ministry program for our son Tyler, who was just entering into the Eden Prairie School District. St. Andrew checked the box for that and so much more that we never imagined. Since retiring, Dave enjoys volunteering with the church facilities, music programs, and co-hosting Wine & Fellowship with Pastor Matthew. Rhonda participates with a church support committee and attends Women of the Word (WOW). Fast forward 30 years later, St. Andrew has become our second home.

From the moment we enter the front door, God is at work through the beautiful music, excellent preaching, open and inclusive programs and activities, and warm, faithful

fellowship. Through participating in fellowship and small groups, we have expanded our network of church friends experiencing similar life journeys. St. Andrew has so many offerings and programs to meet all the seasons of life. Because we feel that we belong, we matter, and St. Andrew cares, we feel so blessed to have this as our church home.

As we imagine St. Andrew in the future, we hope and pray that people experience and become engaged in the beloved community that has helped us to grow in our faith lives. The friendship, love, and support we have received from our St. Andrew family is extraordinary. In today's world, it is so important to have this safe haven to worship, grow together, and be part of a loving community.

“Because we feel that we belong, we matter, and St. Andrew cares, we feel so blessed to have this as our church home.”



Story of Christmas

This past summer VBX students were asked about their thoughts about the Story of Christmas. Those recordings were then acted out by Spirit in the Pines counselors. Watch this fun video play out. This heartwarming retelling brings the season to life. Watch now and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas (even if it isn't Christmas)!



LYNDON MOQUIST

In 1997, we moved our family into Eden Prairie with our first child, hoping to find a church with a great youth program. We quickly learned about the children's choir and the large church camp at St. Andrew, which were similar to my wife's experience growing up at Mount Olivet church camp and choir. I was impressed that the St. Andrew choir was led by the former Gustavus choir director. I introduced myself as a former first trumpet in the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble and a 15-year professional trumpet player. I was invited to play in the brass quintet, which was a way to contribute as well as quickly make new friends via church activities. Since 1997, the musical talents at St. Andrew have blossomed every year with an awesome variety led by musical director, Tim Graf. It has felt like I am attending a concert performance along with the meaningful sermons over the years.

There is an energy of the Holy Spirit working in us and through each other, with so many ways to be involved in church that transcends to our daily lives. The variety and depth of musical talents is also wonderful to enjoy every Sunday. One example is the talented singing soloists that both grew up in the church Sunday school program, and are now giving of their talents in a profound, moving way. In addition, I have enjoyed the men's annual Fall golf retreats at

our beautiful camp for the last five years, where guys of all ages can be supportive of each other and vulnerable with our faith journey too.

The pastors all lead in their own authentic way and strive to make personal connections. Their compassion shows in their daily leadership as well as with their unique sermons shared Witnessing the wide variety of talents and constant efforts contributed by so many people has been the biggest inspiration for me to keep doing my part—especially seeing the heartfelt appreciation and smiles on faces.

As St. Andrew looks forward, I hope new and current members can feel connected and bonded in a heartfelt spiritual journey to maturing and experiencing the love of Jesus, supported by all of us. I am grateful that St. Andrew provided a positive Christian education for our daughters with their Sunday school through confirmation experiences. Spirit in the Pines church camp for kids and adults is truly special and amazing so hope that keeps thriving. I hope people take advantage of the many, many opportunities to get even more engaged and closely bonded in whichever pathways suit their passion at St. Andrew—always led and guided by a personal, grateful, joyful relationship with Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us meet any challenges, and to focus our hearts on spreading God's love to others



STEVE & BETH HARSTAD

For more than 28 years, St. Andrew has been at the heart of our family's life. When we first moved to Eden Prairie, finding a church home was important to us—and from our very first Sunday, St. Andrew simply felt like home. We were surrounded by familiar faces, fellow Gusties, and a warm, welcoming community that quickly became lifelong friends.

Over the years, St. Andrew has helped shape who we are and the values we try to live by every day. Our children, and now our grandchildren, were baptized at St. Andrew. They grew up in Sunday School, celebrated their First Communion here, and were all confirmed in this faith community. One of the traditions we cherished most was the Senior Year High School Service and Send-Off, a meaningful moment of blessing and encouragement as they stepped into the next chapter of their lives.

Church camp and family camp were also special parts of our journey, building friendships and memories that have lasted a lifetime. Bible studies at St. Andrew deepened our faith and strengthened relationships within the church community. One of the most meaningful milestones for our family was celebrating our daughter Kendall's wedding at St. Andrew—a beautiful reminder of how deeply this church is woven into our lives across generations.

Holiday worship at St. Andrew has become a cherished family tradition. Gathering together in this community, across generations, has helped form not only our family, but now our

children's families as well. St. Andrew has never simply been a place we attend; it has been a true community that has shaped our faith, strengthened our relationships, and guided our journey.

During difficult moments, this community has also been a source of strength and comfort. When I lost my younger brother, the love and support of the St. Andrew family, and the care of Pastor Peter, provided a steady foundation during a time of deep grief. We will always be grateful for that compassion and presence.

Service and generosity have also been part of our St. Andrew experience. Beth began teaching hat knitting at the church, which grew into a group that has lovingly created warm hats to share with others in need—small acts of care that reflect the spirit of this community. In many ways, supporting St. Andrew means helping extend this mission of faith, compassion, and service beyond our walls and into the lives of others.

Today, as we all navigate challenging times, St. Andrew continues to be a positive voice of love, acceptance, and clarity in sharing the message of Jesus. We strive to carry those values into our daily lives, and each Sunday remains a warm, renewing time to reconnect with our faith and the vibrant, caring community that has meant so much to our family.

St. Andrew has been, and will always be, an essential part of our story.





CARTER STAAF

How did you know St. Andrew was your church home?

I was not a church going person. My parents didn't go to church, and I thought Sundays were for golf. My wife, Julie, had a strong faith and grew up in two different churches.

I first went to St. Andrew for Mayor Jean Harris's funeral. I heard Pastor Rod, and his message and style drew me in. The next weekend I told Julie I wanted to try St. Andrew. She was surprised to say the least.

Once inside the doors at St. Andrew, I started meeting people. Everyone was so kind and welcoming; they were also so normal. They met me where I was and didn't make me feel weird about not knowing God.

How do you experience God at work here at St. Andrew?

I went to an Alpha course. I was very nervous my first night, but my small group leaders, Molly and Ruth, were amazing. They encouraged me to explore and open up to the experience. I really didn't want to go to the Holy Spirit retreat, but with their encouragement, I went. That weekend was the first time I committed to Christ.

What is it about St. Andrew that moves you to show up—with your time, your care, and your generosity?

It's the relationships that keep me at St. Andrew. I love our pastors and staff, but it's really the people. It's a community of saints. The Spirit draws us together in His service.

When you imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead, what do you hope people experience here?

I hope the church continues its commitment to our community's personal experience with Jesus.





GRACE STEWART

We first came to St. Andrew through a friend's recommendation, and it's hard to believe that 34 years have passed since then. It has been a joy to watch this church flourish over the decades. One of my many memories is from the construction of our current sanctuary, when our family—along with many others—inscribed Bible verses on the floor beneath the carpet, becoming a lasting part of the building's foundation.

Over the years, I have experienced God at work here through the wide variety of people I've met and connected with. The St. Andrew community is both professional and

approachable, and I'm deeply grateful for the inspiring role models whose faith and example have encouraged me.

St. Andrew also moves me to stay involved through its enriching studies and diverse range of volunteer opportunities, which have allowed me to see how individual gifts can create a collective impact. I've found that I have grown far more through these experiences than I could ever hope to contribute. I especially value how the church unites different generations, backgrounds, and life stages to work toward a common purpose.

TOBY NORD

Shortly after moving to Eden Prairie, we began looking for a church home as our kids were starting elementary school. We were newcomers hoping to establish roots and build community connections. Some of our new neighbors suggested we check out St. Andrew.

We have enjoyed the many opportunities the church has to offer. My wife, Janna, has participated in small group and has found ways to contribute by working with the teachers and students at Forest Hills. Our kids have gone through Sunday school, Vacation Bible School and confirmation, and now our grandkids go to St. Andrew daycare.

We knew St. Andrew is right for us because it feels like a neighborhood.

St. Andrew has provided a foundation from

which my relationship with God continues to grow. I believe I have a much better idea of what it means to be a Christian while remaining "me." And being involved in Church Anew has required me to think about and articulate what God means to me. I firmly believe in Church Anew's mission as they work to create resources for communities, congregations and church leaders to teach and spread Christian values. Church Anew has given me an opportunity to serve and contribute in a way that fits me best.

I continue to show up because St. Andrew gives me what I need, even when I am not exactly sure what that might be. It is uncanny in that way. Sometimes it is joy; sometimes it is a shoulder to cry on; sometimes it is deeper context for the lessons in the Bible. It is always a feeling of

renewal, fellowship, and—maybe—a donut.

I believe I am a better person, a better father, a better husband, and a better friend because of St. Andrew. I sincerely hope we continue to find ways to communicate the Christian messages of hope, love, kindness and grace to all, just as I hope people find what they need, like my family and I did, in any future version of St. Andrew.





JOEY & CORY JOHNS

We both grew up in different faith traditions: Joey—Mormon, and Cory—Lutheran, and we had each been away from the church since we were young. Eventually, we felt a pull to find a church that reflected what we believed together. We spent time watching YouTube videos, talking through our faith, and realizing that Lutheran theology felt right for both of us. From there, we researched churches online, read mission statements, and looked for a community that aligned with our values. Human rights and equality matter deeply to us, and St. Andrew stood out with its welcoming mission and grounded approach to faith. When we walked through the doors for the first time, the warmth of the people and the message made us feel we hadn't just made a good choice—we had been guided there.

Not long after joining, life shifted in painful ways. Joey's best friend, NeNee, was diagnosed with leukemia and later passed away. In that

“When we walked through the doors for the first time, the warmth of the people and the message made us feel we hadn't just made a good choice—we had been guided there.”



heartbreak, we felt God's presence through the timing and support around us. Cory struggles with extreme social anxiety, and didn't realize how much he needed a church community until he suddenly had one. The kindness and genuine care at St. Andrew helped him open up in ways he never expected. Our first Sunday happened to be the first day of Lent, and it felt like divine timing—God opening a door right when we needed it most. Now, two years later, we continue to experience God's blessing through the prayers, care, and steady sense of community that surrounds us.

What keeps us returning is that St. Andrew talks about belonging—and truly lives it out. There's a real energy and love in the church, and the grace of God is reflected in ways that make us want to share that grace with others. We've been especially drawn to the small groups and activities that support the wider community, giving us a chance not just to attend church but

to participate in something meaningful. Showing up feels natural because of the goodness we've experienced at St. Andrew.

When we think about the future of St. Andrew, our hope is that anyone who walks through the doors experiences the same love, community, and deep sense of belonging that has meant so much to us. We want St. Andrew to remain a place where people can grow in their faith and feel God's presence in the same steady, comforting way we have. We hope St. Andrew continues to be a church where no one feels on the outside looking in, and where relationships form naturally—relationships that stretch beyond Sunday mornings and into everyday life.



JEANNE LIND

Over forty years ago Denny and I started attending St. Andrew with our young family. It was a growing congregation with families planting and nourishing the seeds of faith. As our family grew, so did our purpose-filled commitment and joy at being part of this congregation.

Our four daughters made wonderful connections through programs, youth and service trips, camp experiences and a strong sense of support, knowing St. Andrew was a place where

staff and other families cared about them.

Decades later, we still feel that support and sincere interest in our lives as our family has transitioned to adult children and grandchildren. We see St. Andrew as a vibrant congregation that has an openness, with strong leadership, program offerings, and the ability to adapt to community needs and beyond as they arise.

Denny and I feel fortunate to be a part of the St. Andrew family.



MARY SALYARDS

How did you know St. Andrew was your church home?

Thirty years ago, Dan and I moved to Eden Prairie, Minnesota. It was a new opportunity for my husband in his work. That relocation brought several “news”: new state, new community, new home, and new church. This would be a time and opportunity for exploring and new discovery.

During the two to three months of settling in, we visited a number of churches in the area for Sunday services. I recall the initial feeling I had as we arrived at St. Andrew; seeing a rather modest structure (the current Fellowship Hall) in a beautiful pastoral setting. The church was framed with the greenery of the wetland, the flowing of the waters of Purgatory Creek, and the protection of the towering oak tree. It reminded me of the peace and joy of my childhood days on the family farm, tucked away in peace and quiet. It spoke to me, “Welcome,

peace be with you.” I had the same feeling of peace as we were greeted by a community with acts of kindness and love.

This year, the 50th anniversary of St. Andrew Church is in the same pastoral setting, with a large sanctuary, a vibrant and growing community of faith—with all created and sustained because of the love, compassion, and acceptance of “All are Welcome!” I knew it was our church home three decades ago, and that is true today with the wonderful and abiding pastors and dedicated church staff. Truly, a blessing in my life.

How do you experience God at work here at St. Andrew?

All God’s children are welcome at St. Andrew. This is evident by the “buzz” of joy and love, compassion, and concern for others as signs of WELCOME and words of joy and love are uttered to all who come to worship. There is



an additional bonus hour of donuts and coffee following church services that has the added blessing of a multigenerational gathering—the glee and excitement of children and their parents, the mingling and sharing of stories, and the grandparents looking on with such love and support. Those who may be alone find joy in sharing this special time with others seeking a time for conversation and sharing. Hope, echoing the promise of God’s goodness; a flurry of activity where blessings abound and God’s grace and love flow freely for all!

What is it about St. Andrew that moves you to show up—with your time, your care, and your generosity?

In the 30 years that I have been a part of the St. Andrew Church Community, I have experienced and received the gift of God’s Word via the amazing and gifted pastors that have guided and supported me and my family in times of joy, loss, sorrow, and celebration. The chapters in my life, my journeys, may be unique to me, for God has a plan for each one of us. But I believe our human needs of feeding our heart, soul and body are universal. And loving one another and our neighbor, all with whom we commune and share this life, are present and offered at St. Andrew.

The weekly worship services of Scripture and the Word, provided to us by our wonderful, knowledgeable and dedicated pastors who bring the word to us in today’s world and people’s needs are a gift which grounds me and guides me each day. The Music Ministry is par excellence at St. Andrew with outstanding leaders, and for me, I “show up” for Canticle Choir not because I am a great talent but because I experience

the joy of singing and praising God with friends singing alongside of me.

I show up for coming together around the many opportunities to share a meal, a small group potluck, a Wednesday evening dinner for all who wish to dine out. I enjoy volunteering and serving, supporting others when there is a need for funeral luncheons for families to share and heal. Having been a recipient of this gift, I know the love of St. Andrew.

What makes me show up is gratitude and a desire to do unto others as the pastors, the church community, and the many friends that have cared for me in love and spirit. St. Andrew is my home away from home. It is where I find purpose and receive an abundance of blessings.

When you imagine St. Andrew in the years ahead what do you hope people experience here?

I imagine a thriving St. Andrew church community which will continue to be a place of God’s love and radiant light that is far-reaching in love for one another. A place where the door is always open (or no doors!). A place or dwelling that welcomes the treasure of the heart in ALL people. A place where there is no fear “to be” so the good in each of us becomes the common good and a beacon of light in our world.



