

Word of the Week



A Devotional

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week Devotions

Written by 53 St Andrew's Members Ages 65 and Better!

Each person chose a verse from the Bible that spoke to their heart.

They wrote their thoughts on how this verse influenced their life. They included a question and closed with a prayer.

Ways to apply Word of the Week

Use personally for your devotion time.

Meet with, zoom or phone another person and read together – discuss the question and close in prayer.

Use with your current Small Group – or begin a Word of the Week Small Group.

Send Word of the Week out to others – weekly or as you feel moved.

Write your own Word of the Week post and have this as a devotional legacy witness for your family and friends.

Be creative – what are other ways to apply Word of the Week?

Our prayer is that the Word of God will comfort, encourage, and stir the soul of all who read Word of the Week.

Thank you to each person who graciously shared their faith, story and heart for Christ. God blesses us through each writer!

Sue Lennartson, whose contribution concludes this devotion, led this ministry project.

ALL PRAISE AND THANKS TO GOD!

Word of the Week

Week 1



Margit Joy Maakestad Coltvet

- Wife (Ben) for 52 years, Mother of 5, Grandmother of 19
- Public Health Nurse – Missionary for ELCA
- Musician – singer, pianist, Suzuki Violin Teacher for 35 years

Word of the Week

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Romans 8:38-39

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

As I have been studying the book of Romans for our Women of the Word Bible Study this fall, I found my mother's study of Romans. In the front cover of the lesson book she had written out in beautiful calligraphy the words of this hymn: “God's Word is Our Great Heritage.”

ELW #509 (LBW #239). There is only one verse:

*“God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever,
to spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way; in death it is our stay.
Lord grant while time shall last your church may hold it fast
throughout all generations.”*

What wonderful words written by Nicolai (NFS) Grundtvig (1788-1872) who, though he was raised by faithful Christian parents in the Danish church, struggled as he searched to find himself, asking: *Does God's Word have anything to say to me today?*

After a time of darkness in his life, he came back to the light of God's Word and wrote this hymn — A Mighty Fortress — using Martin Luther's hymn tune “Ein Fest Burg.” I was struck by the line:

*...Through life it guides our way; in death it is our stay.”
The words of Romans 8:38-39 have been that for me.*

The love of God, in Christ Jesus, has reached out and touched me through the Word of God. Life's tragedies have not separated me from that love – not even my sister's suicide or the death of my young nephew and two nieces from the same family. God's Word sharing the Grace of God has called out to me through the words and actions of my parents and continues to be present in my family, and my church. Thanks be to God.

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOU BEEN TOUCHED BY GOD'S WORD OR BY GOD'S FAMILY?

Prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for your Word. Thank you for the ways you include all people, all races, all creeds and all nations in your never stopping, never giving up, always and Forever Love. May we be faithful to share it with all generations. Open our hearts to receive you and your Word today. Amen*

St. Andrew's
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Word of the Week

Week 2



John Straiton

- Teaching Pastor at St. Andrew's
- Lives with his wife, Mary, in Stillwater, Minnesota
- Loves to study and teach the written word of God.

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Matthew 22:36-39

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

The command to “love the Lord your God” is called the “Shema.” Shema is the Hebrew word for “hear.” It’s the first word in the actual command in Deuteronomy 6:4. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”*

The fact that Jesus said the Shema was the “greatest and first” command would not have been a surprise to anyone. Devout Jews (like Jesus) prayed the Shema twice a day, 365 days a year—once in the morning and once at night. It’s part of my daily prayers.

And then out of 613 written commandments, Jesus added one more to the Shema, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* Basically Jesus summarized the main message of the entire Hebrew Bible in five words, “Love God, love your neighbor.”

Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan answered the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Our neighbor is anyone were in a position to help. It includes family, friends, associates, next door neighbors, and “the poor and the oppressed.”

We see the “poor and oppressed” as our neighbors because Jesus saw them as his neighbors. Jesus reached out to the poor, the sick, and the vulnerable. He also included people discriminated against by society due to social, religious, ethnic, or cultural reasons.

Jesus got personally involved with those who needed it most. He welcomed them, interacted with them, healed them, ate with them, valued them, and loved them. That is our joy and mission as well—to love God, and love our neighbors.

“WHO MIGHT YOUR NEIGHBOR BE TODAY?”

Prayer: *Almighty God, give me a heart to love, eyes to see my neighbor, and the joy of helping others. In Jesus’ name. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 3



Sharon Pfeiffer

- Live in Woodbury with my spouse and best friend of over 30 years
- Member of St. Andrew's since 2013
- Foundation of St. Andrew's Board Member 2017 – current
- St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Council Member 2020 - current
- Child of God, striving to walk in his ways and be the person he created me to be

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1 Corinthians 12:4-8

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Romans 12: 4-6

...for as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we though many, are one body in Christ, and individual members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...

Rank and status mattered a lot in the days of Jesus. And they matter no less today. It can be easy to fall into the belief that some gifts, spiritual or otherwise, are greater than others. What is lost in this kind of thinking is that all gifts, everything we have, is a gift from God. None is less important than the other, and all, working together with each other, are important to fulfill God's mission here on earth.

The situations we face in our day-to-day lives can spotlight the benefit of one person's skills over another's, and with that can mistakenly lead us to believe that one person is more valuable in all circumstances. Together we comprise the one body of Christ. Working together we are best able to fulfill Christ's expectations for us. None of us and none of our gifts is more valuable in God's view. We are equally valuable, and our individual gifts are equally important for the effective functioning of the whole. Shouldn't we then love and value each other for whatever gifts we bring, rather than compare and criticize?

CAN YOU THINK OF A SITUATION WHERE YOU FELT "LESS THAN" BECAUSE WHAT WAS BEING VALUED IN THE MOMENT WAS SOMETHING OTHER THAN WHAT YOU WERE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE? HAVE YOU SEEN THAT HAPPEN TO OTHERS? THINK ABOUT WHAT WAS BEING OVERLOOKED, AND WHAT OTHER GIFTS IF VALUED EQUALLY, WOULD HAVE ENHANCED THE SITUATION EVEN FURTHER.

Prayer: *Dear God, help us see each other for the valuable member of the whole body that we are. Help us lift one another up and give each other the space to serve fully by valuing their gifts, whatever they may be. Help us live into the scripture: ...one body, many members, one goal- serve the Lord.*

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Word of the Week

Week 4



Paul Pallmeyer

- Served as a missionary in Japan for six years
- Served as a pastor, writer and editor for church publications
- Served as Director for Evangelism of the American Lutheran Church

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Luke 14:15-24

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

Jesus' stories about the Kingdom of God never get old. A favorite of mine is the one the Parable of the Great Feast in Luke, which is as relevant today as it was when he told it.

A man prepares a great feast to which he invites many. But all invited find excuses for turning down the invitation. What's fascinating is the reasons they give for doing so. One man says that he has purchased some property and wants to take a look at it. But would someone buy property without seeing it first? Another invitee declines because he needs to test a yoke of oxen he has purchased, which sounds like buying a car and then seeing if it runs. Still another gives the strange excuse that he can't make it because he got married! Because of their refusals the dinner host tells his servants to invite anybody and everybody to his dinner. He wants everybody to enjoy it.

The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of right relationships – between us and God and us and one another. Many reject the invitation to be part of it because they think of their own needs and desires first – their careers, their bank accounts, their status, and many other things. God and their neighbors come next, if at all. But in doing so they cheat themselves out of the joys of the dinner of God's good gifts – forgiveness of sins, the abundant life and salvation. That's sad. But the good news is that God's dinner is still offered for all and God pleads for all to enjoy it! Passing on that news has been the passion that has motivated my ministry.

"AS ONE OF GOD'S SERVANTS, WHO MIGHT YOU INVITE TO THE DINNER OF GOD'S GRACE?"

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, thank you for the feast of your love and the gifts they provide. Move us to heed your command to invite others to enjoy this feast as well.*

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Word of the Week

Week 5

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Jeannie LeMere

- Passionate wife, mother and grandmother
- Lover of laughter and fun
- Oh so happily retired

Word of the Week

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2 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

This verse has helped me pull myself out of difficult situations for many years, but it's never been more important than it is today. The list of things to be fearful of gets longer and longer as the world grows more chaotic. If we are held in fear's grip, we live only a small part of the wonderful life God has mapped out for us. If we recognize fear and make a decision to release its hold on us, we are free to live our lives fully, with arms wide open.

Releasing fear's grip is easier said than done, isn't it? Every day we are bombarded with messages that make us feel weak and vulnerable, but we don't need to listen to them. We have choices about what we surround ourselves with – those choices aren't easy, but with God's help we can gain strength and power.

“WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND THAT HELPS YOU GAIN STRENGTH AND POWER?”

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, help us to live with arms wide open and to love our imperfect world every day. In your precious name we pray. Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 6

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Diane Diemer

- We have been members at St. Andrew's since 1988.
- We have seven grandchildren and I love being a grandma.
- I was the leader of the food service ministry at St Andrew's for many years.

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Romans 12:6-8

We have gifts that are different according to what His grace gave us. If a person's gift is speaking God's word, let him speak it in complete agreement with the faith. If a person's gift is serving, then let him serve. If it is teaching, let him teach. If it is encouraging others, let him encourage. If a person's gift is sharing, let him be generous. If it is managing, let him do it eagerly. If it is helping people in need, let him do it cheerfully.

I believe that God created each of us with unique abilities and talents. Our talent may be a special personality, an ability to give kind words, a musical ability, a gift of compassion, teaching, wisdom, or craftsmanship. Each of us has been given talents that we can use to help others and glorify God.

Among the talents that God has given me are cooking for large groups and sewing. For many years I led the food service ministry at church. I enjoyed meeting and serving so many people. The fellowship that I shared with the volunteers was especially wonderful. Preparing and serving funeral lunches for grieving families was an important part of our ministry.

Another of my talents is sewing. My mother taught me to sew when I was six years old. I have been using that gift to serve others ever since. I have used that gift in many ways. Today I am using it to make quilts to keep people warm.

Talents and abilities are our gift from God. Let us use them to serve others in amazing and creative ways.

"HOW ARE YOU USING YOUR GIFTS TO SERVE OTHERS AND GLORIFY GOD?"

Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for giving me special gifts and talents. Lead me in discovering meaningful ways to use them to serve others. Amen.*

Word of the Week

Week 7

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Harvey Taipale

- Married to Gayle for 51 years, 3 children and 4 grandchildren
- Joined St. Andrew's in 2003 after moving to Lake Elmo and happy to find that both changes were big plusses.
- Retired after 40 years in the computer business, but still enjoys learning about technology, science, and the Lutheran faith.

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Genesis 2:7

“Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.”

Ash Wednesday is the traditional beginning of a time for Christians to re-center themselves through re-examination and re-dedication. In the wonderfully poetic second account of creation in the Book of Genesis, we find the story of the beginning of our very existence — the source of our center. In that telling, several remarkable facts about our relationship with God are revealed: God wants us. God's act of creation was a deliberate work on his part, not some casual action or accident. He also wants us to know him — the authors of Genesis had no way of knowing this story unless it was told to them by the Creator. God does not distinguish within humankind. We all trace our being to the same dust and the same breath. God is personal — God breathed his own breath (or spirit), life-giving breath directly into the nostrils of mankind.

Without God we are spiritless and no more significant than the dust beneath our feet. But every human does carry God's Spirit, a Spirit that makes us full of potential and given to us with high expectations. We know these expectations because God sent Jesus in the same form as mankind to show us the ultimate model of what those expectations are. We have a powerful Creator and a perfect example to help us discern our center.

In our day to day lives, we all find it all too easy to lose sight of the miracle of our existence and the purpose of our creation. We often struggle to remember why we are here. This is a great time to remind ourselves of the gift we have been given and to think about how we are going to continue to use God's gift of life.

“WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP I NEED TO TAKE TO HONOR THE GIFT I HAVE BEEN GIVEN?”

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, Thank you for our very lives. Thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, which energizes our lives. Thank you for Jesus, who teaches us the way you would have us live. Be with us as we try to better see your will in our daily lives and help us to live as you would want. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 8

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Jo Knutson

- Active member of White Bear Lake/Mahtomedi Community for 67 years and of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church for 30 years
- Bible Study Leader for 20 some years, past church council member, pastor search committees
- 3 children, 8 grandchildren, 3 great grandchildren

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Psalm 62:4, 5, 6 (CEV)

Only God, gives inward peace, and I depend on Him. God alone, is the mighty rock that keeps me safe and He is the fortress where I feel secure. God saves me and honors me. He is the mighty rock where I find safety.

There are two things about these verses that speak very clearly to me. The first is in the fifth verse where the Psalmist points out that God is the only place to seek peace and hope. I know that it is only God that can give that inner, soul satisfying peace. That is the peace that calms and quiets like nothing else. It is the mysterious peace that truly passes my understanding.

The second way I am caught up in these verses is through the very strong words that I love to grasp: rock, fortress, refuge. Hebrew writers seem to use the word rock quite often and sometimes compared it to "mountain" where people and animals could actually run for protection. The word I especially hang onto is "fortress" as it depicts a solid place of security and protection. The Psalmist puts his personal stamp on each of the powerful names he gives to God; my rock, my fortress, my refuge, my hope, my salvation.

There are many other names that describe my wider relationship with my Lord, but these verses from Psalm 62 have become more precious to me as I have aged. I love these strong almost uncompromising words! Faith speaking figuratively of God as rock and fortress signifies the permanence and stability of divine protection and it is God, alone, from whom it comes.

"WHAT NAMES DO YOU GIVE GOD?"

Prayer: *Good and Gracious God, thank you for the gifts of grace, forgiveness, mercy, inner peace which you so freely give us among so many others. Sometimes feeling that peace eludes us and we need to grasp a sturdy anchor in the storm and run to you as our fortress. Thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all you are. Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 9

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Paul Berge

- Mary Ellen and I are members at St. Andrew's, together with our daughter, Kari, her husband, John, and their son, JP.
- I have served as a Lutheran parish pastor, missionary teacher in Madagascar, US Air Force Chaplain, professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary and director of Vision Slovakia at St. Andrew's.

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Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The apostle Paul was a missionary and proclaimer of the Gospel of the good news of Jesus Christ, establishing Christian communities in his travels. He moved from the East in Palestine and traveled to the West through Asia Minor (present-day country of Turkey) and across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia and the Greek peninsula, finally arriving as a Roman captive in the imperial city of Rome.

The Philippian letter is a powerful example of one of the 13 letters from Paul in the New Testament. Paul's letters are sent to communities of faith in Christ established in his travels. They express his deep and ongoing concerns for these people. This letter expresses Paul's final thoughts for the people as he wrote from his imprisonment in Rome. He sees his own death as imminent at the hands of the Romans and writes this letter of endearment to what he sees as imminent death that will also befall Christians in Philippi.

One might think this would be a morbid letter, but to the contrary, this letter has become known among Paul's letters as a letter of "joy" (Phil. 1:4, 25; 2:2, 29; 4:4) and "rejoicing" (Phil. 1:18, 19; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 4,10). Our verses come from Paul's concluding thoughts and prayer of thanksgiving for life and death in Christ. This letter speaks to our time with the mounting infections and daily death toll as I write this devotional during the days of our pandemic. Listen to these words of hope and promise as they speak to our time:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Phil. 4:6-7).

"AS YOU READ OUR VERSES FROM PHILIPPIANS, SURROUNDED BY COVID-19 CONCERNS, HOW DO PAUL'S WORDS SPEAK TO THE PEACE YOU HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS YOUR LORD?"

Prayer: *May these words and prayer of Paul guide our lives and hopes everyday and bring us reassurance in the promise that God's peace, which surpasses all understanding in these days, will guide our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 10

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Ben Coltvet

- Richly blessed by God's Spirit each new day
- Husband, Father, Grandfather of 19 grandchildren
- Challenged by the Spirit of God in a new chapter of life, Retirement

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II Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

When I was 11 years old, I moved to a new place. It was a difficult move for me. I left behind good friends, familiar places, and those special “hideouts” and meeting places that brought joy. I was moving to a place I knew nothing about. Leaving a small town, I was moving to live in the country with no kid friends living near.

My parents enrolled me in Summer Bible School. I can still feel the anxiety of going into that new church not knowing anyone. To top it off, since our house was not yet finished, I was staying with an older couple near the church in the country. I slept on the couch in the living room. My heart was heavy with sadness.

The first day of Bible School we were given an assignment for the next day – memorize a new Bible verse to be shared the next day. I remember going to sleep that night staring out the window with a hurting heart!

I awakened in the morning in a panic remembering that I was to have memorized a Bible verse for Bible School. I didn't have my Bible (it was packed in the moving truck). What should I do? As I looked around I saw a plaque on the wall above the sofa I was sleeping on. It said, “Pray without ceasing” II Thessalonians 5:17!

Wow, that became my Bible verse for the day. When my teacher asked why I chose this verse I told her why I picked it. She smiled and said, “Oh Bennie, that is such a precious story. Remember that verse always!”

And I have all through the years of my life! The gift of prayer has been my constant companion in sickness, loneliness, joy, pain, hurt, celebration, uncertainty, despair, hope, anxiety, fear – the list goes on! To experience the presence of God in all of the events of life has been a blessed gift!

The “Rejoice always” and “give thanks in all circumstances” that surround this short, powerful verse 17 continues to enrich, empower and guide my life in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

“WHAT IS PRAYER DOING IN YOUR LIFE TODAY?”

Prayer: *Empowering Holy Spirit, thank you for the gift of prayer that brings me into your healing presence in all circumstances of life. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 11

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Pamela Nuffort

- Immediate family include my husband and two adult children.
- Member(s) of St. Andrew's since 1980.
- My "spirituality is heightened" through being and exercising in God's beautiful naturescapes.

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Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Jesus actively embraced a life of giving, serving, losing, and dying — a life of servanthood and selflessness.

God is always at work around us. To know God, we need to experience him. We are the recipients of his love and humility. We are called to reach out to others with empathy and unity. It requires truth and unselfish giving. It is a clear purpose to which all are dedicated. Unity is the framework that helps man accomplish great things.

I believe it is through giving that we truly receive. I pray that I may do things for God's glory, not just mine. May I come to know God by experience as I obey God through a relationship built on faith and trust. Help me to develop this unity through actively studying the Bible, being in prayer with Him, and being active in worship. May I listen to God's invitation for me to work with him. Sometimes this will require that I make adjustments in my life. However, when I get God-oriented, I will see where he is at work and join him. God accomplishes his work through me. Apart from God, I can do nothing.

May my daily life reflect God's wisdom trying to reach out to touch someone else's life in a thoughtful, positive way. Help me, Lord, to look within myself and up to you for guidance, versus outside, where I get distracted. Showing genuine interest in others is a positive step forward in maintaining unity among believers.

"WHAT IS GOD'S WILL, AND HOW IS GOD WORKING THROUGH YOU?"

Prayer: *Thank you God for always being at work around us. Continue to strengthen our relationship with you — to follow you by faith and trust. May our love for you be revealed through your love for us; empower us to reach out to others in kindness and with hope. Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 12

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Nancene Getchell

- Married to Richard for 63 years; together we raised two sons, Christopher and Timothy
- Taught school for 30+ years in White Bear Lake and Stillwater School Districts
- Interests include needlepoint, reading WWII novels, traveling and music

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Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

This Bible verse has helped to provide strength to me at different times in my life. When I transitioned, as a teenager, from North Dakota to Florida, moving to a new community was quite traumatic, at first. My totally comfortable social zone had been replaced by complete strangers. For the first time, I felt "alone and afraid." The words of this Bible verse became very meaningful.

Another time it became meaningful was when my parents dropped me off at college. I can still see them in the car, waving goodbye as they pulled away. The feeling of loneliness swept over me. Again, "be strong and courageous" had much meaning.

As I moved on in life from college, to marriage, to my teaching job and to raising our children, these words were with me. During these years, many different decisions were made: buying our first house, building a second house, starting our boys in their schools, choosing "just the right summer camp," finding a church that seemed just right for us, and then, whether to continue working or not. Once we built the second house, it meant a new community and this Bible verse was important to me.

One of the most traumatic and lonely times that I have experienced was the death of our younger son, Tim, at age 41. His death was not on our radar at all. We learned, along with him, about his disease, Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. "The Lord, your God, will be with you, wherever you go... Do not be afraid." Our church family and other friends supported him and us continually. Our faith, with their help, sustained us and got us back on our feet. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, you are with me." Comforting words that come to mind.

"HAVE YOU FELT ALONE? HAVE YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCES LEFT YOU FEELING AFRAID? I HOPE THESE BIBLE VERSES WILL OFFER YOU STRENGTH, JUST AS THEY DID ME."

Prayer: *Gracious God, I thank you for this day and the opportunity to share these thoughts with you. During these days of uneasiness, we feel your presence by our side. "Do not be afraid" is a comfort to all of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

St. Andrew's
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Word of the Week

Week 13

saintandrews.org/grow



Glenn Taibl

- Parish Pastor - 32 years
- Luther Seminary – Philanthropic Advisor – 9 years
- Leadership roles at Center for Stewardship Leaders and Stewardship of Life Institute

Word of the Week



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Mark 14:38

Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

The sign at the coffee shop brought an early morning chuckle as I ordered a tall coffee to sustain me in the 6:30 a.m. meeting. “Life is short, stay awake for it.” Peter, James, and John should have stopped for coffee as they followed Jesus from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane. They had just finished a Passover meal, complete with wine and the warmth of a crowded room. As they arrived at the quiet garden, they could not stay awake. Jesus, full of agony for the inevitable journey to the cross, asked for their support. They only needed to stay awake and pray. Jesus warned them to stay awake, be alert, not only for his journey but for their own.

You and I will have our own experiences of the warm room, full meal, and long walk to a quiet garden. These are the experiences that lull us to sleep. They will come to us as attractive distractions that engage body, mind, and spirit to focus on interesting but not always helpful stops in the life-journey. They will come to us in the dread of events that discourage and bring despair and grief and fear of the future. We will be tempted to forget who we are as God's children. We will have a challenge to stay awake in this life of baptismal grace. Here is our cup of coffee then, Jesus Christ the Living Lord pours himself into the cups of our lives. Christ will not sleep, and we will stay awake.

“HOW DOES PRAYER HELP YOU IN BEING OPEN/AWAKE TO GOD’S PRESENCE IN YOUR LIFE-JOURNEY?”

Prayer: *Faithful Lord, we have a deep desire to hear you and see you as we move through the routine hours and days of life. When we are lulled into complacency and numbed by distractions that seem so important but are empty of your presence, prod us to wakefulness. Open our eyes and ears to see and hear you as you claim the center stage of our hearts. Amen.*

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 14

saintandrews.org/grow



Milt Kroschel

- My wife, Donna, and I live in Dellwood. We have been members of St. Andrew's for over 55 years.
- Bible Study leader and a student of escatology.
- Grateful to St. Andrews for the positive influence it has had on my children and grandchildren.

Word of the Week



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Luke 24:1-5

Now on the first day of the week — they came unto the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. (and said) “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”

The whole of Scripture that focuses on God's plan for mankind's salvation finds its center in the events that occurred that particular Sunday morning! Imagine, if you will, the emotions that flooded the hearts of the women. The Gospel according to Mark tells us “they trembled and were amazed.”

What really happened that morning? Yes, Jesus rose from the dead as he said he would. But there is a more significant aspect to all that occurred that morning. It affects all of us. If we were to ponder the significance of that event in the light of eternity we, too, should tremble with amazement for in this one event our eternal future is sealed.

As Jesus, himself, said later, “Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations.” That includes you and me.

Just as Christ defeated death so will we. Through the power of his resurrection he has made our resurrection a surety. He now lives with the Father and the day is near when we, too, shall join him there.

So, in light of all of this we, too, should view the empty tomb with trembling and amazement. Unlike the women, however, who asked, “Where have you laid him?” we can state with all assurance, “He is risen, he is risen indeed.” Because he lives, we, too, shall live!

This message is not just for you and me alone. Now that we recognize the full import of this event, should we not announce it to the world?

“WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE MESSAGE OF THE RESURRECTION?”

Prayer: *Dear Father, we come to you with a heart full of gratitude for the events of Easter Sunday. We ask that you would reveal to us the full significance of that day. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for that amazing sacrifice you made for our behalf. We thank you and praise your Holy Name. Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 15

saintandrews.org/grow



Pat Whelpley

- I taught blind and visually impaired children of all ages for 34 years.
- Ten years ago I started volunteering at the Community Resource Center. I love how welcoming it is to everyone who enters and gives hope to those it serves.
- I believe in the healing power of art. I do art projects with people impacted by dementia, sick and/or dying children through Ziggy's Art Bus, and children in a shelter for homeless youth.

Word of the Week



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Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

To everything there is a season.

A time for every purpose under heaven.

A time to be born, and a time to die.

A time to plant, and a time to reap

A time to kill, and a time to heal.

A time to break down, and a time to build up.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh.

A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones.

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.

A time to gain, and a time to lose.

A time to keep, and a time to throw away.

A time to tear, and a time to sew.

A time to keep silent, and a time to speak.

A time to love, and a time to hate.

A time for war, and a time for peace.

In researching this verse I learned that the 14 opposites are common in Hebrew poetry indicating completion. I think this verse shows how the whole spectrum of opposites are felt throughout our lives. Nothing stays the same. The difficult thing to realize is that it is God's design, not ours.

Each season has its appropriate time in the cycle of our lives and I have been comforted by them at different times. This was read at the funeral of a dear friend who I lost suddenly in a car accident when I was 20. When I was diagnosed with breast cancer 25 years ago, I wept but quickly got back to laughter and being optimistic.

Right now, we have to refrain from embracing but I am hopeful it won't be much longer.

**“WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES YOU ARE FACING? (COVID, JOB UNCERTAINTY, HOME LIFE AND FAMILY CONCERNS)?
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS COPE?
ARE YOU ASKING GOD FOR WISDOM AND GUIDANCE?”**

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, help me to understand and accept that you are in control, that there is a season for everything in your great design. Amen*

St. Andrew's
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Word of the Week

Week 16

saintandrews.org/grow



Gayle Taipale

- Lives in Lake Elmo with husband Harvey
- Mother of three adult children and four grandchildren
- Worked as a teacher and in Special Education

Word of the Week



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Psalm 30:4-5

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

It was 1984. We had three children ages 11, 7 and 2. The “swollen gland” in my neck wasn’t going away so I finally made an appointment with my doctor. After some tests for what I thought was going to be a simple diagnosis I was told that I had cancer. Wow! Didn’t expect that one. That led to surgery and 60 radiation treatments. Needless to say, it was a difficult time for our family.

Our pastor on one of his visits shared Psalms 30, and verse 5 of that passage really spoke to me that day as it has many times since. I realized that indeed prayers were being offered for my family and me and that many people had offered help and encouragement. A feeling of peace and hope came over me in the midst of the fear and uncertainty. Another round of cancer years later and other health issues, dealing with our son’s addiction and, of course, this past year’s uncertainties due to Covid have reminded me again and again of that verse.

We all experience times of weeping in the night when worries and uncertainties seem to take hold and it is hard to feel joy. However, if we put our trust in God and know that he puts people in our lives to help us bear our burdens, we can feel joy in the midst of our hardships and know that whatever the outcome God is there and feels our sorrow and enjoys our joys.

“WHEN HAVE YOU HAD FEELINGS OF DESPAIR AND FEAR ONLY TO BE REMINDED THAT GOD IS WITH YOU TO COMFORT AND GUIDE YOU?”

Prayer: *Thank you, dear God, for your presence in and for the people you place in our lives to help us remember that joy will come in the morning. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 17

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Bev Deak

- I was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA when I was 64.
- In 2017 I became an Oblate of the Sisters of St Benedict, St Paul Monastery, St Paul, MN.
- My favorite place is a rocky shore along Lake Superior in Northern Minnesota.

Word of the Week



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Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Some scripture is for eating. Have you ever eaten scripture? You can find some fascinating stories in the Bible about people who have done just that. Read about Ezekiel in Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 and John in Revelation 10:8-11. And I've eaten scripture too, but my story is quite different.

It was early morning Labor Day 1974 when the phone rang. It was my father calling long-distance with the news that my mother, who had been depressed, had taken her own life by drowning.

At that moment my heart stopped beating. I became a robot who had a million tasks to do. I purchased tickets for my husband and me to fly to Pennsylvania that day, and I took our three small children to our next-door neighbor's home where they added them to their six. Arriving "home" my greatest responsibility was to console my father who was devastated. I remember making funeral arrangements but not many other things during that week in PA. But this is what I do remember after returning home to MN with my mother's Bible.

I felt dead myself – exhausted physically with a brain that wouldn't stop asking the WHY questions over and over.

Then one morning I noticed my mother's Bible still unopened by me, so I decided to open it. And there on a scrap of paper, in my mother's handwriting, tucked between the pages, I read these words from Scripture "TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING." Proverbs 3:5

I ate those words. They nourished my soul, body, and mind. My heart started beating again. I came alive! Those words of trusting God with everything still course through my blood and my brain. My faith in God lives like those words.

"WHAT WORDS IN THE BIBLE GIVE YOU NEW LIFE?"

Prayer: *Dear God, help us to feel and see your presence every day; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 18

saintandrews.org/grow



Gary Woeltge

- Married to wife Sandie 56 years, 3 children, 10 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren
- Blessed in knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
- Likes reading, music, fishing, motorcycles, being with friends and family, serving and the outdoors

Word of the Week



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Psalm 23: 1-6

“The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul, he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and staff they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies, you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

I must admit it was a challenge to pick one verse from the Bible to share with you. I started and stopped a number of times, searching for just the right verse I wanted to write about. When I stopped thinking with my head, and let my heart take over, a passage became obvious, one that has always meant a lot to me.

This Psalm lets me sleep at night. It provides the comfort of knowing God is always present, in every situation, every circumstance and at all times. With that knowledge and assurance, I have nothing to fear. Like the good shepherd who stands guard over his flock protecting them from predators, God is protecting me.

Knowing God is in control allows me to have confidence in the future. God has not promised me wealth, perfect health, fame or a long life. However, I know that as I remain faithful to God's word that “surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

**“DO YOU WORRY OR HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE?
HOW DOES PSALM 23:1-6 HELP YOU?”**

Prayer: *Lord God, we love you, our Creator and God of the universe. Only you are holy, all powerful, and ever faithful. We give you praise and glory forever. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 19

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Jeannette Bakke

- Lives by the lake with her husband, Stan
- Spiritual director and retired seminary professor
- Author: *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*

Word of the Week



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Matthew 11:28-30 (The Message)

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and fully.”

Learning, learning, always learning... These verses invite me again and again to learn the “unforced rhythms of grace.” I forget. Or it seems that life crowds in... or...

There are many reasons that I need to hear this invitation repeatedly. I have found that I am easily drawn to second things rather than first things. These verses call me back to the One who has called me into being for this particular time and invites me day by day to trust in God and to make space for the quiet where I am more likely to hear God.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.

TAKE A MOMENT TO NOTICE YOUR RHYTHMS OF GRACE...

**“WHAT HELPS YOU LIVE OUT OF THE CENTER OF YOUR SOUL?
WHAT HELPS YOU PAY ATTENTION TO GOD AND TO YOUR OWN HEART?”**

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for calling me to pay attention day by day to our love relationship. Please show me how you are inviting me to do this now. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 20

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Dottie Hoel

- Wife of Richard for 51 years, Mother of Katie and Beth, Grandmother of Jack, Caroline, Evelyn, Elijah
- Member of St. Andrew's since 1989
- Gifted Education Specialist, tennis player, golfer

Word of the Week



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The 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

My father worked for the JR Watkins Company his entire life. He held various positions and worked in many cities for the company, which is why I was born in New Jersey, moved to Minnesota and then to Memphis, which is where the majority of my formative Christian education took place. We were a divided faith family. My father was Catholic, while my mother was Episcopalian. She raised my sister and me in that faith. My childhood was not steeped in Bible verses, though I remember the verse I had to memorize as a kindergartener: the 23rd Psalm. My dad practiced the verse over and over with me so that I could recite it and receive the small glow-in-the-dark cross that was the reward for mastery. I earned that cross and it went on to hang from a picture frame on my wall. Many nights I would fall asleep looking at that cross and remembering the verse. It brought me comfort then and it brings me comfort now. It reminds me that I am a part of the greater flock of God's children. While there are times that life's challenges seem overwhelming, keeping the faith that the Lord will see me through, guide me to greener pastures through the rough and rocky terrain of life, and eventually to God's house is a promise that sustains me. I learned something important as a little lamb that sustains me now as a ewe: I am still part of God's flock.

**"WHEN THE STORMS OF LIFE HIT YOU,
WHAT BRINGS YOU COMFORT AND SUSTAINS YOU?"**

Prayer: *Dear Lord bless the person reading this. Remind them that sometimes God calms the storm and sometimes He calms His child in the storm. You are a member of God's flock and are loved. Greener pastures will come. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 21

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Dick Getchell

- I am 87 years old, maybe 88 by the time you read this!
- Fantastic wife, kids and grandkids
- Love jazz, big band music, and medieval history

Word of the Week



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Psalm 50:15

**Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you,
and you shall glorify me.**

This was one of many verses I had to memorize in my Confirmation class of 1947. In those days, Confirmation was twice a week for two years, no excuses, and the front two rows in our church were reserved for our class every Sunday. This verse always stayed with me, as it gave comfort whenever I was in a difficult situation. Not that I was in many difficult situations, but I remember often saying that verse to myself in school when I was taking a test. I'm not sure I was delivered but at least I passed the test. It is a verse that can be thought of for all of kinds of circumstances. Back then as a kid, I think I even used it when I was up to bat! Today, it is a much different story, but still applies to the many daily encounters we all have. Small or large, just remember, "Call on me."

"COULD THIS BE A VERSE THAT YOU WILL REMEMBER AND USE YOURSELF?"

Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank you for being with me today. I pray that I will not have a need to call on you; however, I will and I know that you will be there. Regardless, I will always glorify you! I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 22

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Mary Blanchard

- Member of St Andrew's since 1995
- Lover of reading, walking, Bible study, lunching and cats
- I have been Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Christian and Missionary Alliance and Dutch Reformed, have done many Baptist Bible studies - before becoming Lutheran when we moved to MN. Jesus rocks!

Word of the Week

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John 6: 28-29

Then they said to Jesus, "What must we do to be doing the works (plural) of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work (singular) of God, that you believe in him whom he sent."

Growing up and into adulthood, I was always a works person. I thought I had to accomplish things to be worthwhile and loved. My father had taught us that we were what we got done, a pressure he had always put on himself as well. When I began reading the Bible in my early 30s, the above verse was the first one that ever jumped off the page at me. The people were clearly believing they had to DO something to have life eternal. Jesus told them the one thing they needed to do was to believe in him, the Son of God. When I read that, it spoke so clearly to me that believing in Jesus would trigger in me a DESIRE to do the things God wanted me to do, and God would give me the ability and the wisdom to know what they were and how to do them. It was such a burden off my shoulders when I realized that I didn't necessarily have to go to Africa to do God's work (although if God wanted me to go, God would give me the desire). God's work was all around me, I would be shown what my part was to do. God had created me to be me, with my set of gifts for God's purposes. I had no need to compare myself to anyone else. What a joy and sense of purpose that gave me, and it has stayed with me now for almost five decades.

"HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT THAT YOUR WORTH WAS BOUND UP IN YOUR "WORKS"? WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO "LET GO AND LET JESUS" SHOW YOU YOUR WORTH?"

Prayer: *Dearest Lord Jesus, thank you so much for loving me just as I am and for calling me to join in your kingdom work. Your yoke is easy and your burden is light when I walk in step you and follow your guidance. I know that every day is a new opportunity to serve with a fresh slate, because of your forgiveness and love. Thank you for showing me a life worth living. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 23

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Curt and Twila Johnson

• Curt and Twila have been members of St. Andrew's since 1962.

Curt:

- Majored in Chemistry and Business at NDSU
- Was a member of the Church Council and served as Business Administrator at St. Andrew's for 10 years after retiring from his previous line of work.
- Currently likes to spend time at the library reading the paper, going on walks, doing crosswords and playing bridge

Twila:

- Worked as a nurse for over 30 years in both clinic and hospital settings
- Loves to cook, quilt, and sew, biking
- Sang in church choir for over 30 years

Word of the Week



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Psalm 28:7

**“The Lord is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps with joy, and with my song I praise him.”**

We chose this Bible verse to represent our relationship with Christ as we feel inspired and comforted by his words. Our trust in God comes from believing that God will guide us in the daily activities and choices we make in our lives.

There are times when we try to take care of things ourselves instead of being patient enough to follow God's lead, even though we have learned that it proves to be so much more valuable to wait on God's word and trust in the Lord.

We have been blessed in raising four daughters who are our hearts' joy. From baptisms to weddings, in sporting events, concerts, and plays, we felt God's presence. Only with God's guidance were we able to find direction in supporting our family.

While raising our girls, there were many times that we would call on the Lord for wisdom and prayer! God has blessed us with 11 wonderful grandchildren, ranging in ages from 27 to 11. We have had the opportunity to be involved in their lives in many ways. We cherish our time together and love being grandparents!

We come from a Scandinavian background - having a tendency to be more private about our values and don't necessarily share our beliefs with others. We have found ways to show our connection to Christ through our actions and life choices:

Twila - sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, and Wednesday evenings. I have been involved with the quilting ministry, sewing baptism napkins, providing meals to families in need, and most recently making hundreds of masks to support those in need.

Curt - served as the Business Administrator at St. Andrew's for over 10 years, served on the Church Council, was involved in the fundraising and design of the Sanctuary, was the church's representative in the design and construction of St. Andrew's Village. A fun memory for Curt is being a part of a group that drove vans to South Dakota to pick up confirmation children from an Indian Reservation.

**“HOW DO YOU GET YOUR STRENGTH AND
WHAT MAKES YOUR HEART REJOICE?”**

Prayer: *Dear Lord, Thank you for all of the blessings you bestow upon us every day. Help us to be humble and grateful for all we have and to know that you are there to guide us in every way. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 24

saintandrews.org/grow



Debbie Starr

- I enjoy Bible Studies and looking for deeper meaning of scripture
- I enjoy reading and being helpful
- I love my prayer group

Word of the Week



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1st Corinthians 7:35

“I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraints upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.”

I am one of those early risers. I usually get up every morning between 4:30 and 5:30 a.m. I most often sit on the edge of the bed a few minutes before actually standing up and in that silence, I say good morning to God and ask him to direct my day, and to make me useful in his hands. After getting myself ready for the day, I get a cup of coffee and head to my desk. I grab my Bible, devotional book, notebook to settle down for some reading, prayer, writing and meditating.

That sounds really obedient and holy, doesn't it? Well, it isn't. because a few minutes into the devotion, my phone may ping. Someone has put something on Facebook or I received a text, and that inevitably leads to a few minutes of scrolling and responding. Time for more coffee. Oh no, I dripped a little on the counter and I stop to wipe it up, and finish by wiping the whole counter down. Then back to my devotional. Then I remember that I have to do something or pick something up that day. I better write it down. Back to my devotional. Heavy sigh.

In the end, I usually do carve out a chunk of time that is for God, or maybe it's all for me. What I read, and what I may write, and the praying does all filter through all the clutter and distraction to help me start my day. It is always a discipline of choice for me and remains so throughout my day. I have learned to accept this as I know God loves me anyway. God appreciates my attempts to be in devotion with him and the decision to seek him.

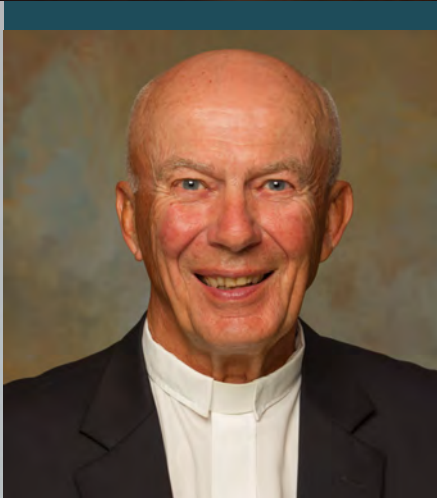
“DO YOU HAVE A CERTAIN PLACE OR TIME WHERE YOU MEET WITH THE LORD REGULARLY?”

Prayer: *Lord God, I thank you for your goodness and your gift of mercy. Help me to be aware of the many distractions that compete for the time we share together. And please help me to redirect my thoughts to stay focused as I seek to know you better. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 25

saintandrews.org/grow



Gerry Rafferty

- Cher and I, along with our two daughters and their families are members at St. Andrew's – beginning in 2001
- Parish pastor, Luther Seminary staff and stewardship leader
- Fishing, pickleball and gardening are among my favorite pastimes

Word of the Week



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Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This summer will mark the 50th anniversary of my ordination. And as I look back on these 50 years of ministry, the one verse that has woven its way through the fabric of all of these ministry settings has been Romans 8. And it began a week into my ministry when I was asked to do a funeral for a young teenager who had committed suicide. She was found with a Good News for Modern Man Bible in her hands; opened to Romans 8, where there was a stick figure drawing of someone being attacked by the storms of life. That was her story. And Romans 8 was her message. And mine too.

I have participated in hundreds of funerals since that first week of ministry, and in each and every one of the funerals, no matter what the circumstances were, I read Romans 8 as one of the scripture passages for the day. Nothing can separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

We all go through storms of life. What has happened to our world over the course of this last year feels like a storm.

“WHAT STORM ARE YOU FACING AT THIS MOMENT?”

Prayer: *Gracious God in Christ Jesus, thank you for keeping the promise that no matter what happens, you will be by our side, in life and in death. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 26

saintandrews.org/grow



Sandie Woeltge

- Member of St. Andrew's since 1984 and support the Community Resource Center
- Wife, mom, grandmother, great-grandmother who loves to cook, bake, make candy and play cribbage
- Love to be on Rainy Lake in Canada with a BIG fish on my line!

Word of the Week



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2nd Corinthians 12:9

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I wanted to say no to writing for Word of the Week – I am not comfortable with my writing skills. However, I knew that the Holy Spirit would inspire me and give me guidance. So here goes!

I know what it feels like to be weak, and I know how it feels to call upon God for help, and then feel his grace and strength come into my heart and soul. 2nd Corinthians 12:9 has been in my heart since 1991 when our son was sent to Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The world wasn't sure how things would turn out. I was afraid for my son. A friend from St. Andrew's sent me a card full of hand-written Bible verses, this verse being one. She also enclosed an Arrow pin, that I wore every day. She said that she was sending up prayers to God often each day. As I read this verse, I realized just how weak I was feeling. I started saying this verse over and over and I began to sense the grace of God in my mind and heart. I feel that trusting in God to guide and strengthen us is how we grow strong in our weakness.

I opened my heart to God's unconditional grace and felt his hand in mine. There was a peace I didn't understand, but it was beautiful! When we face tumultuous times, God's grace, peace, and love are sufficient and made perfect in weakness.

When our son died in 1993 these words got me through the worst time in my life. When I was driving, feeling as low as I could get, I would roll down my window and scream! I would say, "I need you, Jesus" and could feel a weight lifted from me. I knew. God was giving me his strength.

**"WHEN YOU FEEL WEAK AND BURDENED WITH CARES,
HOW DO YOU SEEK GOD'S HELP?"**

Prayer: *I pray for each of us to know God's unconditional grace, power, peace, calm and loving care. In Jesus' name, this is my prayer for us. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 27

saintandrews.org/grow



Dianne Sjolander

- Married to Sonny Sjolander
- Grandma to 4 grandchildren
- Retired from 3M
- Like to be active exercising, biking

Word of the Week



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Ephesians 1:7-8

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

There are many verses to choose from that speak to me. The one I have chosen is Ephesians 1:7 – 8. What this means to me is that God loves me and is so full of underserved love for me that I am saved to be with him for eternity. This is so overwhelming to know that eternity is forever. I will spend my time with God, not because of my works but because of God's grace.

Daily I sin, sometimes not even realizing it, but God is always there to forgive me as I pray and ask for forgiveness. He guides me to follow him, which gives me a better way of life. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have Jesus by my side in all the daily happenings. He is our real hope on a daily basis.

The Bible studies at St. Andrew's have helped guide me in a closer walk with God. During this time of COVID 19 it has been challenging to miss out on going to church and Bible group studies, but God always makes a way for fellowship using computers and the telephone. It makes me appreciate what we have, and going back we will value these.

God's comfort has been there through cancer with my husband giving me a calming assurance that he has a plan. There are so many daily blessings that I receive and I thank God for these also. No matter how chaotic things get in this world, it is comforting to know that God is in control. I pray that you receive the free gift we all receive through Jesus our Savior.

“HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE THE GIFT OF LOVE, FORGIVENESS, GRACE AND ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS?”

Prayer: *Father in heaven, we thank you for all of your many blessings we receive daily from you and we ask for your continued comfort in dealing with life's happenings. We pray that all of the hurt and violence will stop, and that we will all come together in faith in your name. Thank you for our faithful pastors and staff in bringing the Good News that God is there for all of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 28

saintandrews.org/grow



Pat Karczewski

- Married 62 years, mother of 2, grandmother of 5
- Worked as nurse for over 30 yrs
- Enjoys gardening, reading, and creating art with wool and beads
- Member of St Andrew's for over 20 years – involved with church Library, women's book club and Thursday dinners

Word of the Week



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Psalm 23:1

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

The promise of God provides a constant in my life and has served me long and well, both in happy times and when the unthinkable happens. For those heavy-duty times we have verse 4 from the 23rd Psalm – “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”

It was a grey cold morning in February, 35 years ago, that I received one of those phone calls that everyone dreads. My husband had been in a car accident and was seriously injured. They wanted me to come to the hospital as soon as I could. Because of our last name, they assumed we were Catholic and had a priest waiting for me when I arrived. While disconcerting, it was reassurance that I was not alone. My husband was on his way to surgery. The doctors were kind, but honest about his minimal chances for survival.

During the following 11 hours of surgery I experienced the presence of God through the kindness of others. He was there not only in the form of the priest, the hospital chaplain and our own pastor, but in the doctors and nurses who checked on me and made sure I was kept aware of where they were in the process of repairing his injuries and how he was doing.

God was there in the doctor who told me they had lost him once during the surgery, but got him back and that he was doing better. He was also there when that doctor took my hand and told me that they were not alone in that operating room!

The road to recovery was long, but we did not walk it alone.

**“TAKE THE TIME TO THINK ABOUT HOW JESUS WALKS WITH YOU.
THANK HIM. HOW HAS HE HELPED YOU MOVE FORWARD?”**

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, thank you for each of the precious days that we are given. May we use them to serve you. Amen*

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 29

saintandrews.org/grow



Pastor (Pat) Colon

- Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, raised in ghettos of New York, moved to Mpls, met wife Melinda, became a US Navy Pilot during Vietnam, became a doctor.
- Married 56 years to Melinda, 2 daughters, 4 grandchildren
- Loves salsa and swing dance, family games, history, birds and music

Word of the Week



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Psalm 23

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...”

What the 23rd Psalm - a psalm of David – means to me:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want
(God provides wisdom and courage)

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures
(for my peace)

He leads me beside quiet waters
(for my tranquility)

He restoreth my soul
(by forgiving my sins and inserting harmony into my soul)

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake
(the paths that lead directly to the Lord's house)

Yea thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me
(In every human brain there is a valley of shadows in a structure called the Amygdala where fears and anxieties are experienced)

Thy rod and Thy staff
(and the Holy Spirit)

They comfort me, Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies
(with the Lord I really have no enemies)

Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I (and my family) will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

“HOW FULL IS YOUR COMPASSION BUCKET?”

Prayer: *Lord God, I thank you that the Holy Spirit is with us every day illuminating our hearts with God's bright Spirit. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 30

saintandrews.org/grow



Tom Lennartson

- Married 53 years to Susan, 2 sons, 4 grandchildren
- General Contractor – still working very part time!
- Loves to be with family and friends, study history, play cribbage, have time at the cabin!

Word of the Week



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John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, and whoever believes in him will never die but have eternal life.

This is a verse that many people know – it is flashed at football games, on billboards, plaques, coffee cups. I memorized it when I was in 4th grade in Sunday School at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church on the East Side of St. Paul. It has always stayed with me as I feel it is important to remember. It is a message of assurance – no matter what – for me and my family. At present I am dealing with congestive heart disease, lung issues and diabetes. There are many uncertainties. But we all face uncertainties – I am no different from anyone else. In all of this I trust in God. There is a win-win in life, to be here, and to die, we have eternity with God.

I have a loving family and dear friends that enrich my life – I enjoy being with them and serving them. I enjoy being a part of the St. Andrew's Men's Prayer Group on Monday nights, learning from Pastor Straiton's teaching, playing cribbage with Earl Olson, volunteering at church, and more.

As problems come into my mind I pray – in that I find the peace that I need. I have been abundantly blessed in life!

Thank you God.

**“HOW HAS GOD BLESSED YOU?
TALK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT HOW GOD BLESSES US.”**

Prayer: *God, thank you for the message of John 3:16 – it gives me peace. Please open our hearts to live into the blessing of your love for all of us. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 31

saintandrews.org/grow



Janet Knoll

- Member of St. Andrew's for 40 years
- Retired from St. Paul Public Schools
- Blessed to have been married to Randy for 39 years
- The role of Grandma to Erik and Everett suits me just fine

Word of the Week



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Psalm 118:24

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

It's always beautiful at 6 o'clock in the morning. For years I've started each day with an early morning walk. (Yes, even in retirement. It's a hard habit to break!) It's a chance to greet each day as it is and for what it will bring. And it gives me a front row seat to watch Minnesota's theater of seasons – the awakening of the earth in the spring, the lushness of the summer, growth coming to fruition in the fall, the descent into winter. Even winter has its beauty if you dress for it! One of my very favorite sights is a full bright moon on new-fallen snow...breathtaking. But you only see that in the darkness of winter.

I've always loved Psalm 118:24; it's one that most of us learn as children. Stepping outdoors at the beginning of a new day, it's easy to see the Lord's handiwork; each day is a gift that we can do with as we are able. But the part about rejoicing seems more complicated. Of course, there are days that are made for rejoicing! And there are lots of ordinary days when we might not be rejoicing, but we can find plenty to be happy and thankful for. But there are also days when rejoicing is just not possible. We've all had days like that. Yet there it is, right in the Bible: rejoice!

I think it helps to put things into perspective. Maybe this verse was written for a special occasion. And maybe on those days that aren't so special, we can look at things in a different way. We can focus on all that God has given us, and be able to rejoice a little more. And we can know that even in the dark of winter there is the bright light of love, and the promise that spring will come.

“HOW WILL YOU USE THE GIFT OF THIS DAY?”

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for today. May I embrace it as your gift, celebrate your faithfulness, and live this day fully for you.*

Word of the Week

Week 32

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Marilee Elsholtz

- Believer in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior
- Married to Bob for 59 years, 4 children, 10 grandchildren
- Worked as a registered nurse at the Veterans Hospital in Mpls – retired to become a full-time mom and wife
- Love being in Bible study, volunteering with the Children's Hospital Association, and many Volunteer experiences

Word of the Week



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3 John 1:4

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

I have so many favorite verses in my Bible – it was hard to select just one. As I prayed, this verse kept coming back to me. I think that sometimes we forget that the work of parenting is likely the greatest contribution we can make in the lives of our children. I give God the glory that our children and grandchildren serve Jesus.

I also think that the greatest legacy one can pass on to their children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life but rather a legacy of character and faith. We cannot be too busy to not pray for them. A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. Jesus spent many hours in prayer – sometimes all night long. Jesus modeled time spent in prayer and being with his father.

My devotion and prayer time with Jesus was sometimes hit and miss. Life is what happens to all of us and we don't always take time to meet with the Lord every morning. That all changed on Oct. 9, 2007. A member of our family was diagnosed with a very rare cancer and given a few years to live. God certainly had my attention. I was brought to my knees in prayer. I cried out to the Lord. For 13 years now I meet with Jesus every morning – I say this not to be proud – but I say this with utmost humility and sincere gratitude to my Lord Jesus. Our family member is now in remission.

Jesus can do wonders with a broken heart if given all of the pieces.

“WHAT LEGACY ARE YOU LEAVING FOR YOUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, NIECES, NEPHEWS, THE CHILDREN AROUND YOU? WILL THEY ONE DAY RISE UP AND CALL YOU BLESSED?” (PROVERBS 31:28)

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, please guide us to spend daily focused time with you. I pray that our children, grandchildren and this new generation will know you and love you, Jesus – their lives depend on this. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 33

saintandrews.org/grow



Bob Jasper

- Yoko and I have been members of St. Andrew's since 1974.
- We have two grown and married children and one grandson.
- Favorite activities include reading, writing, walking, and bike riding.

Word of the Week



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Jeremiah 29:11

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

I don't remember when Jeremiah 29:11 first called out to me, but probably it was some 30 years ago when I hit a rough spot in the road of life and lost my sense of direction and purpose. Since then I've read that verse, contemplated it, and prayed it thousands of times, each time saying something like, "God, I know you've got this. Help me to trust the plan you have for my life, even though I don't see it at the moment." And true to God's faithfulness, God has always led me to a better place as I've trusted in God and followed God's lead. For example, in my 60s, he led me to a corporate job that made it possible for my wife and I to eventually retire – something we had not thought possible.

Many times I've wished God were more open; other times I've been grateful he kept his plans a secret. Frequently, I have to remind myself to turn to the Lord in prayer and trust that God has my back, that God is faithful, just, and merciful. For the past 20 years I've done this mostly through a morning Quiet Time that includes some devotional reading, prayer, and journaling.

"HAS THERE BEEN A TIME IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU QUESTIONED GOD'S PLAN? HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT?"

Prayer: *Lord, thank you that we can trust your plan for our lives. Help us to remember to turn to you when the future seems dark and scary, as well as when it seems to overflow with joy.*

Word of the Week

Week 34

saintandrews.org/grow



Mike Diemer

- Member of St Andrew's for 33 years and enjoy seeing it flourish
- Enjoy family time, the outdoors, photography and helping others
- 34 Lutheran Pastors in family and extended family

Word of the Week



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Parable of the Sower — Luke 8:5-8

A farmer went out to sow his seed. Some of it fell on the road; it was tramped down and the birds ate it. Other seeds fell in the gravel; it sprouted, but withered because it didn't have good roots. Other seed fell in the weeds; the weeds grew with it and strangled it. Other seed fell in rich earth and produced a bumper crop. Are you listening to this? Really listening?

A young man searching for answers went to a wise man and asked the question, "How do I live a meaningful life?" The wise man showed the young man an apple, cut it in half and asked the question, "How many seeds are in this apple?" When the young man answered, "Six," the old man asked the question, "How many apples are in those seeds?"

Seeds are mentioned in the Bible 285 times and in this parable Jesus says that God's Word is the good seed. Seeds are important but if they are never planted, they are useless. We have good seeds within us, but do we always plant them? Do we plant the seeds of generosity, hope, kindness, love, honesty, compassion, patience and gentleness every day for those around us? Do we plant them among the grieving, the broken-hearted and the lonely?

So, how many seeds that you plant will sprout? No one knows for sure but we know if they are never planted there can never be a "crop." Think of how much of a difference each of us could make by planting good seeds instead of storing them within ourselves. The seeds mentioned earlier will grow, and ultimately they all reflect the light of God's Word back into a world that needs it, not just now, but for generations to come.

The best answer to the young man's question: Your life will be meaningful if you plant the seeds of God's Word. A good "crop" will be assured because God's Word is good seed and, like the apple in the story, will bear good fruit for generations to come.

Remember: It is up to you to plant the seeds!

"How many seeds that you plant will sprout?"

Prayer: *Lord, help me to only plant the good seed you have put within me. Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 35

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Carol Bufton

- Daughter, sister, mother and grandmother. Child of God.
- Member of St. Andrew's for forty-plus years. Past Church Council president. Second alto in the St. Andrew's Choir.
- Lover of books, baking, music, family and friends, travel, ice cream, strategic planning and puns, not necessarily in that order!

Word of the Week



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Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

One snowy February Sunday afternoon, I sat in front of the fireplace with a book and a bowl of popcorn ... so at peace that I was drifting off. And a voice spoke to me with absolute clarity: “It’s time to plan your retirement.” Didn’t see that coming! I had been thinking about retirement in far-off terms but that voice made it feel immediate. One of my life verses – Jeremiah 29:11 – came to me as it has before when I’ve been at a crossroad. I was reminded that God has a plan for me and it would be wise to pay attention! And then – while I was working retirement details and preparing mentally for a major life change, I was asked to accept a big challenge. I didn’t think the timing was right with everything else on my plate. But God’s words through Jeremiah pushed me again. I said yes and found it one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Looking back, I see how the pieces of God’s plan fit together just as God promised.

Over and over again, God’s words offer us assurance as we prepare to meet challenges and make decisions that may move us way outside of our comfort zone. For me, especially now when the world can sometimes seem like it’s teetering on its axis, I lean on God’s promise given through Jeremiah. And I am grateful beyond measure for the reminder that God has plans for each of us – plans to prosper us, to give us hope, to give us a future. We may not be able to see that immediately but we know that God’s words are trustworthy and true!

CAN YOU SEE TIMES IN YOUR LIFE WHEN GOD’S PROMISE THROUGH JEREMIAH WAS AT WORK? WHAT DECISIONS DO YOU FACE TODAY THAT REQUIRE YOU TO RELY ON GOD’S WORDS IN JEREMIAH TO HELP YOU MOVE AHEAD?

Prayer: *Almighty, trustworthy, faithful God, you assure us that you have plans for us – plans to prosper us, to give us hope, to give us a future. Give us the courage to be bold enough to live every day of our lives trusting in that promise.*

Amen

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 36

saintandrews.org/grow



Bob Hanson

- Husband to Sharon, 4 children, 10 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren
- Member of St. Andrew's for 45 years. Served on the Church Council and as Secretary, taught Sunday School and was Director of our first Capital Campaign to raise funds to purchase our current site and build the Great Hall complex
- Retired as Human Resource Director at 3M Co.

Word of the Week



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Romans 8:28

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Please note this clearly does not say God will answer all your prayers and give you all you ask for, which might be what many think when they read or hear these words. However, these words have given me strength, assurance and hope hundreds of times during my lifetime when I take a problem to the Lord. And I have found over those years it is helpful, depending upon the subject, to just state the problem (which he already knows) and say, "Let thy will be done" versus giving him details on how we want it resolved.

Also depending upon the subject, I find it helpful to share with a few Christian friends and ask them to join me in prayer. God assures us of his presence in such a gathering. (*Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."*) And we should be in prayer with our Lord constantly. (*1st Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray without ceasing."*) It continues to amaze me the way in which God answers prayer and God's timing is so much better than I could have ever imagined or what I ask of him.

That takes us back to the scripture above: "all things work together for good for those who love God..."

WHAT IF ANYTHING WILL YOU CHANGE IN YOUR APPROACH ASKING GOD FOR HELP WITH A NEED AFTER READING SEVERAL "WORD OF THE WEEK" ISSUES?

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, I love you more than I can possibly express in words. I am so thankful I can have a personal relationship with you and come to you in both thanksgiving and in need with the assurance that through you all things will work together for good. I give you thanks for all the many blessings you continue to bestow daily on me and my family. Amen*

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 37

saintandrews.org/grow



Sharon Hanson

- Member of St Andrew's 45 years.
- Married to Bob Hanson 62 years, 4 children, 10 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren
- Enjoy reading, and gardening and time spent with family and friends.
- Served in Women's Ministry and various ways as a volunteer
- Enjoyed Bible studies, taught S.S. and VBS. I am committed to Prayer Group and Prayer Chain at St Andrew's
- Homemaker and mother all my married life; moved as family from St Paul to Chicago, Philadelphia, and Brussels, Belgium

Word of the Week



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Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do and he will direct your paths.

Many years ago, on a Sunday morning, our lesson for the day was Romans 8:28: "All things work together for good to those who love God, and are called according to his purpose."

Sunday afternoon, unexpected heartache hit hard! And, in anger, I thrust my hand heavenward to God, as I cried out: "HOW! How is this going to work for good?" (Silence... God did not speak.) Now in tears, my next words were: "Why me?" Only an inner voice answered, "Why not you?"

Crushed, humbled, and in tears, I collapsed in a favorite chair with my Bible. I hoped to see words to comfort me. My Bible fell open, randomly, to Proverbs 3:5-6, the Wisdom chapter. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do and he will direct your paths."

Next day, we went to church to see our pastor. He directed us on, after prayers, to counseling for help. Counseling went on for some months, helping us to seek wisdom. The answer that came at the end was not easy, but it was rooted in Love.

Our faith and trust in God was now in for "the long haul." In his timing, our faith and trust was rewarded. Heartache was healed, joy came, and "all things were made new" (Rev. 21:5). Thanks be to God! Great is his faithfulness!

**HAVE YOU BEEN ANGRY AT GOD, EXPRESSED IT TO GOD,
AND MOVED FORWARD TRUSTING GOD ANEW?**

Prayer: *Lord, when life hands us heartache, we need you to move us through the stages of grief, into healing hope for the future. Thank you, Lord, that you "Heal the broken hearted, and bind up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3)*



Word of the Week

Week 38

saintandrews.org/grow



Roger Rowen

- Married to my wife, Marilyn, for 62 years, 1 son, Doug, 1 daughter, Sarah, 2 granddaughters and 2 step grandsons
- Worked for 3M for 42 years – traveled to all 50 states and 39 foreign countries – lived in Japan for 5 years
- Love the outdoors, cabin life, fishing, boating, golf, and BBQing

Word of the Week



Every Monday morning of 2021 watch for Word of the Week where 52 St. Andrew's members have chosen a verse from the Bible that speaks to their heart. They share their verse and have written their heartfelt thoughts on how this verse has influenced their life. They have included a question and close with a prayer. All of our writers are ages 65 and better!

James 1: 1-6

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Greetings my Brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let the patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith with no doubting.

My spiritual life was ignited as I digested this scripture, in total. I want to share a family experience that became an example of all the lessons in James 1, i.e., answered prayer, patience, hope, trust in God's promise and miracles can actually happen.

In 1974, we invited a foster daughter, Cheryl, into our family. Cheryl was 17 and arrived at our door with her earthly possessions in two grocery bags. After years of care, counseling, trials, praying and blending, Cheryl graduated from high school and college where she developed a solid Christian background. She was hired by Hospitality House, a Christian organization, as a counselor and began helping youth in North Minneapolis find their way.

In December 1980, Cheryl was the victim of gun violence near the neighborhood where she worked. She was shot in the head and left for dead in a vacant field. Barely alive, she was found three days later sustaining freezing temperatures. The result of this situation was that she became a paraplegic and was paralyzed on her left side. After many months of healing, rehab, prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit, she became independent again.

Cheryl carved out a new life for herself as a volunteer, assisting children and women in difficult situations. As a Bible Study Leader, she was not shy about letting others know about the power of prayer, love, forgiveness, and miracles. She was one! March 14, 1986, Cheryl was awarded one of the Channel 11 "11 Who Care" Awards for her service to others.

Cheryl's philosophy: Don't concentrate on what you don't have – put what you do have to work helping others. Cheryl's life is a great example of faith, patience, perfect and complete, and asking in faith. Cheryl was a blessing to our family. We lost Cheryl in December of 2006. She is now in heaven with her Lord and Savior.

ARE YOU USING YOUR TALENTS AND ABILITIES, WHATEVER THEY MAY BE, IN HELPING OTHERS AS A SERVANT OF GOD?

Prayer: *May God bless you and your family each day. May Jesus hold your hand through difficult times, and may the Holy Spirit give you wisdom, comfort and peace as your prayers are answered. Praise the Lord.*



Word of the Week

Week 39

saintandrews.org/grow



Arlene Bennett

- Has been at St. Andrew's for over 55 years and even served on the Church Council
- Finds great joy in participating in Bible study and has always found the study of scripture to be very important
- Enjoys figure skating, tennis and golf

Word of the Week



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Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God has promised that he will be with us in the midst of every storm providing strength and coping power. Only God truly knows what we feel and only God can fully understand the conditions and circumstances we face. Only God can perfectly guide us and provide us with love, peace, hope, comfort, patience, wisdom and strength to endure even the toughest storms life can bring.

We all have and will go through difficult situations in our lives, but as believers in Christ, we know he is always with us and that we have to put our trust in Christ. There will be things in life that will want to test our faith.

Two years ago, my husband, Tom, went to be with the Lord. Just under a year later my beautiful daughter, Cindy, also went to be with Jesus. Losing both of them in such a short time was like living a bad dream. When going through such a trying time it is hard to praise God, because it's like going through a dark tunnel and not being able to see the other side. But God promises he will get us through and when we look back on our past, we can see God has always been with us, holding us up and getting us to the other side. There is nothing that can separate us from him and his love, not even the hard times.

I know with my heart and soul that Christ has a plan for my life and he has given me so many wonderful blessings as a reminder of his love. So in the midst of the hard times, the blessings of my children, grandchildren, great-grandchild, church, pastors, friends and caregivers give a reason to praise him and remind me that he will get me through because he loves me.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE LORD HELP YOU THROUGH ONE OF LIFE'S STORMS AND GET YOU THROUGH A DIFFICULT SITUATION?

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for your love and comfort. You care so deeply for your children, you always have and always will. Help us to always trust in you, even when we face difficult circumstances. Strengthen the faith of your followers so we can encourage others and be a reminder to others of how great your love is and that nothing will ever separate us from you. Amen*

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 40

saintandrews.org/grow



Connie Mondo

- Meeting planner for 22 years
- Avid golfer
- Bible studies
- Preparing and serving meals in the church kitchen brings me great joy!

Word of the Week



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Acts 2:26

“No wonder my heart is glad and my tongue shouts God’s praises! My soul rests in hope.”

My favorite word is Hope! I always think of it with the exclamation mark included, because of the exciting possibilities it promises!

At a very low point in my life, a friend said, “There’s always Hope!” That phrase has become my mantra.

Daily struggles come to us all. I too have seen that in my family. What would I have to get me through these difficult times if I didn’t have Hope? Where would my strength come from? Hope needs a strong foundation of faith in God.

The hymn words, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness” describe that deep foundation.

Hope blossoms in the sure knowledge that my Father walks with me daily. From my morning meditations to my nightly prayers,

God is always my shepherd. I find my Hope in the Bread of Life.

An abundant faith ensures a confident Hope!

Life doesn’t slow down, so let’s meet it head-on with Hope!

“WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE? WHAT STRENGTHENS YOUR FAITH?”

Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank you for blessing me with the many ways you sustain and strengthen my faith. I am broken, but you provide me with Hope!*

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 41

saintandrews.org/grow



Jack Fortin

- Married to Sara for 54 years, with a wonderful son and two fantastic granddaughters
- Retired pastor/teacher and Senior Fellow at Augsburg University
- Golf, flyfishing, biking and photography are my pastime loves

Word of the Week

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John 6:44

“No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me, and I will raise that person up on the last day.”

I believe being drawn, by the love of God, not driven by my need to perform, is the result of a grace-filled life.

One of my hardest lessons continues to be how to live out of my “blessedness” claimed for me at baptism. In fact, my primary struggle in life has been finding my identity in who I am rather than from what I do. My western culture has been successful in convincing me to define myself externally, by comparing myself and competing with others with how I look, and how well I perform. I can remember in high school believing if I was an “A student” I was an “A person”; a “B student” a “B person” and so on.

This simple truth, to accept the fact that I am accepted, is so easy to say and so hard to live. John Stott, pastor and writer from England, says it this way: “We go to God and ask, ‘what should I do?’ and go to our faith community and ask for acceptance.” We have it wrong, says Stott. “We find our acceptance in God and go to our neighbor to determine what it is we are to do.”

Thankfully, the scriptures are clear about this point. In John 6, Jesus reminds me that no one comes to him unless “drawn by the Father.” Later, in John 15, Jesus reiterates this when he says, “Remember, we are friends not because you chose me but because I first chose you.”

Bill Smith, my friend and spiritual mentor, spent a lifetime reminding me: “Live out of your chosenness, rest in the love of God.” I am drawn, first and foremost, to the Father and hence to Jesus from whom I get my identity and my calling.

I have learned that calling emerges out of being drawn. The Gospel challenges me, be drawn, not driven. Jesus promises to be there, even to the point of lifting me up on the last day.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW?

WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS DRAWN OR DRIVEN?

DESCRIBE A MOMENT OR EVENT IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE CLEARLY DRAWN.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank you for loving me unconditionally with your grace. Help me to accept the truth that I am already accepted and forgiven. Set me free to serve, knowing that I do not have to win my way with you, but simply receive and rest in your unearned gift of love. Amen.*

St. Andrew's
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Word of the Week

Week 42

saintandrews.org/grow



Bob Storeygard

- Married to my sweetheart and wife, Didi, for over 43 years
- I live to make music for my Lord (soloist, choirs, conductor)
- Retired 35-year 3M International Project Manager and current Certified Wine Professional

Word of the Week



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Psalm 118:6a

"The Lord is for me."

There are SO MANY fantastic verses to choose from, but this usually truncated verse that we use frequently in our services speaks to me in a number of ways, word by word. Examine it slowly with me, saying it multiple times, each time emphasizing a different word.

THE – not a Lord, but the one and only Lord, encompassing the whole of the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – wow! Does it get better than that?

LORD – the Creator of all that there is or ever will be – the Lord of the universe concerned with and loving all of God's creation.

IS – not was, or will be (however both are true), but God is here now with us and God's attention is currently focused on our lives and the lives of all God's creation.

FOR – not against, or ambivalent, or apathetic but positively FOR us. Our Lord wants the very best for us and can guide us if we let him through the Holy Spirit.

ME – this IS personal. Yes, God knows and loves YOU personally. And this can stretch to our corporate ME (St. Andrew's), and our world ME (the human race). God's ability to care for all, as well as individuals, is truly breath taking!

In these troubling days when you don't always know who to trust or turn to, **THE LORD IS FOR AND WITH YOU** to the very end of time. Amen to that!

DO YOU TRUST THE LORD TO HAVE YOUR BEST INTERESTS IN MIND?

Prayer: *Lord, help me to trust that you will always have me in the palm of your hand in all that I go through... and I claim this because what you have said is worthy and true. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 43

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Melinda Carlton Colon

- Attended the High School of Performing Arts in New York City while apprenticing with Balanchine and the Joffrey Ballet Company.
- Married to Pastor Colón while he was in the Navy, and toured with him as officer's wife throughout Europe.
- With two daughters and four grandchildren, she still has time for her decades' long work of creating stoles, hanging, and many other types of church accrements for places of worship across the nation.

Word of the Week



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John 15:12

“Love each other as I have loved you.”

I love this very difficult commandment. Being human, with God's gift of freewill I always find this very challenging.

A similar charge comes to us by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-13, The Lord's Prayer, where we are asked to "...forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" - very difficult.

The Lutheran tradition teaches us of God's grace and love. With true contrition, when we ask for forgiveness, we can depend on Grace and The Holy Spirit for comfort and healing. This is where I find comfort in Psalm 51:10-12, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

In my work of creating stoles, paraments, and banners, I always sew into the linings a Bible passage that has inspired my work; they are always passages that include the Love of God and Christ, and the healing of the Holy Spirit, and the Glory of God's Creation.

**HOW DO YOU RECONCILE THE TRESPASSES AGAINST YOU,
WITHIN YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH?**

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, remind me that I am always surrounded by your Love, Grace, and The Holy Spirit.*

Word of the Week

Week 44

saintandrews.org/grow



Eunice Voorhees

- Married to John for 56 years, son Andy and 3 awesome grandkids
- Blessed to have lived in Hong Kong, Manila, Brussels, Paris, and Buffalo, New York
- Delivered tapes to shut-ins and helped with meals at Dorothy Day

Word of the Week

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1 Thessalonians 5:14

“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

In this passage we are urged to encourage the disheartened. Often we miss the opportunity to use our life experiences to encourage others as they confront life's hardships.

Some years ago my husband, John, and I were asked by a St. Andrew's intern to assist with an informal gathering of recently bereaved parents. It had been about 10 years since our daughter, Lara, had died from leukemia, so I was somewhat reluctant to open up the wounds that I thought I had worked so hard at to move on with life. However, my husband felt we could serve some purpose in encouragement as an example, so that these parents could some day find happiness, joy and peace again.

We gathered in our homes with other parents over the next few months with the intern serving as moderator, talking about our children and, of course, trying to make some sense of their deaths. We trusted God that God would bring something comforting to these hurting parents, but it turned out to be a very important step in my own journey of healing. Even though it was years later, it was part of a very long process that gave assurance that someday I would be with Lara again.

I am thankful that I was asked to extend my comfort zone and was able, with God's help, to encourage the disheartened. The experience was truly a blessing for me and hopefully to those parents.

CAN YOU THINK OF SOMEONE THAT HAS ENCOURAGED YOU DURING A LOSS IN YOUR LIFE? WHO CAN YOU MINISTER TO WHO IS NOW GOING THROUGH A TIME OF LOSS?

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you that you are the Great Healer of wounds seen and unseen. Show me whom I need to encourage as well. In Jesus' name. Amen*



Word of the Week

Week 45

saintandrews.org/grow



Bob Elsholtz

- Married to a beautiful woman named Marilee for 59 years
- Owner and President of two truck lines – semi tractors and trailers
- Father of four children and Granddaddy to ten grandchildren – eight granddaughters and two grandsons.

Word of the Week



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Joshua 24:15

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

We are very grateful that our children and grandchildren love Jesus. As parents we were together, and supported each other, in modeling – in trying our very best to make living out an everyday Christian walk a priority. It was work – and effort – but wanted our children to know the Way, Truth and Life of the Lord. Serving others as Christ is important to all of us. We continue this journey still – with every age and stage of life – for us and our family.

There are many wonderful ways to serve the Lord, which can be in church, school, neighborhood, home, etc. If we all do our part, this world will be a much better place for our children and grandchildren.

In my own life, I am happy to be able to call upon the Lord, not only in troubled times but also in thankful times.

ASK YOURSELF – IN MY/OUR HOUSE, ARE WE SERVING THE LORD?

Prayer: *Dear Lord, please help us to serve you to the best of our ability.*

We can only do this with your gracious help. Amen

St. Andrew's
Lutheran
Church



Word of the Week

Week 46

saintandrews.org/grow



Kathleen Warner

- Mother of the real Kurt Warner
- Love being creative on every level
- Mosaic artist and amateur photographer
- Just moved back to Minnesota for the third time
- Served on the Church Council

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Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

When I was growing up as a child I was scared of God. I lived in the era of corporal punishment Catholic schooling. I remember the day my mom was leaving to go to her cousin's wedding at a Methodist church, fearing God was going to strike her dead for going into a house of worship that wasn't Catholic. That was a hard nut to crack. So growing up, church wasn't my thing. But I always had faith.

With a nudge from God, my late husband, Clyde, and I took a peek at St. Andrew's.

My biblical knowledge was at the preschool level when I decided to join a Bible study. I was floored at what I learned — turns out God was a really cool dude — and full of love for me and everyone in the world. I learned about Jesus' journey. He embraced those who were cast aside (the kind of people I could relate to) and taught them that their faith and love was all they needed. And last but not least: The Holy Spirit. Always there in my soul, guiding me and encouraging me every step of the way.

Such a blessing knowing that we're never alone.

I pray with my Three Amigos often.

Dear God...I'm so tired. You know what I need. Just hold me. Thanks! Amen. Good Night.

Sweet Jesus... Take the wheel! I'll sit shotgun in that red convertible with my fuschia scarf flying free in the wind! Thank you! Amen.

Holy Spirit... My tap shoes are ready. Please help me to remember how to do my "zazzy" dance and guide me into the darkness. I trust you! Thanks! Amen.

I LOVE TO WALK IN NATURE TO MEDITATE AND PRAY.

WHERE DO YOU LIKE TO PRAY?

DO YOU EVER JUST STAND IN AWE AND REALLY FEEL HIS PRESENCE?

Prayer: *Lord, thank you for loving me and not ever leaving me hanging. Please know how much I love you, too. You Are The Bestest. High Five! Amen*

Word of the Week

Week 47

saintandrews.org/grow



Gus Blanchard

- Married to Mary 53 years, 2 daughters, 3 grandchildren, strong family orientation
- St Andrews Church Council 9 years; President of Congregation and Board Chair 5 years
- Board Chair for Luther Seminary – 5 years, Minnesota Opera Board Chair 3 years
- Worked for 5 businesses and CEO of 3; multiple corporate boards
- Committed to the belief that the Lord's work can be done in the manager's office or factory floor as surely as the pulpit or choir loft

Word of the Week



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Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.

In this increasingly chaotic world of ours, nothing about the future is so certain as is the certainty of change. How many trillion units of human energy are wasted daily in railing against the government, the schools, the climate, competitors, the kids, their parents! What's worse, all that expended energy doesn't seem to have changed anything – my experience with thousands of managers and workers says they go home feeling that they haven't used more than 35 to 40 percent of their talents and capacity for creation. Underutilized and underappreciated – is there no way out? Of course there is!

First, remember that King Solomon tells us that for everything there is a time and season – not almost everything. As we move through our lives, we'll pass from one season to another, sometimes smiling, others crying, but always changing. Learn to make change your friend.

Second, there will always be some negatives coming with the happy days. Use the blue sky days to pile on extra praise and thanksgiving for all that we've been given, and when dark days inevitably arrive, help us bury our pride, bend our knee, acknowledge our weakness and need, and go forward with the certainty that the Lord is with us and that better days lie ahead.

FROM THE SEASON WHERE YOU CURRENTLY RESIDE, DOES YOUR VIEW AHEAD LOOK MORE LIKE AN OPPORTUNITY OR A THREAT? AND HOWEVER YOU ANSWERED THIS QUESTION, WHAT IS THE ROLE FOR GOD IN THIS VISION?

Prayer: *Lord of us all; teach us to gracefully move from one season to another with a minimum of friction and wasted energy. Clear our vision to see the opportunity rather than the threat of change. And, may we never lose sight of the fact that our strength and joy lie in you. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 48

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David Tiede

- Muffy and I are grateful for the community of St. Andrew's with its superb pastoral leadership, splendid music, and active public service.
- Retired as Professor of New Testament and President of Luther Seminary, and as Bernhardt Christensen Professor of Vocation and Religion at Augsburg University.
- Blessed to be parents, grandparents, and Arizona snowbirds

Word of the Week

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Matthew 6:10

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The Lord's Prayer is deeply comforting.

When we commit a loved one to the grave or when we close our own eyes for the night, what could be more assuring than "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." As Pope John XXIII would add, "It's your Church, Lord. I'm going to sleep!"

But Jesus' prayer can also be disturbing, especially those "as" clauses. "Forgive us our sins, as we have also forgiven those who have sinned against us." Ah yes, I'm working on that, trying to let go of old grudges, and some recent ones. Come to think about it, I'll never live long enough to catch up with God's forgiveness.

And how about, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"? I have recently realized how risky this petition is to my comforts. I have loved the rhythm of the biblical parallels, making virtually the same request twice: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done." Have you noticed how the congregation pauses after these phrases? Under my breath, I have quit pausing, pulling the request for God's reign into now, "on earth as in heaven."

Now we're praying for life on earth. We don't pray for heaven. God's got that! But life on earth is contested ground, and we are engaged in the struggle. It's not that hard to figure out how God's love works on earth. Just watch Jesus in the Gospels.

But what is difficult is the fierce opposition that rises up against Jesus. The forces and powers and our self-interests defy God's way of ruling the world. Jesus never promises it will be easy. But when we pray the Lord's prayer, we are brought into God's mission. When our feet hit the floor in the morning, we operate under orders at work or play, at home or in public: "Your will be done on earth!"

It won't always be comfortable. But what a life!

WHEN YOU PRAY FOR GOD'S WILL TO BE DONE ON EARTH, WHAT OPPOSITION DO YOU FACE IN YOUR LIFE FOR WHICH YOU NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT'S STRENGTH?

Prayer: *Spirit of the living God, capture me and turn my strengths to the way of Jesus that your will may be done on earth, even through my life.*
AMEN



Word of the Week

Week 49

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Terry and Kaye Myhre

- We love time with family and friends, especially time with our grandchildren, watching their sporting events, being at the cabin, or in Florida, and all the fun holidays making them a celebration of life and time together – we love Christmas when we are all together and share our love for one another, take lots of pictures, and just celebrate life – God’s gift to us all!
- Love sports and sporting events and try to exercise our minds along with our bodies!
- We love reading our Bible and studying how God is directing us to do God’s will each and every day!

Word of the Week



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Romans 8:28

“All things work together for good to those who love the lord, and are called according to His purpose.”

We fell in love at an early age and planned out our life together, as well as we could. But one thing for sure was our faith in our Lord and the belief that our lives, our family, and our church, were all gifts from God to cherish and support with our love and our possessions.

God has blessed us above and beyond with a wonderful life and a family of 5 children, and now 12 grandchildren. We have always felt that every good and perfect gift is a gift from God to cherish, love and support, nurture, and give willingly of these gifts to our Lord, so our world could be a better place.

We worked hard to grow our business and felt many blessings along the way with the talented staff of employees, the wonderful success stories of students who achieved their dreams and completed their education to get good jobs, have a family, and become a giving part of their community and our world!

In the last several years we have experienced much sadness and loss by a political attack that has destroyed much of our business. But through this tragedy we found the True Peace! In Philippians 4:6 it says, “The Lord is near! Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation with prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

God’s peace that passes all understanding has allowed us to continue to count all our blessings and live a life of purpose and love. Thanks be to God!

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today or our worries for tomorrow-not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39

WHERE IN YOUR LIFE HAS GOD GUIDED YOU, AND HELD YOUR HAND AS YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH ROUGH TIMES? HAVE YOU EVER FOUND TRUE PEACE – THE KIND THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING? WE HOPE SO – BECAUSE GOD IS THERE, ALWAYS!

Prayer: *Dear Lord, we pray today for our world, our churches, our families and most importantly for our children to hear your words of Love and Peace. Help us as a community of believers to teach right from wrong, love your neighbor as yourself, treat everyone equal so our country and our world does not need to be divided, but instead united in your Love. Amen.*

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Word of the Week

Week 50

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Joyce Mundt

- Worked at Fairview Riverside Hospital as a Medical Technologist for 42 years
- Became a member of St. Andrew's in 2005
- Lived in Marine-on-St Croix for 35 years, now living in Stillwater
- Spent several weeks every year canoeing in the BWCA

Word of the Week



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Romans 5:3-5

“We also boast in our suffering, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character and character produces hope, and hope doesn’t disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

One Saturday morning 26 years ago, I was awakened at 5 a.m. by a phone call from the hospital where my husband had had some minor surgery. They told me I needed to come in because he wasn't doing well. I drove there in the pouring rain, praying all the way that he would be alright. When I got there, he had passed away. I was in shock and couldn't understand why God hadn't answered my prayers.

I felt so alone. I finally realized that I was never alone – God was always right there beside me, had some other plans for me and let me know that there was always hope, if I just put my trust in him.

Since then so many wonderful things have happened. I went on a trip to Israel with a group from St. Andrew's and started volunteering at the reception desk in the Great Hall and now in the Sanctuary after I retired. I have met so many new friends. And now I know that God loves me and is taking good care of me. God will never leave me.

WHAT SUFFERING HAVE YOU HAD IN YOUR LIFE, WHERE THE HOPE GIVEN TO YOU BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, HAS HELPED YOU THROUGH?

Prayer: *Father God, thank you for always being there for me, even when my prayers weren't answered the way I had wanted. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 51

saintandrews.org/grow



Kyra Ludwigson

- Member of St. Andrews for 25 yrs
- Served in Women's Ministry; Habitat for Humanity; Taste of St. Andrew's
- Worked as Special Ed Teacher, Ski Company Rep, Administrative Assistant, Care Companion to elderly
- Two children, one son in law -Katy & Marko -2 amazing grandsons- Vinny & Enzo, and son Ben
- Wedding Florals as a hobby for 10 years

Word of the Week



Every Monday morning of 2021 watch for Word of the Week where 52 St. Andrew's members have chosen a verse from the Bible that speaks to their heart. They share their verse and have written their heartfelt thoughts on how this verse has influenced their life. They have included a question and close with a prayer. All of our writers are ages 65 and better!

Psalm 46:10

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Who would have thought that in these unexpected times, we would have been forced to “Be still”?

The virus that took over our world created a shutdown unimagined in our lifetime. There was suddenly time to focus on our lives, what we valued, what we took for granted.

As I am a grandmother now, I have had time this past year to reflect on my own grandmother. She was a devout, strict Southern Baptist. I remember going to her church often. One particular Sunday, the pastor had asked each member of the congregation to bring a nail to church. Not having a nail, she found one of those large aluminum nails that people used to insert into potatoes to bake them. She tucked this into her pocketbook and placed it in the collection plate as directed by her pastor. When he had the plate full of nails, he demonstrated how God was like a magnet and pulled his followers to him. He dramatically thrust a large magnet into the plate and all the nails stuck to it. Suddenly there was a loud clink as my grandmother's aluminum nail fell back into the plate. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I glanced at my grandma's face as her horrified look turned into stifled giggles.

She taught me the power of God's love, and the power of laughter. She didn't expect me to “be still” in church, she wanted me to focus on the love her Savior had for all of us, and to take the time to notice it and enjoy it.

**HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE THE ALUMINUM NAIL,
FALLING AWAY FROM GOD? HOW DID HIS LOVE DRAW YOU BACK?**

Prayer: *Dear Heavenly Father, you have simply asked us to be still and know that you love us, to know that you are God. There are no strings attached. All you ask is that we believe in you and your power to heal our souls. For this I am eternally grateful. Amen*

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Word of the Week

Week 52

saintandrews.org/grow



Ralph Olson

- Ralph and Andrea have been members at St. Andrews for 11 years
- Proud grandparents of 5 and fortunate to have the entire family living in the Twin Cities
- Retired pastor whose great love and privilege is singing in the St. Andrew's Choir

Word of the Week



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Lamentations 3: 22-24

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning, great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him.

In a world that seems so troubled, how do we hold on to hope?

Every morning when you wake to a new day, do you acknowledge the day is a gift from a loving God, who is faithful? How would you define hope? I believe hope is what enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. Hope is what we desire to happen, but we must be prepared to work hard to make it so.

On my first trip to Tanzania, the pastor taught me a lesson I will never forget. He drew two lines in the dirt – one horizontal and one vertical. The bottom line represents your life, always on the goal, seeking more and reaching a point where you ask, who am I and what is my life all about? The pastor said we live our lives looking up to God giving thanks for all we have because when you know who you are, you know what you are to do.

There is hope for the future in Christ Jesus when we rise to the challenge, inspire and help those around us for the sake of our children, for those who struggle in poverty, for the sake of our natural world the animals, plants and trees.

**ARE YOU READY TO DO YOUR PART?
TOGETHER WE CAN! TOGETHER WE WILL!**

Prayer: *Lord, help each of us join together in the greatest mission of all, serving the Lord Jesus Christ to make the world better for all people. AMEN*

Word of the Week

Week 53

saintandrews.org/grow



Sue Lennartson

- Married to Tom - High School Sweetheart – for 53 years - 2 sons, daughter in love, 4 grandchildren.
- Love to swim, spend time with family and friends, share the love and hope of Christ, dance in creative humor and love music.
- Author, Speaker, Chaplain, Spiritual Director, Teacher, Encourager

Word of the Week



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Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

As a little girl – age 10 – I remember sailing with my dad. My dad was a boat builder, choral director, performer and in church music ministry. I spent days watching him build wooden boats at Amundson Boat Works. My grandfather, Gustav Amundson, came from Norway and started the Boat Works with his sons on White Bear Lake.

One day out sailing on the lake my dad said to me, “Susan, look at the slats of the boat in the front – they are like the arms of Jesus carrying you through the water – some days are smooth and some days are very windy, but God holds you in his loving arms. Now look at the mast – (Dad had to make it very strong) – remember that your strength comes from God – read your Bible and learn about this. And do you see the wind against the sail – moving us across the water?”

“No, Dad,” I said. “I really don’t see the wind.”

“Well, that is like the Holy Spirit – you don’t exactly see it but the Holy Spirit is with us – the power of the Holy Spirit lives in you, Susan. And Susan, where is your hand?”

“On the till, Dad.”

Then I remember him asking me, “Are we going to come about – turn – go right or left? You have choices and decisions to make, Susan – make them based on all that you learn about Jesus.” My earthly father, Edwin Gustav Amundson, taught me a lot about my heavenly Father. My dad would have me put my name in John 3:16: “For God so loved Susan – that he gave his only Son...” I hold my dad’s words and his love for me in my heart. Thank you, Dad! And I hold Philippians 4:13 as a guide through each age and stage of this life that God calls me to live out. Thank you, Lord God!

IS THERE SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE THAT HAS SHARED THEIR FAITH WITH YOU – WHERE YOU WILL HOLD THEIR WORDS, AND THAT MOMENT, IN YOUR HEART FOREVER? YES? NO? SHARE YOUR STORY WITH SOMEONE. AND THEN, HOW CAN YOU FIND TIME AND MOMENTS TO PASS ON YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST TO THE GENERATIONS?

Prayer: *Lord God, I thank you for the many times I sailed with my dad and for the ways he passed on his faith. Please use me, as you will, Lord, to pass on the love, hope, comfort and joy of Christ Jesus to all generations. Amen*

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