



April 2026

MESSENGER

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church | Connecting Hearts | Renewing Lives

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church | 140 Gathering Place Lane
Iowa City, Iowa 52246 | www.saintandrew-ic.org

2 WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF OUR TRANSITIONAL JOURNEY?

Well, here we are.

At the end of a 16-month journey together.

Before I wander off into whatever the next chapter might look like for me, I want to say something plainly: *Serving at St. Andrew has reminded me how much I genuinely love being a pastor.* That might sound like an odd confession, but pastors—like anyone else—occasionally need a reminder of why we got into this strange and beautiful vocation in the first place. Walking alongside you through this season has been that reminder for me.

St. Andrew is a remarkable congregation. You care deeply about people, you wrestle honestly with faith, and you actually mean it when you talk about justice. In a time when a lot of churches are trying to rediscover what healthy community looks like, I suspect St. Andrew could serve as a pretty good case study.

A small confession: this was technically my first official transitional pastorate. I say “technically” because most healthy ministries practice transitional principles all the time—learning, adapting, letting go of what no longer serves the gospel, and making space for what might. Still, the way I landed here was a little unexpected.

It started with some serendipitous phone calls after I had just made the difficult decision to shelve plans for a new faith community in North Liberty—largely because our daughter Ivy had recently arrived and life had become... *complicated* in the best possible way. A few conversations around the Presbytery of East Iowa later, and somehow I found myself walking through this season with you.

As for what's next for me, the honest answer is: we'll see. My family lives in North Liberty, and we're not planning on going anywhere. Life at home will remain an adventure—especially with our oldest heading off to college in about a year. I'm also tinkering with an outreach idea for parents of travel-sports kids, which currently exists somewhere between “interesting possibility” and “workshop stage.”

A few quick notes as you move into the next chapter of St. Andrew's life.

Pastor Colette Soults will continue serving as your pastoral care associate for the foreseeable future. She brings tremendous compassion and steadiness to that work, and the congregation is well served by her presence. I trust she will continue in that role as long as your Session (and the Holy Spirit) discern that it is helpful.

And soon **Pastor Jordan Warntjes** will arrive with fresh eyes and fresh energy. When that happens, the best gift you can give him is the same gift every new pastor needs: curiosity, patience, and a little grace. No pastor can absorb the full life of a congregation overnight. But give it time. St. Andrew has a way of revealing itself gradually, like a really good novel.

Which brings me to the final word.

Transitions are strange things. Scripture is full of them—wilderness wanderings, exiles, road-to-Emmaus moments where people only realize what was happening after the journey is already underway. God rarely works on our preferred timetable. But God is remarkably consistent about one thing: showing up in the middle of the transition.

Thank you for letting me be part of this one.

Carl



During his final month as St. Andrew's transitional pastor, **Pastor Carl Anderson** co-led a discussion of the film *Wake Up, Dead Man*, part of the *Knives Out* series. In the story, a young priest keeps rediscovering why he chose this vocation in the first place—even while distracted by the complicated work of solving a murder mystery. It's a fitting image for Carl's time in Iowa City: a season of ministry that reminded him, in his own words, “how much I genuinely love being a pastor,” and how the strange and beautiful work of walking alongside people is always the point.



The Rev. Dr. Carl Anderson

Transitional Pastor

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WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT WITH OUR PASTORAL CARE POSITION? ³

Over the past year and a half, St. Andrew has lived through an unusual season of pastoral transition. During that time, many people have stepped forward to help care for the congregation in faithful and practical ways.

One of the most important of those roles has been the work of **the Rev. Colette Soult**s as our **Pastoral Care Associate**.

Colette was initially engaged during this transitional period to help ensure that the essential work of pastoral care continued without interruption. Working alongside our transitional pastor, staff, Deacons, and Prayer Team, she has helped coordinate visits with members who are hospitalized or homebound, offered pastoral conversations with those going through difficult seasons, and been available to assist with funerals, weddings, and other significant moments in the life of the congregation when additional pastoral support was needed.

St. Andrew's Session members are deeply grateful for the care, compassion, and professionalism Colette has brought to this ministry.

Last month, our congregation elected **the Rev. Jordan Warntjes** as the next pastor and head of staff at St. Andrew. With Jordan's arrival in May, the church will begin an important process of discerning what our long-term pastoral staffing needs should look like in the years ahead.

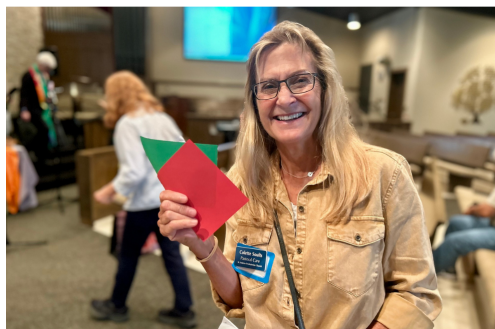
Because Colette was hired on a part-time, hourly basis as an independent contractor, the structure of her position allows the congregation to continue benefiting from her ministry during this time of transition.

Therefore, Session has asked Colette to remain in her role as Pastoral Care Associate for the time being, continuing the same part-time arrangement.

This will allow Jordan, the Personnel Team, and the Session to work together after his arrival to carefully evaluate St. Andrew's pastoral care needs and determine what additional pastoral support may be most helpful going forward. In the meantime, this arrangement ensures that the pastoral care of the congregation continues smoothly and faithfully during this important season of transition.

We are grateful for Colette's willingness to continue serving St. Andrew in this way, and we invite you to keep her, Jordan, and the leadership of the church in your prayers as we continue discerning the next steps in the life of our congregation.

— *The Session of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church*



In December 2024, St. Andrew's Session worked with the Presbytery of East Iowa's Commission on Ministry and Vitality to hire **the Rev. Colette Soult**s as the congregation's **Pastoral Care Associate**. Since then, Colette has worked closely with the **Deacons** and **Caring Christian Friends Team** to visit members facing health or mobility challenges, while also officiating at funerals and weddings during our season of pastoral transition. As **the Rev. Jordan Warntjes** begins his ministry as St. Andrew's next called and installed pastor, Session has invited Colette to continue in her role—and she has enthusiastically agreed.

4 AN OVERDUE CELEBRATION FOR THE MINISTRY OF ROB MARTIN

The past 18 months at St. Andrew have been... a lot.

During that time, Associate Pastor Kyle Otterbein retired after more than 25 years of ministry among us. Not long after that Lead Pastor Rob Martin was forced to retire earlier than anyone expected following a serious health crisis. It was not the kind of pastoral transition anyone would plan.

Since December 2024, Transitional Pastor Carl Anderson has provided exactly the kind of leadership a congregation needs in moments like this—thoughtful, grounded, and refreshingly non-anxious. Carl has helped us keep our footing, remember who we are, and move forward without pretending the past year was simple.

And now, the congregation has **unanimously elected the Rev. Jordan Warntjes as our next Pastor and Head of Staff**. That decision has been met with real excitement and a strong sense that the Spirit has been at work in the middle of all this change.

But before Jordan officially begins his ministry with us—and just after Carl concludes his—there is one more thing the congregation has been hoping for.

While we were able to celebrate Pastor Kyle's retirement in the summer of 2024, Pastor Rob's health made it impossible at the time to offer anything like a proper farewell. Many people have quietly hoped we might someday get the chance.

That day has finally arrived.

During worship on **Sunday, May 3**, we will give thanks for Rob Martin's nearly four years of ministry among us. Rob's health has improved enough that he is able to be with us. One of his longtime mentors, **the Rev. Peter Boehlke**, will also be present.

Rob has even said he'd like to help lead the celebration of communion that morning, joined at the table by our pastoral care associate, **the Rev. Colette Souls**.

If you're noticing the timing here, you're not wrong. The service will take place **one week after Carl's final scheduled Sunday with us (April 26) and before Jordan's official start**. In other words, it sits right in that little window where we can give thanks for the past without confusing anyone about who the pastor is.

(Yes, Presbyterians actually think about these things.)

Following worship, we'll gather for a **reception in the Atrium**, where you'll have the chance to greet Rob and share your appreciation.

St. Andrew has lived through a lot of change recently. Through it all, the congregation has shown patience, grace, and a surprising amount of good humor. May 3 will be a chance to pause, give thanks for a chapter that shaped us, and remember that God has a long history of carrying churches through seasons exactly like this one.

And then, of course, we'll keep going. Because that's what the Church does.

— Jeff Charis-Carlson



Above: After receiving his cancer diagnosis, Pastor Rob Martin recorded a video blessing for the wedding of Lauren and Thomas Hartley in September 2024. Below: Wisconsin artist Robert Martin (Buehler)—no relation—has given St. Andrew permission to use his triptych, *Sketches for a Container Spilled* (2023), as worship art for Pastor Rob Martin's Celebration of Ministry on May 3.

GIFTS THAT HELP SUPPORT ST. ANDREW'S MINISTRY & MISSION 5

If you've been in worship recently, you might have noticed a change in the microphone on the pulpit.

For some time, our old microphone had been failing. The makeshift mount was damaging the mic, and even a light touch on the pulpit could send a sharp burst of feedback through the sound system. After a particularly loud Sunday a few weeks ago, it became clear that the time had come to replace it and install a proper mount so that future speakers can adjust the mic safely.

Thanks to the generosity of memorial gifts given in honor of **Pastor Emeritus Mark Wilson Martin** and **Paul Meyer**, we were able to replace the microphone and have the system properly installed and calibrated. These memorial funds allowed us to address the issue without adding pressure to the church's operating budget.

Memorial and gift funds like these play a quiet but important role in the life of St. Andrew. They allow the congregation to remember loved ones while also strengthening the ministry of the church—sometimes through visible projects, and sometimes through practical improvements that simply help worship and ministry run more smoothly.

You may notice that St. Andrew does not name rooms or equipment after individuals or install plaques around the building. Instead, we keep a careful record of memorial gifts and their purposes in a memorial book maintained in the church office. It's a quieter tradition, but one that reflects our belief that these gifts are meant to serve the whole community.

So the next time the microphone works exactly as it should, you might say a small word of thanks—for the lives remembered through these gifts, and for the ways their legacy continues to support the worship and ministry of St. Andrew.

— *Graham Dameron*



Gifts given in memory of the late Paul Meyer and Pastor Emeritus Mark Wilson Martin were recently used to replace the decades old microphone on St. Andrew's pulpit.

Meet This Year's Summer Lunch Bunch Coordinator

St. Andrew is pleased to welcome **Kim Kipp** as the coordinator of this summer's **Lunch Bunch Program**, offered in partnership with the **Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County**. The program provides neighborhood children with a safe, welcoming place to gather during the summer for lunch, activities, and connection.

Kim brings decades of experience working with young people—as a recreational therapist, special education teacher, and paraeducator—and a deep commitment to helping children thrive. Throughout her career, she has been known as a steady presence, advocate, and mentor for students with a wide range of needs. Recently returned to the Iowa City area and active again at St. Andrew, Kim is excited to step into this role.

Stay tuned for more information about how you can help volunteer with this important neighborhood program.



CONNECTING HEARTS ...

6 MORE ST. ANDREW FOLKS SIGNING UP FOR SUMMER SYNOD SCHOOL

My wife, Pat, and I first attended Synod School in July of 2009 and were immediately captured by the experience—worship, music, challenging classes, inspiration, and the fellowship of some 600 Presbyterians (and others) gathered together for a week of learning and community. We have not missed a year since. Over time our children and grandchildren have joined us as well, and Synod School has become a touchstone of our summers.

Every year I come home with renewed energy and optimism—yes, even in today's world. Sometimes it is an inspiring worship service or a thought-provoking convocation speaker. Sometimes it is a perspective gained in a class discussion. Sometimes it is simply the sound of hundreds of voices singing together, or a quiet walk by the lake after a full day of conversation and learning. There is always something good that comes home with me.

For those who have never heard of it, **Synod School** is a week-long learning and enrichment experience sponsored by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It brings together people of all ages (clergy and laity, families and individuals) from across the country for a week of worship, study, and community.

This year, Synod School will take place **July 26-31, 2026, at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa**, and the theme is **“Love in Between,”** reflecting on the spaces where faith meets the real tensions of life.

The rhythm of the week is both structured and relaxed. Each morning begins with song and prayer, followed by a convocation speaker and two class sessions. Afternoons include additional classes or free time, and evenings bring worship for the whole community followed by optional activities like mini-courses, music, games, and conversation.

This year's convocation speaker is **William Yoo**, author of several books exploring race and the Presbyterian Church and a two-time speaker (via Zoom) at St. Andrew's Learning Academy. Evening worship will be led by **Rev. Cece Armstrong**, co-moderator of the General Assembly of the PC(USA). Music throughout the week will feature indie-folk artist **Matthew Black** as Artist-in-Residence, and St. Andrew's own **Sara Penn** is on the Synod School Board and in charge of the children's program.

Synod School is also truly **intergenerational**. There are dedicated programs for children and youth throughout the day, so families can attend together while everyone still has meaningful activities suited to their age. It is not unusual to see toddlers, teenagers, retirees, and pastors all learning and worshipping in the same place.

For years, the Penn family represented most of St. Andrew's presence at Synod School. But this year something new is happening—**more than a dozen people from St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Iowa City are planning to attend**. It will be wonderful to share the experience with familiar faces and to introduce others to a week that has meant so much to our family.

If you are curious, I encourage you to take a look. Registration is open through the Synod of Lakes and Prairies' website (<https://www.lakesandprairies.org/synod-school>), and there are scholarships available for first-time attendees. Whether you come on your own, with a friend, or with your family, Synod School is one of those rare experiences where faith, learning, and community come together in a way that stays with you long after the week ends.

I hope you will consider joining us in Storm Lake this summer.

— Paul Penn



St. Andrew's Penn Family stands among many people from the **Presbytery of East Iowa** as part of the 2024 Synod School at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake. More than a dozen members of St. Andrew are planning to attend this year's **Synod School** in July. For more information, visit the website for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (<https://www.lakesandprairies.org/synod-school>).

ST. ANDREW HOSTING A PRESBYTERY MEETING & MORE ON APRIL 18⁷

On Saturday, April 18, St. Andrew will host the 220th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of East Iowa. Members of the congregation are invited to come and observe the work of our wider church.

The Presbytery is the regional body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that connects congregations across eastern Iowa. Several times a year pastors and elected commissioners gather to worship, pray, make decisions together, and tend to the shared ministry of the church. While much of that work happens quietly behind the scenes, these gatherings are an opportunity to see how Presbyterians discern and govern together.

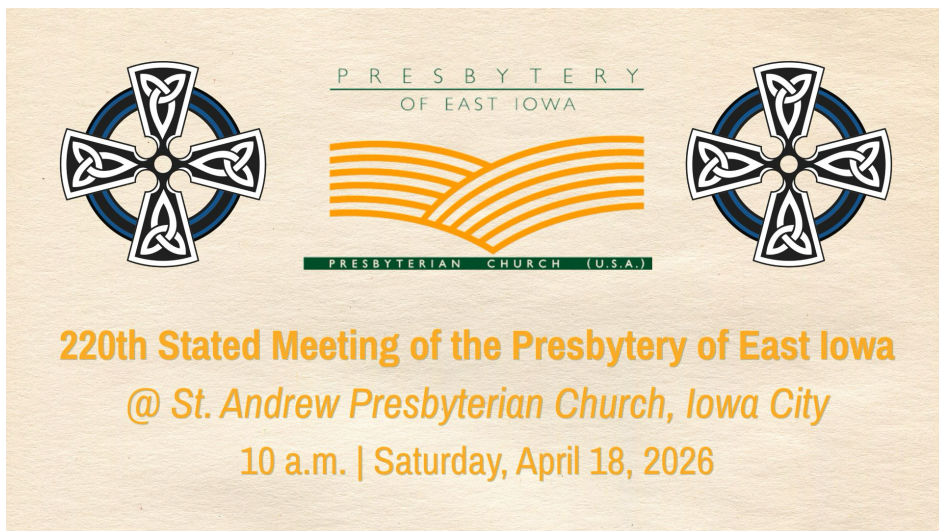
The meeting will begin at 10 a.m., with fellowship starting at 9:15 a.m. in the Atrium. Visitors are welcome to come for part of the meeting or stay for the whole morning. Lunch will be available following the meeting. Youth and adults from Big Brothers Big Sisters will prepare and serve the meal, and the cost is \$15 per person.

In the afternoon, the Presbyterian Foundation will host a workshop at 1 p.m. titled “Cultivating Year-Round Stewardship,” led by the Rev. Kyle Nolan. Anyone interested in stewardship and generosity in the life of the church is welcome to attend.

Then at 3 p.m., the day will conclude with a concert featuring all four of St. Andrew’s handbell choirs, celebrating the congregation’s handbell ministry with music ranging from ABBA to James Bond themes. The concert will also serve as a fundraiser to refurbish our 5-octave set of handbells this summer.

Hosting presbytery gatherings is one of the ways St. Andrew participates in the wider life of the church. If you’ve ever wondered what happens at those meetings, this is your chance to find out.

— Jeff Charis-Carlson



THE INDIAN CARD: AN ACT JUSTLY REVIEW

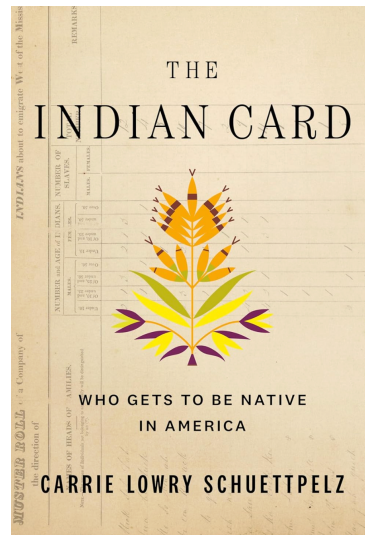
The Indian Card: Who Gets to Be Native in America is written by a member of our congregation, **Carrie Lowry Schuettpelz**, wife of Matt Weitzel and daughter-in-law of Richard and Rose Weitzel. Carrie was born and raised in Cedar Rapids and is a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. She previously worked in the Obama Administration on issues related to homelessness and Native policy and now teaches public policy at the University of Iowa.

This new book is available in the church library on the *Act Justly* social justice shelf. At first glance, it appears to be a careful study of the laws and policies that determine which Native American tribes receive federal recognition, how individuals qualify for tribal membership, and how those systems developed over time. Carrie explains these complex issues clearly while also showing how they shape the lives of Native people today.

Alongside the policy discussion, the book introduces readers to Native women from tribes across the United States and Canada—people Carrie came to know personally. Through these stories, readers gain a deeper understanding of how questions of identity, citizenship, family, and place continue to shape Native life. Carrie also reflects on her own experience receiving her tribal enrollment “card” and navigating the process of registering her two children as members of the Lumbee Tribe.

Thoughtful, engaging, and deeply personal, *The Indian Card* invites readers to better understand the complicated history and lived reality of Native identity in America. Copies are available now in the St. Andrew library.

— Jan Taylor



... RENEWING LIVES

MESSENGER

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140 Gathering Place Lane
Iowa City, IA 52246

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/saintandrewic.org

Phone: 319-338-7523

Worship Schedule:

- **Weekly Worship** | 9:30 a.m. Sundays
- **At the Table** | 7 p.m. First Thursdays

Connecting Hearts | Renewing Lives

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Melodious Harmony Presents St. Andrew Handbells Unplugged

A concert featuring St. Andrew's four bell choirs with music from Abba, Coldplay, James Bond, and much, much more!



3 p.m. | April 18 ✨

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church
140 Gathering Place Lane, Iowa City

Free Admission

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