



*Jesus said, "I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant." – John 15:5 (The Message)*

**April 1, 2023**

Dear Friends and Members of St. Andrew:

Will you join me in thinking about the vine and the branches? The branches outside my window are bare and the roots lie in still frozen ground. It is too soon to predict the harvest.

However, the guiding verse for our current Capital Campaign quotes Jesus using the vine and branches as a metaphor to understand our relationship with him. As translated in *The Message*, when the vine and branches are intimately and organically linked, Jesus promises an abundant harvest.

The **Rooted in Faith | Growing to Serve Capital Campaign** is up and running, with a goal to raise at least \$1 million dollars over the next three years to pay the mortgage and reduce principal on our bank loan. We are thankful to have a great start towards our goal but still could use some help.

If you have not done so already, please prayerfully consider making a one-time or recurring gift to this campaign. Information is available on the church website: <https://saintandrew-ic.org/give-now/capital-campaign>.

Imagining the vine and the branches, I love to hear your stories about how God joins with your families and produces a harvest. It is truly a blessing to know you and be a part of the St. Andrew community. Here is an example from **Stewardship Team member Bruce Walker** about how God has worked in his family over the years:

*We—Dedi, Nick, Tony and I—joined the church in 1977 because we wanted the children to have a good solid Christian education. Nick, at age 5, asked if he could learn more about Jesus. My commitment at the time was simply to try to set an example for our sons.*

*As we began to meet more people and learn about the significant mission commitment of St. Andrew, we became more involved. I played softball, and Dedi went on a youth mission to Mexico, where her skills in language were a help. The cost of the trip for the youth and leaders was funded in part by the church, but most of the cost was earned by various fundraisers. That led to donating from our earnings to help the church carry on the mission activities.*

*Later when asked to serve on committees and in leadership, it became apparent that tithing was a good way to help. For that reason—along with a visit from two elders one Sunday night asking about why we were not pledging—we began pledging as a family.*

*As the children entered Basic and ETC, we increased our commitment to keep the programs vital. As we became involved in Lettuce Feed Others and monthly food distributions, we began to send a portion of our mandatory retirement distributions and gave time to help others in need.*

When I asked Bruce to help me write this letter, he hesitated because he stopped going to church in his teenage years and said he had “little religious training.” But I think his comments show an intimate and organic connection between God and the Walker family, like the vine and the branches.

Many people at St. Andrew are inspired to get involved for the sake of their children. And if you know the Walkers, you know Dedi is an influencer with a big heart for the community. We are so grateful for the way God called them to St. Andrew in 1977. We are amazed at how God continues to grow the ministries of St. Andrew.

If you have questions about the Capital Campaign, please let us know. **Rooted in Faith** and **Growing to Serve**, we can’t wait to see what God does next in your lives and in our community.

Sincerely,

***Christina Charis-Donelson***

**St. Andrew Capital Campaign and Stewardship Team**

- Pastors: Rob Martin and Kyle Otterbein
- Session: Tim Benson and Bruce Walker
- Congregation: Christina Charis-Donelson and Toni Van Voorhis