

# 2 OUR EXPRESSION OF WHAT 'I LOVE YOU' MEANS FOR ST. ANDREW

One of the most inspiring stops on my springtime trip to Paris was *Le mur des je t'aime*—The "I Love You" Wall. This 2000 art installation features more than 600 tiles, each inscribed with the phrase "I love you" in over 250 languages. It's a moving reminder that there are countless ways to say the same beautiful thing.

That wall stayed with me—not just as a tourist moment, but as a source of inspiration for how I imagine the time I have left at St. Andrew. Each of us bears the image of the Divine (Imago Dei, for those of you who enjoy a little theological flair), and each of us expresses that image in a unique, powerful way.

What continues to amaze me about this community is how many different forms the love of God takes here. It shows up in your care for one another, your acts of service.

CE Core Sold Culture

The Wall of Love (Le mur des je t'aime, or literally, The 'I Love You' Wall) is a love-themed wall of more than 400 square feet in the Jehan Rictus garden square in Montmartre, Paris, France. The wall was created in 2000 by artists Frédéric Baron and Claire Kito and is composed of 612 tiles on which the phrase 'I love you' is featured 311 times in 250 languages.

your creativity, your laughter, and your persistence. I plan to collect and share these expressions as a source of reflection and inspiration—like our own living mural of "I love you" moments.

Part of my role is to help us better understand how we relate to one another—practically and spiritually. That includes working to clarify our organizational flow so that communication is simple and everyone knows who is responsible for what. When the structure is clear, our relationships and ministry can flourish.

A central part of my focus will also be preaching and shaping worship with our team—crafting messages that draw us into deeper love for God. As we grow in our awareness of the unique ways we've each been created and cherished by the Divine, we begin to discover new ways to express that love—in word, in service, in community.

In the coming months, I look forward to weaving your stories into my sermons and reflections—to build a rich mosaic of God's love that is still unfolding in our midst.

Here's what I need from you: tell your story. Share the ways you're seeing and experiencing the Divine's love—in ordinary moments, in surprising ways, in times of struggle or joy. When we give voice to these sacred truths, we expand not only our understanding of God, but each other's.

Together, we'll shape our own St. Andrew expression of "I love you." I'm beyond excited to keep discovering God's love—through you.



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Pastor Carl

# **GROWING TO SERVE..**

# SAYING FAREWELL WITH SMILES, HUGS, LAUGHS, AND STORIES

It's not easy to say goodbye to my St. Andrew friends. You're my family: my sisters and brothers, my children. I have gratitude and love for all of you and what you mean to me. You helped form me into who I am.

When we moved to our first house in University Heights with our two young boys (Rima wasn't yet in the picture) we looked for a place to find a loving community—and we found it—less than a mile away.

Yes, it's been 57 years since John and I joined the church of our neighborhood. John was Greek Orthodox. (He got baptized in the Jordan River as a baby, since his name was John). And I grew up in the Mennonite church, baptized at age 13. But having lived in the Holy Land for two years after college—where being Christian was a striking minority—I learned the lesson that the denominational title meant nothing.

We who called ourselves Christian had the distinction of believing in the one God that sent Jesus to live among us to give us an example of what it means to be God's children. So, there, I found, we were just Christian.

I love that St. Andrew is a dynamic church—one that continually knows to grow, be willing to change, and reach out beyond the walls to show the love that Jesus taught us to be and do. That is to be a rebel—to greet and care for the undesirable, feed the needy, heal the wounded in spirit, to open eyes to God's love.

You will keep on that path, and I will be watching from the sidelines—cheering you on. Blessings on you—each and every one.

Thank you for sharing the love of God with me.

# Myrna











On July 27, 2025, St. Andrew members offered a host of hugs, laughs, and stories with Myrna Farraj before she moved to Minnesota. Myrna and her husband John (1939-2023) became members of St. Andrew in 1968 (see the lower left photo above), and she served the church community in nearly every leadership and ministry role available. Myrna's new address is 825 Lake Street East #303, Wayzata, MN 55391. Her email and cell number will remain the same.



2025

St. Andrew All Abilities Gelebration Art Exhibit

Aliter Worship Sept. 7

"I will offer You my grateful heart, for I am Your UNIQUE CREATION, filled with wonder and awe. You have approached even the smallest details with excellence; Your works are wonderful; I carry this knowledge deep within my soul" (Psalm 139:14)

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# 4FEELING A SENSE OF REVIVAL AS WE ENTER THE FALL SEASON

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about revival.

It's a word that keeps coming up in my reading for classes, and it surfaced again during my recent time at the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. At one point, a pastor referred to Triennium as a revival, and it made me pause. *Revival* is a word we don't often use in a Presbyterian context—it can feel too historic, too emotional, or too theatrical.

But at its core, revival simply means a restoration to health—bodily, mental, or spiritual. A restoration of life. When I think of it that way, it does feel like the right word to describe a gathering of more than 2,000 teenagers from across the country. There was energy. There was excitement. There was passion for the future of the church.

The theme for this year's
Triennium was "As if we were
dreaming." And revivals begin
with a dream—a shared,
collective hope. A hope that the
church can be more. That it has a
future. That God is still at work
among us. To be called into
revival alongside God is to
remember that we are always
being called from death into life.



Teens and leaders from St. Andrew enjoy the first day of the **Presbyterian Youth Triennium** in Louisville, Kentucky. "The first day at Triennium was a new experience for all of us! We traded buttons, played games, heard from the co-moderators of General Assembly, and dreamed dreams! Our charge at the end of worship was we are born to dream, go make some NOISE!."

The fall schedule for St. Andrew's **Student Ministry** kicks for **BASIC** (middle school) on Wednesday Aug. 27 and for **ETC** (high school) on Sunday Aug. 31. **Flipping Tables** (post-high school) is meeting at 7 p.m. Thursdays throughout the summer, with an additional outdoor, open house scheduled forr Friday Aug. 22 at the home of Matt and Marissa Moore.

Maybe revival feels intimidating because it forces us to admit we need it. That something in our faith—whether large or small—has gone dormant. That we need renewal.

The truth is, the church is always in need of revival. We are constantly being invited into transformation—into new life. Revival calls us to ask: Are we clinging too tightly to the past, so much so that we risk missing what God is doing in the present? Or what God is calling us into for the future?

As we enter this fall season, my hope is that you feel a sense of revival. That St. Andrew feels full of life—of new growth, new energy, and new ways to serve one another and our community. I hope people of all ages sense this.

And I hope we will listen well and dream together.





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### TRANSITIONS AND CREATIVITY ABOUND IN MUSIC MINISTRY

As the classic hymn *Abide with Me* says, "O thou who changest not, abide with me."

Change is happening all around us. As of the writing of this column, we are waiting for next steps from the Pastor Nominating Committee regarding our pastoral search, we are still searching for a Building and Grounds Coordinator, and we are bidding farewell to Will Fecko as he assumes the Director of Music position at First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City.

With all these transitions, we continue to lean to God, listen to the Holy Spirit, and adapt programming to our mission/vision and the needs/resources/time of our community.

Here are a few things that are not changing:

- Cohesive worship services centered around specific themes that weave together sermon, liturgy, music, and prayers.
- Creative and eclectic music from a variety of eras and cultures that represent the broader Body of Christ.
- Handbell, Brass, Woodwind, and Vocal ensembles that help us dive deeper into what God is saying during a worship service.
- Active participation of children and students in worship.

Specifics of how this looks in a worship service, however, will vary widely from five years, five months, or even five weeks ago!

Here are some upcoming changes that are centered on the above list:

- A greater variety of readers in worship to include even more children and students.
- A Lessons and Carols service based on Isaiah 11, including the verse 16:
   "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (KJV). The service will feature a new anthem composed specifically for Logos Choir.
- An interactive Child-led service for all ages that will focus on Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

And that's just the start. More exciting opportunities will come with the start of Handbell, Brass, Woodwind, and Vocal ensembles for all ages. If you know of someone with a musical gift to share, let me know.

Austen



The 2025-26 season of **Melodious Harmony** will feature outstanding choral, instrumental, and organ music from artists near and far. Here is a list of what is on the schedule already:

- 1:30 p.m. November 8 | Come Hell or High Water: Stories of Hope and Perseverance, featuring music performed on (and stories told about) St. Andrew's magnificent Krapf Organ.
- 2 p.m. December 14 | Orchestra Iowa Holiday Brass, a program guaranteed to put you in a jolly spirit. (This is the only ticketed concert in the series. We recommend you visit the www.artsiowa.com/orchestra-iowa as soon as possible after the online box office opens Aug. 12.)
- 7:30 p.m. February 6 | St. Olaf Band. Founded in 1891 and dubbed "one of America's preeminent bands" by The New Yorker, the band perform the very best compositions and transcriptions for symphonic band, producing an exciting, crowd-pleasing style.
- 3 p.m. April 18 | A concert celebrating the role of handbells at St. Andrew and a fundraiser for the refurbishment of one of the sets of bells.
- 7:30 p.m. May 15 | The University Choir from Nebraska Wesleyan University will perform on their spring tour. They stand on the belief that making beautiful music together can inspire us to become more compassionate, empathetic, expressive, mindful and caring people.



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## **6 LIVING OUT ST. ANDREW'S MISSION FOCUS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**

As fall approaches, St. Andrew's Mission, Outreach, and Service Team continues its vibrant and faithful work in our community. From our Food Market and Free Lunch Program, to Senior Moments, to the upcoming *Minds Matter: Mental Health Resource Fair*, we are actively living out our call to serve. We also remain closely connected to local and global mission partners doing transformative work.

#### MINISTRY FAIR | SEPT. 7

Join us for our Ministry Fair—a celebration of all that God is doing at Saint Andrew! It's a great opportunity to explore ways to get involved in the life of our church. Whether you're interested in sewing, greeting, music, or helping behind the scenes, there's a place for you.



#### You can also:

- Update your information in St. Andrew Connect,
- · Connect with the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC), and
- Learn more about our final Capital Campaign.

Passports for all ages will guide you through the event, and everyone who participates will be entered into a prize drawing. Don't miss the *All Abilities Art* exhibit—a joyful celebration of creativity in our community.

#### **SENIOR MOMENTS RETURNS**

Senior Moments is back with a full calendar of events, open to all ages. This season's highlights include:

- Juli Johnson on the art of guilting.
- Doris Montag presenting the history of men and shaving, and
- · Heritage Area Agency on Aging sharing local resources.

We'll also enjoy a luncheon in November and a December music program. Senior Moments meets on the third Tuesday of each month—bring a friend and join us.

#### **UPDATE ON THE BIG TABLE**

We have sad news: *The Big Table* will not return this year because of the closure of the Center for Worker Justice. The MOS Team is exploring a new partnership with a similar organization, currently in the approval process. We'll update you in the next *Messenger*.

#### LOOKING AHEAD: MINDS MATTER | SATURDAY NOV. 1

*Minds Matter: Mental Health Resource Fair* returns—this year alongside the *Homemade from the Heart* Craft Sale. Our 2025 theme is **Mental Health Matters: Learn. Share. Connect. Across Generations.** 

#### Speakers include:

- · Mollie Schmelzer on youth mental health,
- · Laura Semprini on peer support and Johnson County services, and
- Our friends from Dementia Friendly Johnson County to provide additional training.

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., local organizations will be on-site to share mental health tools and support. At the same time, local vendors will offer handmade crafts—perfect for early holiday shopping. Please spread the word and invite others!





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# **GROWING TO SERVE..**

## SUNDAY MORNING LEARNING OPTIONS BEGIN ON SEPT. 14

St. Andrew's **Learning Academy** recently announced its syllabus for the Fall 2025 semester. All classes will take place in The Hub and will begin shortly after worship ends on Sunday mornings. All teens and adults are welcome.

If you have any suggestions for Learning Academy Class for the Spring 2026 semester, contact the church office (office@saintandrew-ic.org) or Paul Penn.

#### Sept. 14: "Non-Dualistic Thinking" with Pastor Carl Anderson

Tired of everything being "either/or"? Let's break free of black-and-white thinking. Pastor Carl helps us stretch our minds (and maybe our hearts) into both/and territory. Your brain may thank you.

# Sept. 21 & Sept. 28: "Finding Hope in the Cancer Journey" with Sharon Fogleman & Paula McCue

Whether you're walking this path or walking alongside someone who is, this twoweek series offers gentle truth, resilient faith, and real-world wisdom. Because cancer doesn't get the final word—hope does.

#### Oct. 5 & Oct. 26: "Why Is Evil Allowed?" with Aaron Shileny

Come wrestle with hard questions and bold faith. No tidy answers—just real conversation.

#### Oct. 12: "Poverty in America" with Twila Finkelstein

This one-week class will feature a conversation with Rima Afifi, director of the Prevention Research Center for Rural Health at the University of Iowa.

#### Oct. 19: "Reckoning with History" with Twila Finkelstein

Speaking with William Yoo about his new book, *Reckoning with History*, this class examines how slavery and settler colonialism shaped American Christianity—and how churches today can face that legacy with honesty, repentance, and hope.

#### Nov. 2 & Nov. 9: "Walking through the Bible" with Robert Cargill

Join Robert Cargill for a dynamic tour of the Bible, informed by archaeology, digital humanities, and biblical scholarship. With expertise in ancient texts and virtual reconstructions, Cargill helps uncover what lies beneath the surface of familiar stories—and how scripture continues to challenge, inspire, and evolve in our time.

#### Nov. 16 & Nov. 30: "LGBTQ+101: Becoming a Welcoming Church"

Curious how churches can move from tolerant to truly welcoming? We'll get real about what inclusion means and why it matters. Presenter TBA, but the conversation will be bold, brave, and beautifully overdue.

#### Nov. 23: Alternative Gift Market

Skip the mall. Choose gifts that heal, help, and give back. One Sunday. A world of impact.

#### Dec. 7 & Dec. 14: "Stories of Advent" with Christina Charis-Donelson

Advent isn't just candlelight and cocoa (though we love those too). Dig deeper into the stories that carry us toward Christmas with hope, honesty, and a little holy mystery.

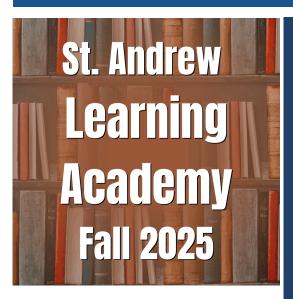
#### **Other Sunday Learning Options**

#### **Small Group Starter Class (Room #128)**

Interested in joining or starting a small group bible study at St. Andrew? Ted and Annie Potter will be hosting a six-week Small Group Start Study in the Conference Room (#128) from Sept. 14 to October 19. The class is designed to serve as a small group that can continue after the final Sunday session or a laboratory for showing people how to start and lead a new group within the congregation. If you are interested, contact the church office (office@saintandrew-ic.org) or fill out this form: https://tinyurl.com/small-group-starter.

#### Dropping in with Matt & Carl (Room #103)

Pastor Carl Anderson and Matt Moore, St. Andrew's director of Student Ministries, are planning to tag-team teach an every-other-week class focused on teenage theological concerns in Room 103. (The class will be geared for teens, but adults are welcome.) For the weeks in which the class is not in session, Room 103 will be available for a teenage hangout (with board games and Nintendo Switch provided, along with occasional adult check-ins).



# **3DON'T FALL ... JUMPSTART THE NEW MINISTRY YEAR AT ST. ANDREW**

The start of a new school year often brings a mix of emotions. There may be sadness as summer fades, kids head back to school, or that ambitious summer to-do list remains unfinished. At the same time, there's excitement for what's ahead —new classes, new friends, and new routines. There's joy in reconnecting with familiar faces, and sometimes a bit of anxiety as the unknowns of the year begin to unfold.

At St. Andrew's Children and Family Ministries, we're hoping this school year doesn't just meet your expectations—it exceeds them. We're praying for a joyful, energized, and faithful start to 2025—2026!

We have so many exciting opportunities ahead, and we'd love for you to be part of them. It all begins on **Sunday, August 24**, as we welcome the year with our annual **School Year's Eve Celebration!** During worship, we'll offer a *Backpack Blessing* at the benediction for all students, educators, and school staff—whether currently enrolled, working, or retired. After the service, join us in the Atrium for ice cream floats and treats to kick off the year in sweet style.

Then, mark your calendars for **September 7**, when we'll celebrate our **Ministry Fair and Sunday School Kickoff!** Enjoy Moo Moo's Ice Cream Truck, a bounce house, and tons of fun as you meet Sunday School teachers and discover the many ministry opportunities at Saint Andrew.

Sunday School classes officially begin the following week for children ages 2 through middle school. We can't wait to welcome our students back—and we're also inviting grownups to consider joining the team. Whether as a regular teacher or an occasional sub, your presence makes a big impact in helping our kids grow in faith.

We love summer—but we're just as excited for everything fall has in store. We hope you are too!



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#### School Year's Eve Celebration

- What: An open house to bless the school year for students, teachers, parents, and caregivers. Bring your backpack for a blessing during the benediction!
- When: After Worship Sunday Aug. 24
- Where: Atrium

#### 25Live@Home Listening Post

- What: A Q&A-style conversation about the upcoming year in Children's & Family Ministry
- When: After Worship Sunday Aug. 17
- Where: Children's Gathering Area

#### Sunday School Teacher & Volunteer Meetings

- What: Learn about the joys of teaching Sunday School and what's ahead for this year!
- · When & Where:
- Sunday Aug. 31, at 8:45 a.m. (Location TBD)
- Monday Aug. 18, at 6:30 p.m. (3rd–5th Grade Room and via Zoom)

#### Gift of the Heart Supply Collection

- What: Donations of school supplies for PC(USA) disaster relief kits.
- When: Aug. 31 through Sept. 28Where: Mission Bin in the Atrium

#### **Sunday School Kickoff & Ministry Fair**

- What: Join us for a fun and exciting field day to meet Sunday School teachers, register for programs, and explore St. Andrew's fall ministries!
- When: After Worship Sunday Sept. 7
- Where: Front lawn near the playground (check-in at the children's area)

#### 25Live at Home - Season 2

- What: Kick off Season 2 with us as we relaunch our video series and share what's coming this fall!
- When: Sundays, beginning Sept. 14
- Where: St. Andrew's YouTube Channel

#### Hayrack Ride at the Dane Farm

- What: Catered cookout, s'mores, yard games, and hayrack rides at 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
- When: Saturday Oct. 11, 4:30 p.m.
- Where: Jim and Ruth Dane's Farm (4507 Dane Rd SW, Iowa City, IA)

Thomas, Sara, and Nichole

# ROOTED IN FAITH ...

# A BUSY SUMMER OF STRENGTHENING LOCAL FOOD SECURITY











St. Andrew members help strengthen local food security through (from upper left clockwise) partnerships with with Health Kids lowa and HACAP, the Summer Lunch Bunch, harvesting with Fields of Faith, and monthly hosting at the lowa City Free Lunch program.

# 10'FINISH THE RACE | OWE NOTHING BUT LOVE': A FINAL LAP

This month, St. Andrew members are invited to gather in living rooms around the lowa City area for a series of **Home Stretch Check-Ins**—conversations about where we've been as a church, where we're headed, and how we'll get there together.

These in-home and at-church gatherings are key parts of our "Finish the Race | Owe Nothing Buy Love" capital campaign. More than mere fundraisers, they are opportunities to look back at the road we've run together, and then look ahead to see where God is leading next.

#### A Story Told in People

The evenings so far have began, as many good things do, with stories. People spoke of their first encounters with St. Andrew—some arriving in childhood, others as grad students or new parents—and how this church became the place where their lives took root.



For more information about St. Andrew's "Finish the Race | Owe Nothing But Love" campaign and "Home Stretch Check-Ins," visit https://saintandrew-ic.org/campaign.



- "I was brought to St. Andrew by my parents when I was 7. I was baptized and confirmed here and I've never been a member anywhere else."
- "It was the thing that good kids did. I had friends who went here, and it just felt right."

And then deeper threads emerged—weddings, funerals, baptisms, losses, healings.

 "Pastor Rob did the wedding for my son and the funeral for my dad. That's what keeps me coming back—it's all woven together."

That weaving, it turns out, has room for newcomers too.

• "I love going on Sundays and seeing people I don't know. It's exciting. I try to meet them. That's what makes it feel alive."



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#### Debt, Dollars, and Don Heineking

Of course, part of the reason for gathering was to talk about the next capital campaign—the sixth and final campaign for covering the costs involved with purchasing our land and constructing our building. Here's the basic math: over five campaigns in 17 years, we've raised \$7.8 million, supplemented with proceeds from land sales. And now, of our original \$5.8 million building loan, just \$1.8 million remains.

And then there's the gift—a \$1 million legacy from the estate of Don Heineking. It's not just generous; it's transformative.

During the Check-In gatherings, most members didn't know Don well (if at all), but that didn't stop the room from filling with gratitude. A known supporter of lowa Athletics and a one-time "Hawk of the Year," Don lived at Oaknoll for many years and formed deep bonds with fellow St. Andrew members. His estate directed the gift toward either debt elimination or future capital needs.

#### Not Just a Campaign (Anymore)

While the mortgage numbers were compelling, the conversations quickly turned toward the spiritual energy beneath them. What was once envisioned as a "soft landing" is now being reframed as a bold finish.

- "Let's crash land. Let's hit zero and maybe dig into the ground a little."
- "Racers don't stop at the finish line. They train for the next one. That's what we're doing."

Some suggested we even start calling this final push something other than "capital campaign."

• "That's not what it is. It's mission. It's stewardship. It's future-building."

This shift in language reflects something deeper: a growing sense that giving at St. Andrew isn't about fundraising fatigue. It's about identity.

"We're a community of givers. That's just what we do. And I don't think
people get tired of giving when they're still getting so much out of the
community."

#### Why We Give, Why We Stay

The Check-In gatherings weren't only financial checklists. They were liturgies of belonging.

With little prompting, people spoke of the beauty of the sanctuary, the welcome offered to children, and how this church has repeatedly created space for both questions and service.

"Without a church, life can just become work and kids. This gives us something more."

For some, the surprise has been how quickly St. Andrew says "yes." Yes to leadership, yes to questions, yes to vulnerability. One person described being brought to tears just seeing the pipe organ for the first time. Another shared about being drawn in by music and thoughtful preaching—and then stunned by the outpouring of care during a health crisis.

#### **Completing the Lower Level Showers**

As we look beyond the mortgage and into what comes next, one long-paused project is waiting quietly behind a false wall—literally.

When the building was first constructed, both lower-level bathrooms were plumbed for three showers each, with the intention that one day St. Andrew might host mission teams, offer emergency support, or simply extend its hospitality in new ways.

That day never quite came. Budgets tightened, priorities shifted, and the shower spaces were closed off behind temporary walls.

Now, with the finish line in sight, our Student Ministry leaders and others are hoping this is a moment to return to that vision. Completing the showers—estimated between \$31,000 to \$59,000, though less with volunteer labor—won't just finish what we started. It will open the door wider.

It will demonstrate again how our building is built for mission. That we are making room. That we are ready to welcome.

#### Mission Isn't a Footnote

The conversation also made space for mission—not as a program, but as a posture.

• "The hook for me has always been Mission. If I can be in a place of service, I know I'm where I belong."

From the Food Market now serving over 500 families a month, to past Habitat builds, to ideas for future outreach (financial literacy classes, youth trips, and yes, even showers for mission guests), people spoke with both pride and urgency.

• "There are churches where you have to attend a service to get food. It's humiliating. I'm proud that we don't do that."

#### The Invitation

So, what now?

In addition to Don's generous gift, the "Finish the Race | Owe Nothing But Love" campaign is aiming to raise \$800,000 by the end of 2027. Digital and paper pledge cards are available. But this moment is about far more than pledges.

• "This isn't just about dollars. It's about being part of something bigger than yourself."

Or, as another put it—less like an ending and more like a benediction:

• "We're not just finishing something. We're opening the door to whatever's next."



# MESSENGER

August 2025

#### St. Andrew Presbyterian Church

140 Gathering Place Lane Iowa City, IA 52246

Website: www.saintandrew-ic.org YouTube: http://bit.ly/SAPCYouTube Email: office@saintandrew-ic.org

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

#### Rooted in Faith | Growing to Serve

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