

The AGAPE Newsletter

November 2011

Vol. 6, No 11

Some problems are wonderful!!

Our level 1 room is too small for all the preschool children coming to our 9:30 Sunday morning program. Such good news! The first Sunday in November the children will have a larger room and more materials.

To accommodate this expansion the level 2 group will be moved to the room next to the Welcome Room. .. first door on the left.

Adult classes at 9:30 will be using the Welcome Room, the library and Karen's office.

Watch for news from the Guardian Team about how we plan to meet the needs of our growing ministries.

Hangin' Of The Greens-

It may be better known as decorating the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. The Artist Team invites you to stay after worship on Sunday, November 20 to help them with this.

There will be a Christmas tree to decorate, garland and wreaths to hang, etc. It will take only a few minutes with lots of hands. Come see how you can help and get in the spirit for Christmas. All ages are welcome.

Macrobios

"My child, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."

(Proverbs 3:1,2)

Certain parts of the Bible seem to promise long life to virtuous people. This promise can be confusing when a lovely friend is broken early in life like precious crystal, and a vicious bully causes misery well into their golden years.

There is a word from the ancient world that is sometimes translated "long life", but can be understood quite differently. "Macrobios" can indeed mean long life, but it has other meanings as well.

When we feel at one with nature, we have a sense of a larger life of which we are a part. "Macrobios" can be understood as referring to this sense of vastness. When we live selfishly, the boundaries of life begin to shrink, we feel small, cramped and easily threatened. When we act compassionately, the horizons of our life begin to widen and open to a larger beauty and purpose.

It has been said that Jesus embodies the spirit of living from the largest view. So "macrobios" can mean "long" life, but it can also mean something much better. It can mean living in the intimate vastness of our common life. We may not even see the connection between our kind actions and the beauty we begin to experience all around us. One purpose of scripture is to teach us to recognize that connection between our love and our happiness. It is silly to think that compassion will necessarily make our lives longer, but it is also silly not to know love will always make our lives bigger.

Love, Jim

Session Notes for October

At the Session meeting on Oct. 22, two representatives of the Mission Presbytery's Committee on Ministry met with the Session. They are required to meet with the Sessions of the churches once every three years. Some of the things they ask are:

Using your mission statement, how do you see your church supporting this statement?

Tell us about your successes and what make you proud of this worshiping community.

Looking ahead three years, what is your vision for ministry in your community?

Name one thing that a visitor entering this church for the first time would notice?

Do you have specific requests for assistance from the committees, divisions or agencies of the presbytery?

Other items discussed at the meeting were to move ahead with architectural redesign of the building, reconfiguring current Sunday School classroom space, and restructuring the AGAPE teams and committees to make it easier for people to volunteer and to define ministries/duties of each team and committee.



Dear Friends,

As we approach this season of Thanksgiving I am reminded of a hymn from the opera "A Tender Land" entitled the "The Promise of Living" written by Aaron Copland. It is a lovely choral piece that, when sung by a large group, fills the air with overwhelming joy, happiness and loving thoughts of thankfulness for our life,

our land, our labor, our friends and family.

With the idea of happiness and thankfulness in mind, I recently read an article from Johns Hopkins about the importance of positive psychology for good mental health. The absence of mental illness is not the same as good mental health. The practice of positive psychology helps individuals to achieve and maintain good mental health by focusing on strengths and virtues that help people thrive, such as: courage, gratitude, compassion, resilience and creativity. When these strengths are practiced mindfully, the behavior's that give life a sense of meaning and purpose can be fostered.

Some positive psychology techniques are:

- **Identify and use signature strengths.** Write down your top 5 strengths. Think of these strengths as blessings. Use them in new ways each day.
- **Keep a gratitude journal** – Write down 3 good things that happen to you each day and note why you think they happened. This helps the mind to shift focus from negative emotions or events to the positive ones and helps you reflect on the positive.
- **Express appreciation to others.** Ongoing...especially the important people in your life.
- **Perform acts of kindness.** By turning your focus to improve the lives of others you can increase your own happiness. Random acts of kindness such as letting someone in line ahead of you, a friendly conversation with the cashier or holding a door with a smile make a difference. Planned volunteering that uses your talents at church or in your community can help to increase happiness and overall satisfaction with life.

Give some thought and consideration to the ways that you can enrich your own life and make a difference in the life of someone else. Give thanks to God this season by sharing your talents and blessing with others.

Love and Blessings, Donna

The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving

Is born of our loving our friends and our labor.

The promise of growing with faith and with knowing

Is born of our sharing our love with our neighbor

Aaron Copland



Fill Up Your Bucket, **Saturday, Nov. 5, 9 to 10am.** Take an hour to begin to prepare physically and spiritually for the holiday season. Join Barbara McCarty and Donna Rutherford to share prayer, music, meditation, and relaxation with friends from our St. Andrew's community. Fill Up Your Bucket will meet the first Saturday in Nov., December and January. We welcome everyone.

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Clerk of Session
Marilyn Love



1st Sunday Potluck

Don't Forget....no, not the time change. It's the First Sunday Potluck. You can't beat cooler temperatures, warm home cooked dishes and sizzling conversation. Join us for the 1st Sunday Potluck on **Nov. 6**, right after the 2nd service. Bring enough for yourself and a little bit more. We'll see you then!



Meditation Group

St. Andrew's Meditation Group meets from 6-7pm **Wednesdays** in the upstairs youth room. Meditation can help restore harmony and quiet restless minds, while leading us to deep insights. All are welcome to join, no prior experience with meditation is needed. There is a time for conversation, followed by a 30-40 minute meditation. You may arrive and leave according to your schedule and needs. If you have questions, contact Yvette Shelton at yshelton@austin.rr.com

Where two or three come together in my Name, I am there with them. Matthew 18:20



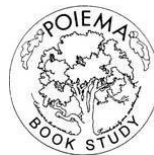
Prepare for the Holidays--and anything else that is coming up in your life! Early morning meditation, Kundalini Yoga Style! Beginning Wednesday Nov. 2, **Wednesday and Friday mornings--starting promptly at 5am.**

A cool shower at home beforehand will help to wake you up. Wear comfy clothes--and bring a mat or blanket. Let yourself in quietly and join us whenever you get here. The sessions will begin with a "tuning in" chant, warm up exercises, a kundalini yoga kriya (set of exercises) then on to a meditation sometimes with chanting then close with the song of blessing



St. Andrew's Garden Project

Gardeners! Come One Come All! The Organic Gardening Group of St Andrew's will meet **Sunday, Nov. 6**, following the 10:45 service. Everyone is welcome even if you have never gardened before. We are also gathering each Thursday at 8:30am to work in the gardens. If you are not familiar with the gardens, we invite you to take a few minutes and stroll to the edge of the lawn on the east side of the church where you will see six raised beds and a large 'in-ground' bed as well. We are producing lots of really good quality organic, fresh food for our church's food pantry. If you would like to help but these times do not work for you, please let us know. We are eager to accommodate your schedule. For more information please contact Meredith at 921-9725 or mer_lancaster@juno.com or call Lyn at 423-6793. We would love to have you all join us.



The Poieima Book Study will meet on **Sunday, Nov. 13** (2nd Sunday this time) at the home of Jean Fox. We are studying *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*, Your Guide to a Wholehearted Life by Brene Brown. We will discuss Guideposts 3, 4, & 5 Cultivating a Resilient Spirit, Gratitude and Joy, Intuition and Trusting Faith. We begin with a meal and fellowship at 5:30 p.m. and start our discussion about 7. All are welcome. It is not necessary to have read all or any of the material. Jean lives at 7215 Geneva Dr. 78723. If you have questions, call her at 512-926-1132 or contact Barbara McCarty at barbaraRMc@austin.rr.com. An offering for the meal goes to St. Andrew's food pantry.



Thursday Nov. 10:

The 2011 Kerrville New Folk Winners

Now in its fortieth year, the Kerrville Folk Festival is one of the world's premier destinations for folk music fans and performers, and the New Folk competition is a perennial favorite part of festival. In the interest of identifying the best up-and-coming songwriters, eight hundred entries were narrowed down to thirty-two finalists, putting them in the company of The Flatlanders, Lucinda Williams, Steve Earle, Nanci Griffith, Tish Hinojosa, Lyle Lovett, Robert Earl Keen Jr., James McMurtry, Jimmy LaFave, Shawn Colvin, and Slaid Cleaves.

Despite the brutal heat and mid-afternoon time slot, the 2011 finalists played to a packed house of musicians and music fans. After the fun but difficult job of listening to and evaluating each performer, judges Michael Camp, John Smith, and Patrice Pike selected this year's six winners: Mai Bloomfield, Megan Burtt, David Moss, Cassie Peterson, Grace Pettis, and A.J. Roach.

Five of the six (Burtt, Moss, Peterson, Pettis, and Roach) are touring central Texas house concerts and listening rooms, and will play at Open Ears Concerts on Thursday night before ending the tour on Friday with a performance at the Rice Festival in Fischer. The tour is sponsored by the Texas Folk Music Foundation and Cabin 10, Inc.

\$15 suggested donation, but no one will be turned away.

Artist websites: www.meganburtt.com,
www.mosssongs.com,
www.cassiepeterson.com,
www.gracepettis.com,
www.roachmusic.com

The shelf in the library, on the side left of the back wall, is dedicated to progressive Christian books/DVDs/reading materials. Each month we will feature new books and/or DVDs; we certainly welcome your suggestions and donations. (See Linda Rowold.) After the books have been highlighted for a period of time they will be donated to the library and mixed in with the other books. Reviews are online and also on cards next to the books. The back side of the card is set up for check-out. For Nov. we are featuring three books on forgiveness:

Progressive
Christian
Library
Reading Shelf

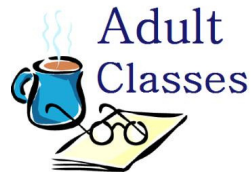


***Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*, by D.B. Kraybill.**

In 2006, a shocking crime occurred in an Amish community—the Nickel Mines shootings. The authors cover the shootings in a straightforward fashion before exploring the broader perspective of forgiveness and concluding with reflections on the meaning of forgiveness. *Amish Grace* explores the questions the story itself raises about the religious beliefs and habits that led the Amish to forgive so quickly.

No Future Without Forgiveness by Desmond Tutu
Desmond Tutu gives us not only an eye-opening account of the brutalities of post-Apartheid justice, but a model for moving beyond the various forms of institutionalized retribution. He describes the joys and difficulties of the truth and reconciliation approach to justice: the granting of political amnesty to those who make a full confession of their crimes. Truth and reconciliation bears study by readers who are ready for alternatives to the cycles of retribution that inundate the world with ever-widening circles of "moral" warfare and all the rest of the self-justifying brutality that only creates new injustices.

I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies by Nick Smith
has marched bravely into the swamp of contemporary apologies with a machete and a clipboard. The good news is that he has cleared away a lot of debris and clearly outlines the dozens of complex issues surrounding the process of apology. After reading this book, the next time you've had an unfortunate accident, made a mistake, or willfully committed a violation of someone's rights, you'll know they are all morally different categories of behavior requiring, from the start, different forms of apology.



Sunday Classes 9:30 am

Sunday with Jim Rigby: Each Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m., Jim Rigby teaches a lesson that closely relates to that day's sermon. Class meets in the sanctuary.

A Year Through the Bible: This class looks at how the Bible came to be, with an overview of each book of the Bible. The goal is to become more familiar with all the books of the Bible. You can join in at any point. The class meets in the second room on the left in the education wing (Karen's Office) on the first and third Sunday of the month. Babs Miller serves as convener.

All the Women of the Bible: All the Women of the Bible (one at a time): So many of the stories we hear from the Bible are about men. Have you ever wondered about the women in the Bible? Peggy Stoll thought it would be fun and interesting to go through the Bible and, one by one, listen to women's stories--voices not always heard. Come and learn more about the Mothers of our faith. The class meets in the second room on the left in the education wing (Karen's Office) on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Class is facilitated by Peggy Stoll.

On the Record Advance Planning with Amy Praskac Imagine that you are in an automobile accident and taken unconscious to the hospital. Will your family have your directive regarding who may receive medical information so they can get information on your condition? Will your family be able to find your Medical Power of Attorney so that they can act on your behalf?

Join Amy Praskac of "On the Record Advance Planning" as she shares stories about the pitfalls of not being prepared. Learn how prepared you really are with her short self-quiz. Class meets on Sunday Nov. 13 in the St. Andrew's library room.

Becoming a Love and Logic Parent: "Love and Logic" helps parents and their children establish a rewarding relationship based on love and trust so you can: have a better relationship with your children, help your children succeed in school and cope in the real world. It also facilitates reflection on one's behavior, and you to raise responsible kids!

The class meets in the Welcoming Room off the foyer and is being taught by Carla Harringer, a parent, former teacher and retired school counselor. She has been trained in, and has taught, three parenting programs and she is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Special Class: Special class: Forgiveness with Ilene Dunn. The last Sunday of each month, Jim Rigby takes a break and the class explores a different subject.

"Forgive us...as we have forgiven..." Oh, dear - if only it were "Forgive us...as we are hoping to forgive..." or "Forgive us...as we are trying to forgive..." But it's "have forgiven" - past tense - while many of us are still lugging around old hurts not yet forgiven. Little wonder that this part of "The Disciples' Prayer" engenders feelings of guilt in many of us! But maybe some of our feelings of guilt are inappropriate, founded on wrong definitions of what forgiveness is and is not. Let's get together and talk about it. This class meets in the sanctuary.



**Planning for Thanksgiving
Community Meal**

St. Andrew's
Annual
Thanksgiving
Dinner for

families from the North Rural Community Center and our Pantry clients is on Saturday, Nov. 19 at 5 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend and we anticipate up to 250 guests.

The Overall/Volunteer Coordinator is Sharon Mock and the Dining Room/Hospitality Coordinator is June Oliver. Please consider stopping by the table in the foyer after the early and late services to sign up to cook, bring food, set up, clean up, or just to tell us that you will be there to eat! The following is a list of volunteer opportunities that are still open and needed to make this project a success:

- Kitchen Coordinator
- Guest transportation
- Food servers
- Set up tables
- Clean tables
- Sweep/Set-up chairs in Sanctuary after the dinner
- Clean up kitchen
- Prepare food at the church
- Decorate
- Bingo / Game host
- HEB gift cards
- Turkey, cooked & carved
- Ham, heated & sliced
- Pumpkin pies / Pecan Pies / Apple Pies
- Fresh sweet potatoes (50 pounds)
- Fresh white potatoes (80 pounds)
- Canned green beans (36 cans-15 oz. ea.)
- Cranberry sauce (5 cans-16 oz. ea.)
- Cream of mushroom soup (18 cans-10 oz. ea.)
- French fried onions (14 cans - 6 oz. ea.)
- Dinner Rolls – frozen
- Vegetable Broth
- Chicken Broth
- Fresh fruit--(apples, pears, oranges)
- Electric Roasters –Turkey size (for warming purposes)
- High capacity power strips
- Contact **Sharon Mock @ 497.2557 / Sharon.mock@yahoo.com** for more information



**Financial
Report**

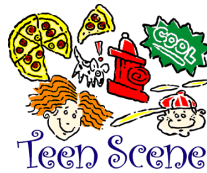
Winding Up. Winding Down. While we have launched the 2012 Stewardship campaign, we still have two months left in fiscal year 2011. There are bills to pay and repairs and supplies needed, so it's a great time to be sure your current pledge is up-to-date.

Overall, St. Andrew's continues to operate with a positive bottom line through the end of September. Donations during the summer kept us from descending into a traditional Fall deficit, and many people are to be thanked for that support.

A report on the status of your pledge for the year has been placed in your church mailbox.

By helping us meet our financial goals for 2011, you'll help us plan better for the 2012 budget. As we enter the 'final stretch' for the year, please help us wind up the year 'in the black.'

Income	Actual	Budget
Pledged Donations	\$176,229	\$180,949
Total Donations	\$222,213	\$237,575
Other Income	\$ 16,620	\$ 4,863
Total Income	\$238,833	\$242,438
Expenses		
Total Expenses	\$230,064	\$246,051
Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 8,769	- \$ 3,613



Teen Scene

- Nov. 6** ~Rolfball noon-3pm 5th-7th grade
- Nov. 20**~ Rolfball noon-3-m 8th-12 grade
- Mo-Ranch Retreat** (registration due Dec. 15)
- Jan 13 - 15 Jr. High and Jan 20 - 22 Sr. High

Sunday School Class for **5th through 7th graders** meets upstairs. All are welcome to explore the Bible, Christian community, the mystery of faith, and how each of us is a gift to ourselves and others.

Attention Teens, 8th grade and up!!! Have you ever wondered what that ancient book the Bible has to offer you, if anything? Have you ever listened to one of Jim Rigby's sermons and wondered, "What did he mean when he said that?" Have you ever thought, "I just don't get it, what do my parent(s) get out of going to church?" Have you ever thought about what religion means to you? These questions and more are being explored in our Sunday School class. Class meets upstairs.

Vision, Renewal, Ministry, Service

The 2012 St. Andrew's Stewardship Campaign was kicked off October 23 with comment by David Rackley (below). This year's campaign is about building and extending the *vision* of the Church; beginning a *renewal* of our purpose and facilities; expanding the *ministry* of St. Andrew's; and building upon our long-standing tradition of *service*. We invite you to consider what St. Andrew's has meant to you, and prayerfully consider ways in which you can support the ongoing message of God's love we attempt to bring.

Why Are You Here?

(Stewardship Kick-Off October 23, 2011, by David Rackley)

Why are you here? That is a question that I cannot answer. I would never attempt to do so. On the other hand I can tell you why I am here. It began 23 years ago, when Peggy and I moved to Austin.

I had just left the military to take a job with the University of Texas. We left behind family and friends and arrived, knowing no one. We visited a couple of churches but didn't find what we were looking for. Peggy found St. Andrew's in the phone book and on a Saturday morning sent me and our 8 year old son to find it. Sean and I scoured the access lanes of north and southbound IH-35 between Wells Branch and Round Rock. When I finally located St. Andrew's in a metal warehouse building, I was convinced that some sort of cult was brewing – I mean real churches don't look like warehouses; do they? Well, we did attend St. Andrew's the next day and our search was over. Twenty-three years ago, next month, we joined into the full faith and fellowship of St. Andrew's. We had found home. The rest is history.

I remember a bomb threat, because we dared discuss abortion and women's rights. I remember a time, when budgets were so tight that we cut the minister's salary and quit contributing to those needier than ourselves. I remember a church divided over inclusivity. I remember a 15-year old, who had never spoken in public, taking a stand and speaking for justice. I remember the wisdom of many who are no longer with us.

I have attended weddings and funerals. I have laughed with you and cried with you. I have told stories, and I have listened. I have served meals, carved turkeys, and made gallons of gravy. I served on Session four times. In doing so, I have argued with you and for you. I have driven teens to the beach for clean-ups. I have played volleyball. I have auctioned carved pumpkins. I have attended and taught Sunday school. I have held your babies and given opinions on their future names. I have taken your photographs. I have delivered Christmas gifts to needy families and have been asked, "Are you Santa Claus?"

Now, change all of my "I statements" to "we statements." Yes, we are all involved. I call that involvement, stewardship. We are learning to do it well. We are taking care of each other, and we have new outlooks on our mission. We are keeping the lights on, salaries paid, and now we discuss how many and where our donations should go. We and our church have become a beacon to many and a thorn to a few. Our continued stewardship is not just a once-a-year request for donations; rather, it is the foundation of our Vision for this church, a Renewal of our faith and our facilities, a Ministry of justice and love for all, and a continuing Service to our community and to the planet.

Why are we here?



Vision, Renewal, Ministry, Service

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I (We) pledge the following support to St. Andrew's for 2012

\$ _____ per week month year

Special talents: _____

Volunteer interests: _____

(This pledge may be increased or decreased as circumstances change.)
Please submit this portion.

Vision, Renewal, Ministry, Service

Stewardship pledge for 2012

I (We) will give \$ _____
per week month year

I (We) have offered these talents and
interests:

Please keep this portion.