

IMPORTANT DATES

- 6— Souper Bowl Sunday; Communion; Food Bank Sunday
- 10—Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations— Extravagant Generosity
- 19— Taizé Service
- 28—Presbytery Meeting at St. Andrew

February Volunteers

Liturgists

- 6 - Wood Family
- 13 - Linda Simpson
- 20 - Susan Dickson
- 27 - Patti Johnson
- Mar 6 - Keith Hanson

Ushers

- 6 - Vilma Bartel and Mary Dick
- 13
- 20
- 27
- Mar 6

THE GREAT GIVEAWAY

The groundhog is an optimist. It's the middle of winter and my impulse to hibernate is stronger than ever. But it's about this time of the year that my thoughts begin turning to springtime and starting seeds for my garden and brave crocuses. My body is still in torpor though.

So to help thaw you out a bit I wanted to share with you some thoughts from Parker Palmer (from *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Jossey-Bass, 1999) as he thinks about spring.

"Before spring becomes beautiful, it is plug ugly, nothing but mud and muck. I have walked in the early spring through fields that will suck your boots off, a world so wet and woeful it makes you yearn for the return of ice. But in that muddy mess, the conditions for rebirth are being created.

Though spring begins slowly and tentatively, it grows with a tenacity that never fails to touch me. The smallest and most tender shoots insist upon having their way, coming up through ground that looked, only a few weeks earlier, as if it would never grow anything again. The crocuses and snowdrops do not bloom for long. But their mere appearance, however brief, is always a harbinger of hope, and from those small beginnings, hope grows at a geometric rate. The

days get longer, the winds get warmer, and the world grows green again.

In my own life, as my winters segue into spring, I not only find it hard to cope with mud but hard to credit the small harbingers of larger life to come, hard to hope until the outcome is secure. Spring teaches me to look more carefully for the green stems of possibility: for the intuitive hunch that may turn into a larger insight, for the glance or touch that may though a frozen relationship, for the stranger's act of kindness that makes the world seem hospitable again.

Late spring is potlatch time in the natural world, a great giveaway of blooming beyond all necessity and reason—done, it would appear, for no reason other than the sheer joy of it. The gift of life, which seemed to be withdrawn in winter, has been given once again, and nature, rather than hoarding it, gives it all away. There is another paradox here, known in all the wisdom traditions: If you receive a gift, you keep it alive not by clinging to it but by passing it along.

From autumn's profligate seedings to the great spring giveaway, nature teaches a steady lesson: If we want to save our lives, we cannot cling to them but must spend them

(Continued on page 2)





**PRAYER AND
MESSAGES FROM
THE HEART**

Doris Fraser
Warren Rogers
Harriet Whearty
Kim Cox
Roy Reynold's sister

*If we want to save our
lives, we cannot cling to
them but must spend
them with abandon.*

Your news concerning St. Andrew and the congregation is always welcome. Regular mail or drop off at the office. E-mail to: office@standrewbillings.org

Deadline for the February issue of the Net is Wednesday, Feb. 16. You are encouraged to submit your news before the deadline.

Thanks,
Susan Dickson, editor



with abandon. When we are obsessed with bottom lines and productivity, with efficiency of time and motion, with the rational relation of means and ends, with projecting reasonable goals and making a beeline toward them, it seems unlikely that our work will ever bear full fruit, unlikely that we will ever know the fullness of spring in our lives.”

Okay, so my motive for sharing this with you was more than just to get your minds off of the snow that has covered our yards since Thanksgiving. The fifth of our dinners and discussions about Five Practices of Fruitful

Congregations is on Extravagant Generosity, and I’ll admit I don’t practice this very well. Parker Palmer talks about the wintertime as preparation for springtime, the hardening of the earth and then the mud and the muck.

There are times when our generosity is frozen; we pull back and hole up. It can be very messy, but what good is the “winter” of our generosity if the “conditions for rebirth” are not being created?

The financial crisis we’ve endured for the past two years has, perhaps rightly, caused us to be more cautious. But the Christian practice of extravagant generosity beckons us to never let go entirely of the harbingers of hope, which is our ability to give. Spring is messy only because it thaws out our hearts when we’d rather stay in hibernation.

I hope you will join us in our dinner and discussion on **February 10th at 6pm**. Sandy Welch is fixing dinner so you know it will be good and we’ll have some cinematic entertainment as we eat before our discussion.

One more time let me remind you how important these discussions are to the future of our congregation. We need your input and visions as we plan for our future, our springtime, the great giveaway of life and love.

Grace and peace,
Brent

JANUARY 18 SESSION NOTES

By Curt Kochner

Session Clerk

The membership of St. Andrew responded very generously to the request to consider increasing their pledges for 2011. As a result of the increase in pledges and additional changes in the proposed budget for 2011, a balanced budget was developed for next year. A sincere THANK YOU to everyone!

-Pastor Long has requested that the Session consider the possibility of changing his Terms of Call from a full-time position to a three-quarter time position at some point in the future. Consultation on the ramifications of such a change and how the current duties and responsibilities of the Pastor would be covered will be considered as a part of the discussion.

-Pastor Long will be on vacation January 24-31.

-Pastor Long will attend a conference in Albuquerque on behalf of Yellowstone Presbytery on February 1-6.

-The next session on Extravagant Generosity will be held on February 10.

COMMUNITY REPORTS:

EDUCATION: All Sunday school classes are underway. Additional help would be appreciated with the Sunday school for the youth. We have a wonderful group of young people attending and additional support would be appreciated.

HIGHLAND HOLY DAYS: Planning for Highland Holy Days is underway. This year the event will be held over Labor Day weekend, September 2-4. Members from other churches in Yellowstone Presbytery will be invited to join us for this special time of study, fellowship, recreation and worship.

FACILITIES: The controls for the furnace that heats the sanctuary are being repaired. The large classroom on the lower level is being remodeled. One room in the basement will be rented as storage space.

The major item presented by the Facilities Community was a recommendation that we explore with Yellowstone Presbytery how money from a sale of all or a portion of the property would be available to St. Andrew. The Facilities Community has had a preliminary discussion with a realtor regarding the possible sale of the west end of the property (beyond the parking lot, including the garden and the labyrinth). Before any further discussions take place, it is imperative that it be clear how proceeds from any sale of property could be used by St. Andrew to further our ministry. The motion was approved.

WORSHIP: Rev. Priscilla Bell will lead worship on January 30, while Pastor Long is on vacation. Elder Curt Kochner will lead worship on February 6, while Pastor Long is attending a conference.

NOMINATING: Bob Wood and Grady Skaggs will serve as Elder representatives and co-moderators of the Nominating Committee for next year. Nominations for Elders and Deacons for the Class of 2013 will include:

Elders

Jeanne Castberg

Guy Glenn

David Kimball

Deacons

Frances Hargis

Mike Patterson

Mary Wood

The next stated meeting of the St. Andrew Session will be February 15, at 6:15 p.m.



IN FEBRUARY

Facilities

1st at 6:15

Education

2nd at 5:30

Session

15th at 6:15

Deacons

Worship

22nd at 6:30

Fellowship

23rd at 5:30

Highland Holy Days



Birthdays & Anniversaries

February Birthdays

- 13 - Sonya Skaggs
- 14 - Bob Wood
- 16 - Doris Lundin
- 17 - Susan Dickson
- 22 - Frances Schnieber
- 28 - Bruce Whearty

February Anniversaries

ATTENTION ALL GARDENERS

by David Kimball

Yes, gardeners, in spite of the frozen ground and snow – it is time to start thinking ahead to the start of a new gardening season. Seed catalogs have been arriving for the last month, and my green thumb has been having an occasional throb.

The 2011 application form for Community Garden plots is now loaded on the church web site where you can download and print a copy. Susan also has copies in the office you can pick up.

Returning gardeners should turn in their applications to the church office in by March 1st. We will then assign plots to new gardeners by March 15 - and we already have several applications and others making inquiries. We will add more plots this year to meet the anticipated demand. However, we want to first be sure returning gardeners from last year have their first choice of plots.



by Cynthia Kessler

On Sunday February 6th, 140 million Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal.

Please join young people around the country as they demonstrate God's love by loving their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It's a simple, yet significant act of caring for others. Drop \$1 or more, in the soup pot Sunday the 6th of February or bring a food item for the pot. Our young people will be in the Garden Room February 6th with soup pots for donations. All donations this year will go to the Billings Food Bank.



A few of last year's gardeners from the left are: Sandy Welch, John Dickson, Unknown, Ric Scott, Stephanie Dills, and Arlyne Anderson.

BOOK STUDY GROUP RESUMES

by David Kimball

What does it mean to be “Christian”? This is the question the Book Group will consider as we begin meeting again weekly starting on

Wednesday, February 23rd during the noon hour. Dave Kimball will be the facilitator.

We will tackle Embracing an Adult Faith by Marcus Borg. It is an exciting, five-session resource for

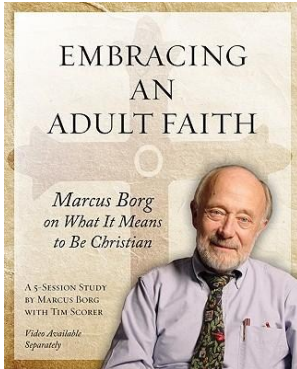
those seeking a richer understanding of issues in contemporary Christian practice and theology.

The format will be a little different from our past experience. Instead of a book, you will have copies of selected readings each week. Each session will be introduced by a 20 minute video presentation that sets the stage for our discussions.

Our discussions will address five topics:

- ❖ Who was Jesus?
- ❖ Who is God?
- ❖ What is Salvation?
- ❖ How do we practice our Faith?
- ❖ How do we live in Community?

A soup lunch will be provided for the first session. Just show up and be prepared to stretch your mind and grow into a better understanding of what you mean when you say, “I am a Christian.”



BOOK REVIEW

by Susan Dickson

Loon Lake, a novel by E. L. Doctorow, is set in the New York Adirondack mountains during Depression days. The main character, Joe, is a drifter who finds himself at a beautiful retreat on Loon Lake belonging to an industrial millionaire. After being attacked by wild dogs, Joe makes the retreat his temporary home. This is where he meets the other two salient characters: Clara, a “gangster’s” girlfriend, and a poet, Warren Penfield, who also has made the millionaire’s retreat his residence.



Loon Lake is admired by literary critics for its experimental usage of stream of consciousness narrative, poetry, juxtaposing past and present, and frequent changing of the narrator’s point of view--all of which make it difficult for readers to follow.

By the second half of the novel, events and individuals come together with a more coherent narrative. Doctorow surprises readers with an unexpected plot that completely justifies their tenacity in reading the book.

Loon Lake is one of Doctorow’s less known works; a few of his more famous novels are *The Book of Daniel*, *Ragtime*, *World’s Fair*, *Billy Bathgate*, and *The March*.

standrewbillings.org

Calendar updates

Resources

PARLEZ-VOUS FRANCAIS?

by Erin Douglas
French Instructor at
St. Andrew Presbyterian Church

"Bonjour mes amis!" This is what you might hear as you enter a *Music Lingua* French class. *Music Lingua* French classes are being taught at St. Andrew by Erin Douglas. She has been using the facility to teach French to children ages zero to 8 years old. Currently, she has 6 students in two different classes held on Mondays at 4 pm. and Tuesdays at 11 a.m. There is always room for more participants.



Instructor, Erin Douglas; students, Seja Foster and Landon Gainan

Foreign languages are most easily taught when people are young. They absorb new information very quickly. For example, if you introduce an animal like "un castor" (beaver) to a child in French, they may use that word when your family sees a beaver at Riverfront Park.

Weekly classes provide opportunities to sing, play and pretend in the target language. The vocabulary taught is set to a simple song so it is easy to remember what they learned. In one class they learned all about what they wear when going outside to play in the cold weather. By the end of the song they've discovered how to say, "Je mets mes bottes" (I put on my boots) and every other item a child needs in the winter--continuing on to "faire le bonhomme de neige" (build a snowman) or "aller patiner" (go ice skating).

Classes run for 12 weeks and are always available to join. After 12 weeks a new themed unit with new vocabulary begins. The classes repeat much of the formerly learned vocabulary, so anyone is able to join a new class without feeling left out or behind. Things like numbers, colors, actions and greetings are repeated in

every unit. Last fall the theme was all about "la vie dans la ferme" (Life on the Farm). Next winter they will be learning all about les animaux de la forêt en hiver" (Forest Animals in Winter).

If you have friends or relatives with young children, they can join the classes also. Sample classes are always available for families who want to try a French class before joining. To see more information about French classes or other languages from *Music Lingua*, go to the website: www.musiclingua.com. For more information about the classes at St. Andrew, you can contact Erin Douglas at 406-672-4679 or email her at: tinrin@aol.com

Thought You'd Want To Know

Most retirement plans require taxable distributions to you and eventually the family who will inherit. Contact the custodian/trustee of your retirement plan to see if your church, which pays no income tax, could be one of your beneficiaries. Make tax-sense? A blessing for your church?

**RESCUE MISSION
SANDWICH MAKERS—
EVERY WEDNESDAY AT
9:00AM
~~~~~  
FOOD BANK SUNDAY  
FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH  
MONTH: BRING YOUR  
CANNED GOODS TO  
CHURCH**



## CREATIVE CHOIR ATTIRE

*By Susan Dickson*

Let's be honest! How many churches have made their own choir attire? It is only one more unique attribute of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church. We have a couple of advantages: A pastor who is a design artist and choir members who are skilled seamstresses/crafters.

After Pastor Long designed both sides of the reversible stoles, Patti Johnson made the complicated calculations on how much of the different fabrics would be needed for the various shapes and outlines. Once she had purchased the assortment of fabrics and supplies, others came to her aid in cutting the pieces and appliquéing/sewing them onto bare outlines. Cynthia Kessler was her chief assistant, but other choir members, relatives and church members contributed a multitude of hours to complete the creative stoles.

All the people of St. Andrew appreciate and thank everyone who volunteered their talents and time to this important project. They will be enjoyed for many years.



**Patti Johnson and Sonya Skaggs modeling each side of the reversible stoles**



Address Service Requested



6-8 pm

**Dinner included**

Radical Hospitality - Oct. 7

Passionate Worship - Nov. 4

Intentional Faith Development - Dec. 2

Risk-taking Mission and Service - Jan. 6

Extravagant Generosity - Feb. 10

**Taizé**

A Service of Worship  
In Prayer, Silence,  
Scripture and Song

February 17th

Third Saturday of each  
month at 6:30pm

