



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

THE CALL

Honoring the Past — Embracing the Future!

Downtown Tampa, Florida ✦ February 2021

Reverently Speaking

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

Dear People of St. Andrew's,

Many years ago, *The Saturday Evening Post* ran a cartoon showing a man about to be rescued after he had spent a long time shipwrecked on a tiny, deserted island. The sailor in charge of the rescue team stepped onto the beach and handed the man a stack of newspapers.

“Compliments of the Captain,” the sailor said. “He would like you to glance at the headlines to see if you’d still like to be rescued!”

Feeling a little burned out on bad news nowadays? You’re not alone. The year 2020 seemed to be a month-to-month challenge to top bad news with worse news, dominated by the coronavirus pandemic. Add to that a contentious election cycle, protests and unrest over social issues, and a host of other potential crises — like an invasion of murder hornets — and it’s no wonder we’re all feeling a kind of information hangover. Many of us were staying home due to quarantine and social distancing, which naturally led to us watching more news than normal.

Many of us are old enough to remember when news outlets consisted of three TV channels, a daily newspaper, and the radio. When Walter Cronkite told us, “That’s the way it is” at the end of every evening news broadcast, we had some time to digest what was going on. The 24-hour, multi-platform, social media-curated, constant cycle of news that confronts us today, however, allows us no time to process and seems to pile on with information that’s not only continuous, but controversial. It tends to include a lot of conflicting information that leaves us confused and stressed, often with no tangible way to respond other than to offer an opinion. Neil Postman, in his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, called this the “loop of impotence,” or the fact that, “The news elicits from you a variety of opinions about which you can do nothing except to offer them as more news, about which you can do nothing.”

Postman, writing in the days before the internet, was already pointing to the problem of “news fatigue” or a general malaise that leaves us feeling depressed, powerless, and distrustful of news sources that often seem superficial, sensationalist, inaccurate, or hopelessly biased. The result is that the more news we consume the more anxiety we feel or, on the flip side, the more desensitized we become to the news itself.

What we need is a mindset that puts the current news within the context of an eternal perspective. The bad and good stuff happening now has happened before and will happen again. Rather than fret or foment yet another opinion about it all, the prophet Isaiah calls us to remember that the only news that really matters is that the God who created the world in which all this news happens is still at work and will ultimately set everything right.

(continued)

Isaiah wrote to a people confronted with the reality of exile — people isolated and distanced far from home in circumstances they did not choose, but that were the result of their sinful choices. In Isaiah 40:1-11, God announces through the prophet that a return from exile is on the horizon: a new exodus in which God's people would be set free and restored. God himself would dwell with them and he would feed them and protect them as a shepherd feeds and protects his flock.

The glory and character of God provides us with the best news we could possibly hear. "Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?" Ask the Creator God, the one who "sits above the circle of the earth" and rules over it (vv. 21-22). The natural and human-caused calamities that dominate the news cycle are not news to God. God puts them all into perspective by taking the long view. Those rulers and newsmakers who crowd our screens today are "as nothing" to God, who sees them like withered plants that are here today and gone tomorrow (vv. 23-24). No one who makes the news will ever be God's equal; he is the one who creates them all (vv. 25-26).

God himself does not suffer from "news fatigue." As Isaiah puts it, "He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless" (vv. 28-29). Not only does God know the long view of his purposes in history, he offers power and strength to those who feel the fatigue of bad news in the present. Human beings tend to busy themselves trying to either come up with solutions to every problem or offering their opinions to those who "should" be doing something to fix them. But as the pandemic has taught us, there are limits to human knowledge and ability. If we trust only in ourselves, we are bound to experience the fatigue of despair when we fail or reach the end of our ability. The energy and idealism of youth can lead to disappointment and exhaustion when the reality sets in that we cannot "fix" the news no matter how hard we try (v. 30).

Rather than fret, fixate, or forego the news, Isaiah invites us to deal with our fatigue in light of the larger reality the Creator God has once again declared to his people. Instead of "waiting" on the news by constantly refreshing our screens or scrolling through a social media feed, Isaiah instead invites us to "wait for the Lord" (v. 31). That "waiting" doesn't mean we simply sit around and do nothing, allowing the news to continue to wash over us. To "wait" means to look to God to provide us with perspective, hope, and purpose through prayer and through being immersed in God's Word.

How much might our "news fatigue" be mitigated, for example, if we committed to spending at least as much time in prayer as we do scrolling through the news and social media? Many of our phones and devices now tell us precisely how much time we spend online every day. Spending an equivalent amount of time (or more) listening to God and bringing our fatigue and worries to him would allow us the opportunity to put those things in perspective while renewing our strength to deal with the things we can actually do something about. The rest? Well, we simply put the rest in God's hands, knowing that his purposes win out in the end.

So try beginning the day with Scripture and prayer before you even touch that phone or the TV remote. Allow God's Word to nourish you and strengthen you for the day ahead, to prepare you to run the gauntlet of the day without growing weary or discouraged, and to walk steadily forward without fainting under a load of bad news.

The cure for news fatigue, in other words, is to begin with the good news first!

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. John Reese

Make a Pledge for 2021

Please return your pledge card for 2021 as soon as possible. If you did not receive a pledge card in the mail, cards are available at the back of the church, in the Parish Hall, or through the parish office (813-221-2035). Make a commitment and support St. Andrew's in the coming year!

We have currently received **147 pledges for \$386,858.**

Ash Wednesday, February 17th Service times at St. Andrew's

7:30am Holy Eucharist (Rite One) in the Chapel
12:10pm Holy Eucharist (Rite Two)
7:00pm Holy Eucharist (Rite Two with choir)
All services include sprinkling of ashes.



Stations of the Cross: Fridays in Lent 12:10pm

Come and join us for this 30-minute devotional, observed on Fridays in Lent at 12:10pm running through Good Friday on April 2. Our Stations of the Cross, a gift from Nathan & Jane Simpson, are a series of pictures representing certain scenes in the Passion of Christ, each corresponding to a particular incident. Formerly the number of stations varied considerably in different places but fourteen are now generally acknowledged. The object of the Stations is to help the faithful to make in spirit, as it were, a pilgrimage to the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death. It is carried out by passing from Station to Station, with certain prayers at each and devout meditation on the various incidents in turn. It is very usual, when the devotion is performed publicly, to sing a stanza of the "Stabat Mater" while passing from one Station to the next.



Outreach

Dear Parishioners-- Since we moved the Homeless Feeding Program over to St. Andrew's from First Presbyterian last August, we have been very fortunate to get all the lunch bags from Metropolitan Ministries every day and a delivery of bottled water from Hillsborough County. The water was free, a program the county put in place due to the pandemic, but now they have stopped that delivery and we are down to only about a week's worth of water. We are asking for donations to buy bottled water so we can continue to serve the thirsty, as well as the hungry. If you can help, please designate your contribution to Homeless Feeding Program. And if there are any of you who can also deliver the water that would be the most welcome help of all. Currently we need approximately 15 cases of 24 bottles each week.

Youth News

New Director of Children's and Youth Ministries



The Rector is pleased to announce that Alicia Schmid is the new Director of Children's and Youth Ministries, effective February 1st. She will be responsible for all facets of Christian Education for our children and youth. This will include leadership of the youth group as well. Alicia was raised in the northern Virginia area until the age of twelve, then lived in Hampton, Virginia, until she was twenty. She moved to Johnson City, Tennessee, in 2006 to pursue a bachelor's degree at East Tennessee State University, where she majored in education and minored in theater. After college graduation, Alicia worked for Citibank full time. But she found herself being called to serve in children's and youth ministries, so she volunteered on Sundays and during Vacation Bible School and saw it was a great fit. Alicia accepted a paid position at First Christian Church of Johnson City, Tennessee, as the nursery and elementary ministries director in March 2011. In July of 2012 her family decided to permanently relocate to Florida so they could enjoy Florida beaches and weather! After moving to Tampa in 2012, Alicia served on staff at Hyde Park United Methodist Church as the Assistant Director of Children's Ministries from August 2012 until October 2014. She then served at Palma Ceia United Methodist Church as the Director of Children's Ministries until August 2015. Alicia was then the Director of Children's and Youth Ministries here at St. Andrew's from 2015 until 2018, helping to increase participation of children in the life of the parish. She then worked full-time at the Cathedral as the office administrator and youth minister from 2018 until 2020. She now works full-time for an elder law attorney.

Alicia is pleased to re-join St. Andrew's in a part-time role. She is grateful and thrilled to be back and has many ideas already in the works to start bringing our children & youth back together in safe & socially distanced ways. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, painting, spending time with her children, Fred Noah (age 10) and Natalie (age 14), visiting the beach, attending Zumba classes, and more. Alicia is very excited to be re-joining the ministry team at Saint Andrew's, where she hopes she can be a blessing to others and serve long-term as the Director of Children's and Youth Ministries.

Donations to Saint Andrew's Foundation

*In Celebration of the
marriage of George Levy
and Rosemary Graf*

Earl & Jan Smith



From the Parish Register

Baptism

John Campbell Besselieu

Donations to Saint Andrew's Foundation

*In Loving Memory of
John Wolfe*

Ruth & Laurence Kinsolving

Adult Christian Education

Sunday mornings at 9:30

When life feels depleted, does God care? I'm facing an onslaught of challenges; will God help? When life grows dark and stormy, does God notice? I'm facing the fear of death; will God help me? The answer in the life-giving miracles in the Gospel of John is a resounding *yes*.

In *You Are Never Alone*, Max Lucado looks at the miracles of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of John. John chose the stories and events from Jesus' life that he believed would give his readers

- **Jesus transformed water into wine.** We don't have to apologize to God for praying for something insignificant.
- **Jesus healed a man who couldn't walk.** We don't have to stay stuck, no matter the reason we got stuck in the first place.
- **Jesus saved the disciples from the raging storm.** We are not alone in our storms, even when it feels like it.
- **Jesus healed the blind man.** We don't have to be defined by our darkness: *guilt, sin, trauma, anxiety, fear*.
- **Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.** There is nothing so bad we have done that Jesus doesn't have power over it to forgive.
- **Jesus was resurrected.** Even though his disciples didn't believe him, Jesus didn't add to their shame or punish them.

Today, take courage that you are stronger than you think because God is nearer than you know. This is the message of the miracles . . . that with God *you are never alone*.

Here is the rest of the line-up:

2/07 - God is With You in the Valley

2/14 - God is With You When You Need Grace

Sunday mornings at 9:30am

The Passion Play: Living the Story of Christ's Last Days

Recognize your own place in the story and Passion of Jesus.

Jesus' Passion story is presented each Lent in countless churches every year. But one play presented by the inhabitants of the village of Oberammergau, in Bavaria, Germany, may be one of the longest-running performances of all. Staged every ten years since 1634, the play makes an impact not only on the villagers who portray the characters but on all who see it as well. In *The Passion Play* video series, Pastor Rob Fuquay follows the biblical story of the Passion and shows how this amazing play has been used both as a ritual of praise and later as a weapon through its anti-Semitic past. It was filmed on location in Germany and includes behind-the-scenes footage of the production.

Rob Fuquay is the senior pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Here is the line-up:

2/21 – The Power of a Vow

2/28 – The Importance of Community

3/7 – The Role of Ritual

3/14 – Living the Story

3/21 – Telling a Better Story

3/28 – The Power of the Cross

This class, facilitated by the Rector, meets in Room 302 (the Library) on the third floor of the Parish Building.

December 2020 Vestry Meeting Highlights

RECTOR'S REPORT

As of 12/7/20, there was \$188,607 in ops account and \$86,744 in the parish reserve account.

As of 12/2/20, there was \$22,278 in the Foundation's checking account – monies available to the vestry. Foundation also just transferred \$7,000 from Foundation principal to the checking account (this \$7,000 is part of the 2017 allocation).

We have another \$26,473 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 3% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2017 at their meeting on 2/21/17. (NB: \$27,000 has already been transferred to the Foundation checking account from the 2017 allocation, which totaled \$53,473).

We have another \$75,659 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 4% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2018 at their meeting on 2/21/18.

We have another \$63,718 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 3% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2019 at their meeting on 2/27/19.

We have another \$72,918 available from the Foundation principal as a result of the 3% spending allocation designated by the Foundation Board for 2020 at their meeting on 2/4/20.

And there was \$2,734,607 in the Foundation principal as of 10/20/20, as opposed to \$2,785,795 as of 12/31/19, a decrease of \$51,188 for the year to date.

There is also approximately \$99,000 in the Dan Curtis fund fbo St. Andrew's within the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay, with \$3,116 in grant money left available for 2020. This fund is designated for church maintenance purposes. (We recently paid out \$5,500 from this fund to repair the northwest corner of the church roof.)

There is Adult Christian Education at 9:30AM in the third floor library. There is no nursery, children's Sunday School, Children's Chapel, or coffee hour. Victor launched a 9:30AM Zoom Sunday school class for youth that started on 10/4. We also have a Zoom SS class for younger kids as well, led by Donreece Brown.

December 2020 Operating Summary

	<u>MTD Actual</u>	<u>MTD Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budgeted</u>
Revenues	\$125,661	\$48,385	\$618,989	\$580,625
Expenses	\$44,990	\$48,385	\$549,281	\$580,625
Net	\$80,671	\$0	\$69,707	\$0

Annual Stewardship Campaign – launched on 10/4. Many thanks to Gary, Sue, Jennifer R., Lynn, and Jennifer S. for speaking at Sunday services. First mailer (with a letter from Gary) went out on 10/5. Second mailer (with a letter from Gray) was sent out on 11/4. Third mailer (with a letter from Piers) went out 12/7. As of 12/7, we have 110 pledges for 315K (compared to 113 pledges for 348K as of this time last year).

There are still 50 pledgers who pledged 110K in 2020 whom we have not heard from for 2020. With that in mind, you will receive names and phone numbers of such people at the vestry meeting on Monday. I have attached sample copies of how to make your phone calls. *Please make every effort to attend Monday's meeting!* Postcard pledge reminders will go out in early January.

Thanksgiving Day Service – was on Thursday, 11/26 at 10AM. We had a group of 20 thankful souls. Hanging of the Greens – will be on Sunday, 12/20, after the 10:30 service. Please come and help decorate the church for Christmas!

Christmas Lessons & Carols – is on Sunday, 12/20 at 5PM in the church. Service will be broadcast live on St. Andrew's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Christmas Eve services will be on Christmas Eve, 12/24 at 5:30PM and 11PM, with pre-service music beginning 30 minutes prior to each service. These services will, God willing, be broadcast live on St. Andrew's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Christmas Day service will be on Christmas Day, 12/25 at 10AM.

Annual Meeting – Sunday, 2/7/21 after 10:30 service

There was discussion regarding the purchase of two new lapel microphones in the church. The current lapel mics are experiencing interference from the new AV system. AJ Layton believes that replacing the mics will take care of the problem.

Jim made a motion to spend up to \$3,000 on the purchase of two new lapel mics from AJ Layton, with payment to be made from Foundation funds. George seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT – Gray Sanders

The Nominating Committee reports there are now 6 committed candidates thus far for the 2021 Vestry Committee. Therefore there will be an election. Gray confirmed that mail-in ballots would be used to include all parishioners. As stated in the last meeting, it was agreed that ballots would be prepared the week of January 11th, and ready to mail out on January 18th. Gray is formulating a letter to be sent out to all parishioners explaining the procedure this year. He proposed live-streaming the annual meeting. Father will confirm with the Bishop that this procedure meets with his approval, and how to handle the issue of quorum for the meeting.

JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT – George Levy

George reported that all previous projects are up to date and completed, with happily nothing else to report.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Piers Curry

Piers reported that pledge revenues are down a bit, but not surprising. He feels confident that will be made up by the end of the year. The Operating fund is in better shape this year than last year. He is taking a conservative approach towards 2021, considering the ongoing circumstances of COVID, and will present the budget at the next Vestry Meeting.

OUTREACH – Sue MacIsaac

Sue reported that a crew of 15-20 people from Metropolitan Ministries served Thanksgiving meals at St. Andrew's. They will be there once again on Christmas morning to serve hot meals to the homeless. Gabriel Tree was a great success this year, with many gifts and gift cards for families along with raffled Christmas trees, plus a \$700 surplus for next year.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

509 East Twiggs Street

Tampa, Florida 33602

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Ash Wednesday

✧ February 17th ✧



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

The Rev. John Reese, Rector

Sunday Services

8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

9:30 a.m. Christian Education
for adults

Church Location:

Marion & Madison Streets

Mailing Address:

509 E. Twiggs St.

Tampa, FL 33602

Phone: (813) 221-2035

Fax: 224-0945

Web: saintandrewstampa.org

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saintandrewstampa.org

**Deadline for articles for
The Call:** 15th of each month

for the following month's
newsletter. Submit articles to
Lauri in the church office.