



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

THE CALL

Honoring the Past — Embracing the Future!

Downtown Tampa, Florida ✕ September 2020

Reverently Speaking

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

Dear People of St. Andrew's,

In January 2019, Russian pianist Elisey Mysyn strode onto the stage of the concert hall in Naberezhnye Chelny, an industrial city of more than a half million people on the Kama River, about 600 miles due east of Moscow. He smiled confidently at the audience. The hall was packed. He was dressed in a concert-style black tuxedo, which contrasted nicely with a mane of flowing blond hair. He sat on the piano bench, and then took a few moments to adjust it for height and distance to the keyboard, rested his hands on the keyboard and nodded to the conductor.

The orchestra began to play and soon Mysyn was coaxing magic out of the grand piano, playing the challenging “Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Major” by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who composed the three-movement concerto when he was only 11 years old. Mysyn played without music, typical of professional, classical pianists, and played, according to one critic, in a way that showcased “his incredible sense of style and interpretation.”

At the end of his performance, Mysyn received a huge standing ovation, two bouquets of flowers and demands for an encore. So he played another piece, and again received the adoration of the music-lovers who had crowded into the venue to see and hear the virtuoso, and then he walked off the stage, and into the arms of his mother, who took him home, where she read him a bedtime story and tucked him in.

Mysyn, at the time, was eight years old.

The story of Mysyn has a bearing on our understanding — or misunderstanding — of the so-called “10,000-hour rule” that Malcolm Gladwell popularized several years ago in his bestselling book, *Outliers*.

Gladwell suggested that expertise, world-class success and virtuosity can be achieved simply by practicing a certain specific task for 10,000 hours. If you spent 20 hours a week doing this, you could reach success after about 10 years.

But wait. When Mysyn played Mozart, he was just eight years old. And yet he is already a world class pianist!

Gladwell explains that the 10,000-hour rule doesn't apply to sports or concert pianists, and he confesses that, “I could play chess for 100 years and I'll never be a grandmaster. The point is simply that natural ability requires a huge investment of time in order to be made manifest.”

In Romans 12:1-2 Paul writes, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Paul suggests in a quite oxymoronic way that we present our bodies as *living* sacrifices, that is, *sacrifices that do not die! Living deaths!*

(continued)

Child prodigies are examples of this. They are all in, and their lives are given entirely to their music or their sport (like golf or tennis). They do not *surrender* their lives; they *offer* their lives. They give up almost everything else. They live for it. It is their life.

Malcolm Gladwell concedes that natural ability is a factor in world-class success. He admits he will never be a grandmaster.

So are some people “natural Christians,” and others not so natural? Why is it easier for some Christians to be nice, humble, caring, loving and kind than for others?

Tough questions. But the fact is that we have all been given special aptitudes, gifts or *charisms*, that will bless the body of Christ in general and people in our own sphere of influence in particular.

Gladwell argues that what distinguishes many virtuosos and prodigies is not only their natural talent, but their ability *to practice in the right way*. Pianists know when they need to practice left hand octave arpeggios; tennis players know when and how to work on their baseline topspin backhand strokes. Practice for prodigies is not haphazard.

That’s the point of Paul’s comments about the gifts of the Spirit. “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness” (vv. 6-8).

We have “natural” ability, that is, we have the mind and nature of Christ. But we should be careful about how we practice.

If we’re teaching, we should focus on teaching, not on leadership and administration; if we are kindhearted and compassionate, we should pursue our altruistic instincts with a passion, and not complain about our ineptitude as teachers. And so on.

Some psychologists and educators call this “staying in our lane.”

Perhaps practicing our passions, focusing on the right kind of practice or committing ourselves to this kind of service will be difficult.

It might mean sacrifice. Some sweat and blood may be involved.

But then, we realize something else that’s truly amazing. The astonishing truth hits us: This is our “spiritual worship.” (v. 1)

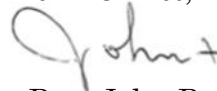
The sacrifice, the blood, sweat and tears, the self-denial, the transformative mindset, the relentless practicing in the right way — it’s our worship. It is a sweet incense that floats pleasantly into the very presence of God.

We don’t know what will become of Elisey Mysin. He’s only 10 years old. He’s still playing the piano in the heart of Russia.

And what will become of us? How will we bless the world? How will our “audience” thrill at the virtuosity of our transformative ministry? How will we serve Jesus in our church, our community, among our friends, neighbors, and co-workers?

For the apostle Paul, bringing his letter to the church at Rome to a close, these are the important questions. He knew then that the world needs Jesus people who are all in, who will sacrifice for success — the kind of success that reconciles and connects people to God.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. John Reese

Adult Christian Education

Sunday mornings at 9:30

How do we walk with Christ—daily follow him, grow in him, and faithfully serve him? In the Gospels, Jesus modeled for us the Christian spiritual life. The apostles taught it in their writings. And the Church has, through the last 2,000 years, sought to pursue this Christian spiritual life.

The Walk focuses on five essential spiritual practices rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and taught throughout the New Testament. Each of these practices is part of our daily walk with Christ and an essential part of growing together in the church. Deepen your walk with Christ as we explore the five essential practices of worship, study, serving, giving, and sharing our faith.

This six-session DVD series is led by Adam Hamilton, senior pastor of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas.

Here is the line-up:

9/6 – Worship and Prayer: A Living Hallelujah

9/13 – Study: The Importance of Listening and Paying Attention

9/20 – Serve: Here I Am, Lord, Send Me

9/27 – Give: Where Your Treasure Is . . .

10/4 – Share: Going Fishing, Reflecting Light

10/11 – The Five Practices from the Cross

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

SUNDAY 10:30 SERVICE CHANGE: Beginning September 6th, the 10:30 service will return to the regular format of Holy Eucharist, with Rite One on first Sundays and Rite Two the rest of the month. Only the bread will be distributed at communion. Communicants are asked to remain six feet apart as they approach the rail. Only four persons will be at the rail at a time, thereby ensuring social distancing. We have been successfully employing this method for communion at the 8AM service for the past three months.

OUTREACH UPDATE:

MANY THANKS!

With over \$750 received in donations, we were able to buy many needed supplies for KIMBELL Elementary and CLEVELAND Elementary Schools. 96 Backpacks, 93 Three Ring Binder Pencil Cases and over 1,000 Pencils. Another Plus was having our Tax Exempt Status so we did not need to pay Sales Tax! Thank you to All who donated!

Donations to Saint Andrew's Foundation

In loving memory of
John Wolfe
Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Simpson
Frances Cranante

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

St. Andrew's restarted our Homeless Lunch Program on August 10th. We need volunteers to help out. If you are so inclined to help, please email Sue MacIsaac at suemmacisaac@gmail.com. Volunteers would need to be at the church by 9:15. We start serving at 9:45am and it goes very quickly. Usually done by 10:30. This is a Monday - Friday Program. If it is easier you can call or text Sue at 813-382-8790 with questions.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

509 East Twiggs Street

Tampa, Florida 33602

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

The Rev. John Reese, Rector

Sunday Services

8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. Children's Church

9:30 a.m. Christian Education
for all adults

Church Location:

Marion & Madison Streets

Mailing Address:

509 E. Twiggs St.

Tampa, FL 33602

Phone: (813) 221-2035

Web: saintandrewstampa.org

E-mail: [secretary@](mailto:secretary@saintandrewstampa.org)

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.