



A little courage . . .

By Courtney Devoid

Taking a sharp breath in, I prepared myself. My heart painfully hit my chest, over and over again. I could feel the anxiety creeping up my body and I walked closer to the door. I couldn't show it though, for this was important to him. I couldn't be scared or weary of something so dear to someone I loved. So, I gripped his hand tightly and pushed open the door.

As walked down a dark hallway I noticed the simplicity of the place. The carpet was old and

dirty, the ceiling low, the walls white. It wasn't daunting at all, not like before. All I could remember from being a kid was feeling so small in such a huge room. Now, we were in a basement, it felt like home.

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What's the Plan?

By Kevin Fitton

At our congregational meeting this December, two significant questions were raised about the future of St. Andrew's. First of all, how are we going to make an impact on the world around us? What is it that our church is going to be known for? Certainly, St. Andrew's is a welcoming church, but we have



not begun to make the kind of impact in serving this city that we would desire. The other issue is the sustainability of the ministry. How do we develop the financial resources and leadership resources we need to make the sort of impact we're talking about? How do we build an infrastructure for a ministry which will last?

And these issues aren't new issues that appeared suddenly this December. These issues were raised at last year's budget meeting; they've been hanging around. From my perspective, one thing is clear: **we need a plan**. Without a plan of action, these issues will remain unresolved.

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A Little Courage, cont



This was the first time I had stepped in a church in nine years. As a little kid, all I can remember was the heavy feeling of sadness that I experienced after being put through two hours of church and Sunday school ever week. I never understood what was going on and didn't feel like anyone cared I was even there. As a child, I was always open to learning and going places. I loved school, playing, and being with other kids. Going to church however, was the one thing I could not make myself do. Because it was such a hard experience, I was left scared away from all religion. Growing up I knew I had some sort of beliefs but I could not make myself go back to the place I had feared so much as a child. All it took was one person to change my whole view on the

world. After months of forming the closest relationship I have ever felt with another person, I knew I needed to confront my fear. Having faith was a very important part of my friend's life. So naturally, him being a very important part of mine, I wanted to give it a second chance.

The church we attended, and now attend, is far less than typical. It is a place aware of the complexities of life. The service is composed of singing and a sermon where the pastor talks about issues that really connect to people's everyday struggles. He has a way of bringing the Christian beliefs into some topic so connected to your current moment that everything just clicks.

The twelve year battle I have had with OCD, the three years of having and recovering from an eating disorder, and the hardship that accompany my obsession to be perfect were bringing me down a slippery slope towards depression. Once a week, hearing a perfect stranger talk about life and having it connect so deeply to what I was feeling brightened

my world. Each service we would be presented with a question. Taking time out of my day to sit and think about how to have inner peace or how hardship can lead to great outcomes presented me with a time for self reflection. It helped me to see how much more to life there is than the trivial things I had become so consumed with that were hurting me.

The connection this church had to my everyday life intrigued me. I began to ask questions and learn more and more about the history of Christian beliefs. Everyone was supportive and I was enthralled by all the amazing things there were to learn. The community of this church transformed how I feel about myself and the world. All it took was a little courage and a leap of faith.



Group for Couples . . .

By Laura Colwell

My family and I have been attending St. Andrews for more than a year now ... we know most of the individuals who attend the church; each of us serves in a different capacity; and our two teenage girls helped to start and shape a youth group community that is now thriving. That's the good part.

The not-so-good part is that my husband, Dean, and I have continued to struggle with a "community" void in our lives. That is not to say that there are no "community" opportunities or that St. Andrews isn't a connecting kind of community. A lot of people, most in fact, have found a solid community here. For us, though, it has been a struggle. We have longed to connect with others who understand the pressures of established careers, the joys and challenges of having children, balancing and prioritizing four demanding schedules, or intentionally nurturing a relationship with a spouse.

So we started a conversation. We spent some time figuring out what we really wanted and needed from the St. Andrews community for it to really be "our church", and we brought others into that conversation. What we discovered is that we were not alone; there were



others who were intrigued by the thought and wanted to explore the same thing.

The result is that a week ago Saturday, we hosted the first "couples small group" meeting at our house. We shared a meal together, prayed as a group, and talked about what we hoped to bring to and receive from the group. There was a genuine sense of community which was so welcome after a year of wondering whether or not it would happen.

The interesting thing is that it didn't turn out to be a "small" group. Six couples were present, and others have expressed their interest as well. We spent a chunk of time figuring out logistics and deciding that we already need two groups to keep the size manageable and to accommodate all the schedules. One group will continue to meet the 2nd and 4th Saturday evenings each month and will spend the next 10 groups

studying the book [Satisfy Your Soul](#) by Bruce Demarest. The other group will meet on a weeknight, but the specific night and study are yet to be determined. If you are interested in either one, please feel free to email me at lraecolwell@gmail.com. We'd love to see others get connected!

What's the Plan?, cont

I've been a part of churches and organizations where we've come around to the same dialogue, the same issues year after year, but nothing ever changed. Because we could never agree on a solution. The solutions offered are knocked

down, one after another, because they require too much change and too much risk. This is the hurdle we need to clear together this year.

My hope for St. Andrew's this year, my goal is that we will develop and agree upon a plan

of action—and that next December, our conversation will be different. Instead of bringing up the same issues, we will, instead, be evaluating our progress, checking in together on a plan that is moving us toward our mutual goals.

Upcoming Events

- Friday, January 29th, 7 PM—**Youth Discussion Night**— Contact Sarah (heim.sarah@gmail.com, 610-533-6749) or Rebecca (rfitton3@yahoo.com, 802-922-3848) for info.
- Saturday, January 30th, 2— 5 PM— **Cross-Country Skiing**—Contact Brian (brian@standrewsvt.org, 802-310-2685) for info.
- Sunday, January 31st, after the service - **Growth Feedback Session**. Bring a brownbag dinner.—Contact Kevin (kevin@standrewsvt.org, 802-922-3569) for info.
- Friday, February 12th, 7 PM—**Youth Discussion Night**— Contact Sarah (heim.sarah@gmail.com, 610-533-6749) or Rebecca (rfitton3@yahoo.com, 802-922-3848) for info.
- Tuesday, February 16th, 7pm—**Fireside Chat** (Location TBD)— Contact Jon (jon.ayers@uscm.org, 802-310-2798) for info.
- Sunday, February 21st, 10 AM —**Connections Team Meeting** (Ayers' House) —Contact Jon (jon.ayers@uscm.org, 802-310-2798) for info.
- Sunday, February 21st, after the service—**Poetry Night** — Contact Jen (jenniferbpearson@gmail.com, 802-318-6420) for info.
- Friday, February 19th, 7—9PM—**Deeper Waters**— Contact Janet (janet@standrewsvt.org, 802-310-2685) for info.
- Friday, February 26th, **Youth Ice Skating**— Contact Sarah (heim.sarah@gmail.com, 610-533-6749) or Rebecca (rfitton3@yahoo.com, 802-922-3848) for info.
- Friday, March 12th, 7 PM—**Youth Discussion Night**— Contact Sarah (heim.sarah@gmail.com, 610-533-6749) or Rebecca (rfitton3@yahoo.com, 802-922-3848) for info.
- Wednesday, March 17th, 6:30PM - **St Patrick's Day Potluck** (Location TBD)— Contact Jon (jon.ayers@uscm.org, 802-310-2798) for info.
- Friday, March 19th, 7—9PM—**Deeper Waters**— Contact Janet (janet@standrewsvt.org, 802-310-2685) for info.
- Friday, March 26th & Saturday, March 27th—**Youth 30 Hour Famine**— Contact Sarah (heim.sarah@gmail.com, 610-533-6749) or Rebecca (rfitton3@yahoo.com, 802-922-3848) for info.
- Friday, March 19th, 7—9PM—**Deeper Waters**— Contact Janet (janet@standrewsvt.org, 802-310-2685) for info.
- Sunday, March 21st, 2—3:30 PM —**Craft Night** — Contact Jen (jenniferbpearson@gmail.com, 802-318-6420) for info.
- Sunday, March 21st, after the service - **Congregational Meeting**. —Contact Kevin (kevin@standrewsvt.org, 802-922-3569) for info.
- Sunday, April 4th—**EASTER**
- Sundays, April 11th—May 9th, 2— 3:30 PM—**Christianity 101 Seminar** — We'll explore some of the basic Christian beliefs, demystify some of the things Christians do, and have lots of opportunities for your questions. — Contact Janet (janet@standrewsvt.org, 802-310-2685) for info.
- Friday, April 23rd, 7—9PM—**Deeper Waters**— Contact Janet (janet@standrewsvt.org, 802-310-2685) for info.



Community Newsletter

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