

How Beautiful Are the Feet

Sharing our faith is one of the most important things we are called to do as God's people. When we share our faith we do so in the context of our own story, our own life. Faith stories encourage, build up, give hope, convey love and express gratitude. They help to build relationships with one another and, in doing so, help to build and strengthen the community of faith. They direct our attention beyond ourselves and to the resurrected and living Lord Jesus.

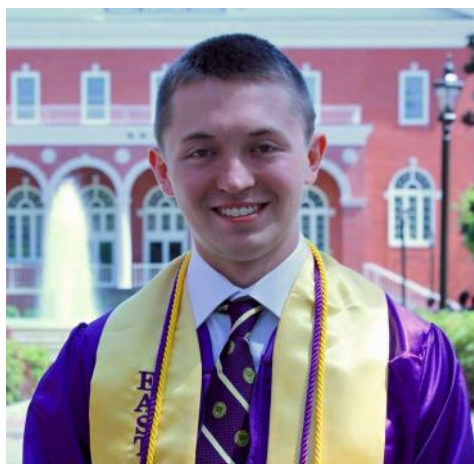
This newsletter series is called "How Beautiful Are the Feet." It is inspired by Romans 10.

St. Paul writes, "For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Each month a different person in the congregation will "bring the good news" in the form of their faith story—at least part of it. As you read their story you may come to know them a little better. Through their testimony of God's active presence in their life, you may come to know God better, too.

This month we hear from **Andy Jones**. Thank you, Andy, for bringing this good news! Andy writes:

Peace, brothers and sisters in Christ! As some of you may know, I have been born and raised at St. Mark's.



Andy Jones

The congregation is truly a second family to me. Like all good church families, this one at St. Mark's has supported me not only in expanding my understandings of faith, but also in my discernment of God's vocational call. My true faith journey began innocently enough, after I was unexpectedly asked to serve as an acolyte for the first time at age ten. The scheduled acolyte had not been able to make it. Before I walked out from the sacristy with my robe and lighter, Ms. Pearl Thompson, who assisted in prepping the lay people looked at me and said "Remember that even if you make a mistake, you're serving the Lord." Those words have continued to resonate with me to the present. I have always enjoyed serving the congregation on Sundays ever since. Once I entered my teenage years I began to realize that there was a richness to the services that I hadn't quite grasped when I was little. The Eucharistic liturgy had a weight to it that gave me chills. I began to fall into a blooming love with faith and liturgy. Something else was also entering my

mind; those pastoral robes looked pretty cool!

The time finally came for our youth group to go to our first church retreat at Eagle Eyrie, in Lynchburg, Virginia. This was perfect timing. We were all in our second year of middle school and all of us, myself included, were beginning to wonder how others our age felt about faith. We had been around school friends who said vastly different things about certain topics, and I was beginning to wonder if others thought the same way I did. To my relief, I found myself surrounded by other youth who shared similar understandings about faith, the Bible, and Jesus. This is when I really began to understand what it meant to be called a Lutheran. Over the next several years, I would eagerly look forward to the next youth assemblies not only to see friends, but to learn about Christ. Following 2012 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans, I knew for certain that I wanted to serve the church in some way. As high school waned and college approached, I looked forward to discerning my call.

College provided me with so many things regarding my faith that I couldn't possibly include everything, so I'll do my best to condense it. After finding a great Lutheran church in Greenville, I began to attend the Episcopal-Lutheran Campus ministry which we called "The Well." Over my four years, I learned, laughed, rejoiced, and mourned with approximately fifteen other young adults as we all began our profes-

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sional and independent lives. My first true first life lesson was that life could become very challenging very fast for so many reasons, yet at the same time it was also amazing. What a paradox! The challenges and hardships accompanied with the beautiful subtleties always seemed to show God's work in the most unexpected places. While hacking through this adventure, I remained stuck on seminary. I desired to serve God and to show the love of Christ to others, but simultaneously began to question my own qualifications for becoming a rostered minister. There was a crucial moment in the Spring of my junior year that changed everything. A personal relationship was suddenly severed over my faith. I was crushed, and began to wonder why such a thing had happened. Guilt set in, and for some reason I felt that I had failed. Had I not been persuasive enough? Had I pushed my personal faith too hard on this person? I had even slipped to wondering what I had done to cause this retribution from

God. How could someone considering to be a pastor screw up this badly? Looking for answers, I chose to reach out to a friend from UNC-Wilmington and proceeded to explain my fears and guilt from the situation. This friend, who is also discerning their call to ministry with the Episcopal Church, promptly replied with one of the most important pieces of advice by saying, "Andy, always remember that God does not look down from above on our suffering, but instead is with us as the Holy Spirit and experiences our hardships with us." I was floored. Suddenly, the very need and existence for Jesus Christ became apparent and vastly more understandable. Christ was not sent out of judgement from God, but was made incarnate to experience the vast range of messiness of life and that we all experience on a daily basis. This was so reassuring!

In my time since, I tried to be more mindful of God's work around me. I was also trying to allow myself to become more open to the unexpected detours that life can often take. The

past two years have had their fair share of unexpected happenings. While I still find myself wondering where things will lead, everything has always turned out for the better. I am not where I thought I would be four months ago, but I am thankful for where I have ended up. My discernment for ministry has also changed, but seems more concrete. After a discernment weekend with other inquirers concerning ministry, I currently believe that rostered ministry is not quite where I need to be at this time. Not to despair, however. It was emphasized that we all can serve God by being good parishioners. Trying to put this to action, I have begun to get more involved here at St. Mark's. This new chapter has been amazing, and while I don't plan on going to seminary at this moment, I remind myself that service to God comes in many forms. We must trust the process and enjoy the dance of life that the Holy Spirit takes us on.

IN THE CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY

PRAYER MATTERS

The following individuals and families were named in prayer in worship during September. Let us continue to keep them in prayer. We pray: O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers: Mercifully hear our prayers and grant to your servants the help of your power that they may experience the healing power of your Holy Spirit. We pray for: **Russell**

& Nancy Dyer, Norman, Butch, Mike & Brittani, Sidney & Wanda Miller, Shirley Aynes, Teresa Kincer, David, Shawn Wertz, Marilyn Holzschuh, Maggie Nelson, Jonathon Ugochukwu, Kimberly Franklin, Lenore Trout, Tom Oliver, Dax and Sheri Carter, Mark Huff, Jordan Bryant, Leigh Ann Duncan, Jessica & Brenda, Joseph Keaton, Rilee Rodgers, Al Who Are Suffering, Jack Brewer, Angela and Allison Dudley, Lee Williams, Ben and Anne Wittenbraker, Cyndi and Dave Sauter, David, Jim and Rick Reese, Cindy Schockley, Calvin and Arbutus Compton, Dylan Davis, Ron and Judy Adkins, Lisa Mayfield, Bill Triplett, Betty Graham, Ann, Jeff Lumsden, Julie Anderson, Fran, Al Sochor, Grant, John Walker, Nancy Duncan, Cordie Nutter, Teresa Kennedy & Family, Larken Family, Joe Keaton, Michael, Denise Capito, Leesha, Carter, Sue, Lisa Mayfeidl, Keith Flynt, George Dees, Meredith, Katrina Koiner, and in Thanksgiving for Julie's good news, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SIMPLY GIVING®

We continue to offer electronic fund transfers as an alternative to using your offering envelopes on Sunday. Participants may specify that offerings be transferred weekly on Monday or monthly on the 1 or 15.

Making electronic payments can be a helpful way to keep your giving current especially when you are able to be present for worship.

The program is free to participants and the church. Member enrollment forms for new participants are available in the church office.

Those already participating do not need to complete another enrollment form, but should notify Financial Administrator Kathy Bryant if they wish to make any changes to their current giving.

Strong Start Envelopes:

Everyone is encouraged to use the Strong Start for Mission envelope to help our ministries have a great start at the beginning of the year. Our goal is to have 100, generous \$52 gifts.

We are reminded that regular use of offering envelopes assists the financial secretaries with their record keeping. Those who give electronically are reminded of the special offering envelopes throughout the year.

GENERAL INFORMATION



Did you know? That you can donate to the church just by using your Kroger Plus Shopper's Card. Go to kroger.com to sign up today.

Kroger Community Rewards -Giving More Back to the Community!
Kroger is committed to helping our communities grow and prosper. Year after year, local schools, churches and other nonprofit organizations will earn millions of dollars through Kroger Community Rewards. Kroger Community Rewards makes fund-raising easy.. All you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card! Sign In or Create an Account to Enroll. Once signed in you can enroll or update your Community Rewards under your Account Settings.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

For November are due in the church office by Wednesday, October 24. Please submit articles by email (preferably) or in written form!

St. Mark's Congregation is invited to a very special joint birthday party for Sidney and Wanda Miller at Brandon Oaks, Saturday, October 20, 1-3 p.m.. The party is being hosted by their children. Wanda and Sidney have requested that in lieu of gifts a donation to St. Mark's Lutheran Church for the "air conditioning fund" would be appreciated! Please mark you calendar and plan to join the Miller's and their family for this joyous occasion!!

October Baptismal Anniversaries

We give thanks to God for the gift of new life through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. In October we give thanks and celebrate with:



10/1	Marilyn Holzschuh
10/11	Angela Dudley
10/21	Nick Rodgers
10/27	Erin Kelly



October Birthdays

Members of St. Mark's family celebrating birthdays in October are:

10/4	Alex Adkins	10/20	Amy Spangler
10/5	Jason Trout	10/24	Mark Heinlein
10/10	Bryson Spangler	10/26	Allison Dudley
10/12	Polly Minter	10/27	Harry Brewbaker
10/14	Jenny Keenan	10/28	Linda Tuner
10/16	Barbara Headen	10/30	Loretta Barnard
	David Lingerfelt		Anna Dyer
		10/31	Pam Bush
			Cathy Thompson

WORSHIP & MUSIC NOTES

Worship Leaders for October

Date	Acolyte	Crucifer	Communion Assistant	Lector	Greeters	Coffee Hour
October 7	Allison Armentrout	Caleb Anders	Eric Mills	George Kegley	Shirley Dyer	Sue Nutter
October 14	Jordan Bryant	Haley Merritt	Loretta Barnard	Andy Stowasser	Betty Burrows	Teresa & Andy Stowasser
October 21	Chisom Ugochukwu	Eric Armentrout	Cheryl Gordon	Carl Jensen	Janet Natt	Sonny & Charlotte Scholz
October 28	Luke Anders	Trinity House	Lois Ashby	Karen Arthur	Pat Gibbs & Denise Capito	Mitch & Heather House

OUTREACH OUTLOOK

THE FOOD PANTRY

During the month of September, the Food Pantry distributed food to feed 91 individuals. Thank you to the September volunteers:

Caleb, Scott, Luke, McKinley, Melissa, Ralph and Sandy Anders, Clara Chitty, Laura Bolton, Suzy Bubnell, Judy Adkins, George Kegley, and Martha Eddleman and Connie Watkins.



During the month of September the Clothes Closet provided clothing to a total of 50 (7 new) individuals. Thank you to the September Clothes Closet volunteers: **Becky Whisnant, Melissa Anders, Connie Watkins, Judy Adkins, Gail & Sid Scott, Suzy Bubnell, Martha Eddleman, Charlotte & Sonny Scholz, and Shirley Dyer.**

Special Thanks to: George Kegley, Wanda & Jim Rettinger, Ralph, Sandy, Alex Adkins and Connie Watkins for picking up 1441lbs of food from the food bank and delivering it to St. Mark's Food Pantry in September.