

The CrossRoads Connection



A Youth and Young Adult Ministry of
St. Andrew United Methodist Church

Casting About

Not so long ago, I happened to be in my front yard casting a new fly rod. Cabin fever is about to get me down! Thank heaven for the warming weather!

Anyway, I was out there plugging away, getting the feel for the new rod and for sunshine on my face. I love casting a fly rod. It keeps my hands busy and my mind free. I use my time on the water AND in my lawn to pray, to think, to let go of stress and relax. It is great therapy for a busy schedule – just like the one you have.

So, there I was, fiddling with my fly rod, one foot in heaven, talking with the neighbors along the way and it dawned on me that there is some similarity between my fishing and my ministry. Now, hear me out here before the jokes start!

Think about it. Whether it's your job, your hobby, a ministry

or fly fishing; you'd better have a target. In the church and in your business you might well think of this as a mission statement rather than a target, but regardless of language, to be successful, you'd better know what you're trying to do.



chipping in

I am a pretty goal-directed person; I believe in being clear about what I'm trying to achieve, so I was pretty frustrated when I first began to fly fish – I didn't catch that many fish and what I did catch were small. It finally dawned on me that I wasn't catching any fish because I wasn't really fishing; I was just concentrating on getting my fly on the water – and not in the trees, grass and bushes along the stream.

When you are just casting OUT THERE, any success is random and unsustainable. To catch fish or

succeed in any endeavor, you have to be clear about what you are after.

The second step to catching fish or anything else you want to do is to have some basic proficiency in the endeavor, some gifts for whatever it might be. In other words, do you practice what you're trying to do? Are you clear about what you're after and how to go about doing what you need to do to have some success? I have to be clear that if I can't get my fly into the feeding lane or ambush slot, I have no shot at catching a trophy – or much of anything else.



Pat Sleeth is pastor to the CrossRoads community.

So, by now, I had a towel on the lawn and was practicing my casting to a target. I was even moving it around, beside a bush, behind a bucket (simulating a mid-stream rock), trying to practice as best I could in an artificial

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Our MISSION: We seek to encourage youth and young adults to develop a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, encourage them to grow as lifelong disciples, and to equip them to minister to others for the sake of the world.

Pastor Pat's Chipping In

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situation, the casts I need on-stream. So, frankly, though my goal for fishing is for relaxation and appreciation of Creation, I like to catch *SOME* fish. And, I practice the art of fly casting because it is fun and when I am on some gorgeous stream somewhere and I see a monster trout rising, I want to be able to get the fly to the fish to even have a chance of hooking it. But there is still one more step, and it's one I can't really practice in my lawn. I need to know how to actually fish the fly.

In other words, I know what my target is – the smallmouth bass lurking under an in-stream log. I have the technical skill to get the fly upstream of the log so it will float past. And, as important as these things are, they don't assure me any kind of success. Art and science both come into play now. I know what kind of fish I'm after, so I need to know what it's looking for and how to reproduce that action with the fly. Do I need to let the fly just drift past? Do I need to gently strip in the line so the fly moves in jerky movements, like a frog swimming? Or, do I need to aggressively strip in line like a wounded minnow trying to escape? Even if I know what I'm after and can get the fly in the general location, I still need to be able to "close the deal."

If I can't convince the fish that my fly is the real deal, I'm wasting my time. It is amazing how critical an animal with an approximate IQ of 6 can be! I spend a LOT of my free time trying to fool this animal, and it wins far more than I do!



So, what are you wrestling with? Career success? New hobby? Bad habit or addiction? Relationship struggles? I think these three steps will get you started on the road to succeeding. Make sure you know what you're *REALLY* trying to do. Make sure you are properly prepared for success. And, then try to do this task the very best you can do it – don't quit. I think it's a pretty good model, and one that works, IF you work the model.

Jesus used it pretty successfully. From a very early age, Jesus was clear about what His mission was – some translations of Luke 2:49 say, "Didn't you know that I must be about my Father's business?" Scriptures don't give us many details on Jesus' life from about 12 or 13 to about 30. Most scholars believe that Jesus was undergoing rabbinic training – learning how to do the mission His Father gave Him. Then He spent the last three years of His life applying His training/His gifts to His mission.

There comes a time in every career, hobby, sport or human endeavor when we must decide how good we want to be and how much we're willing to sacrifice to succeed. How important are these things to you? Are they worth the sacrifice? If you never apply yourself, do you ever know how good you can be at the task before you – whether fly fishing or living out your faith?

My Lenten routine is pretty predictable. Every year, I evaluate my ministry over the past year and I ask myself three questions:

1. What am I trying to do? Is my "target" (mission) the same, or do I need to get back on track, or is it time to tweak my target goals?
2. Am I making sure I stay "trained

up" enough that I can still accomplish my target goals? Am I getting lazy or sloppy in my application of the discipline necessary for success?

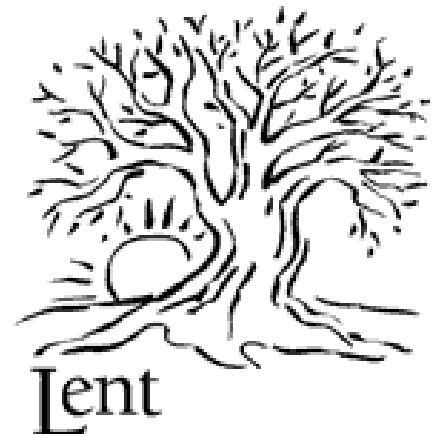
3. Am I "fishing my fly?" Am I presenting my ministry to the best of my abilities to the right target, in such a manner that I get their attention?

Each year, I find that there are areas of my ministry that I need to put some work into, some things that could use some extra effort. Far from being a boring process, this annual evaluation is what keeps my ministry fresh and exciting. I always know there are new things to explore, new persons to reach and people, like you, excited about their own ministries to offer a hand.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have some other chores I have to get to because, if the weather holds until this evening, I'm going to be on one of the local streams testing this model just a bit more.

May the journey that is Lent lead you to prayer, study and an honest evaluation of your own journey. May God bless this annual journey with fresh challenges and a renewed excitement for our faith as we move towards the Celebration that is Easter.

Pastor Pat



Young Adult Café

By Monica Arrowsmith

The Young Adult Sunday Café continues to be held on Sunday mornings at 10 am. This class is for anyone who considers themselves a young adult (most are in their 20's and 30's), whether single, engaged, married and/or parenting. We usually start with some community time and breakfast munchies, then dig into our lesson of the week.

We are just starting a new series that will study and seek understanding on Jesus' answers to the question, "Who Am I?" As the study unfolds, we will explore His answers that, at first blush, are not readily understandable. Jesus answers this question in the Gospel of John in the following seven different ways:

- I am the bread of life,
- I am the light of the world,
- I am the gate for the sheep,
- I am the good shepherd,
- I am the resurrection and the life,
- I am the way and the truth and the life, and
- I am the true vine.

We are really looking forward to deepening our knowledge of and coming to know Christ more through this study. We think it might even help us answer that question about ourselves!

We are having a great time at the Café and love spending the time with God and with each other. Each lesson stands on its own, and there is always room for more – so please join us on any Sunday morning.

Young Adult Mission Trip

The 2009 YA Mission Trip was once again an amazing experience! The small team left on Saturday, March 14 and drove for about 8 hours or so to reach our destination of Bristol, TN. We camped in a lodge that was located in a valley surrounded by the East Tennessee mountains and the South Holston River. The greening and blooming of Spring had started, an excellent sign of the week to come!

We attended Church on Sunday at Elizabeth Chapel. The warmth and hospitality and spirit of that church community was rich and inviting; much like ours. We completed service projects for two different agencies. Each morning we had devotions and, each evening we gathered around a blazing fire, broke bread together, de-briefed the day and prayed.

On Monday and Tuesday, we painted interior rooms and did minor "handyman" stuff for a confidential, emergency shelter for battered women and their children. The name of the agency is Abuse Alternatives. We met and were welcomed by some extraordinary women. We were all struck by the commitment, passion and compassion all of the staff had for all of those affected by domestic violence. In particular, one of the staff members runs the programming for the abusers themselves. Many are court-ordered to counseling / education provided by Abuse Alternatives and specifically directed by this one woman. She told of abusers who had been through the program multiple times, and we talked and dreamed of ways to end domestic violence. Most amazing, was that this woman has been running this program for 22 years!!! I can hardly imagine what she has seen and heard over the years; her perseverance and compassion are truly inspiring.



On Wednesday, we completed some grounds work around the high-ropes course of River's Way. River's Way is an alternative education site that serves many groups but specializes in adventure education for disabled and at-risk youth. Again, we met some amazing, dedicated people who demonstrated great hospitality and shared with us, through their open and giving nature, their love of the Lord.



We started back to West Lafayette on Thursday after our morning devotion. For that morning, we each selected a word that represented God's presence to us throughout the week. The selected words were water, fire, gratitude and beauty, and, as we listened and heard applicable scripture on the porch with the sound and sight of the stream filling our senses, the smell of the last night's fire lingering in the breeze, and the gratitude of those we met fresh in our hearts, we understood a little more the amazing beauty of God.

Thank you to the St. Andrew community for sponsoring and supporting this mission experience!

Junior High Update

TEENS ON A MISSION

By Dana Kirkwood

Sometimes, the energy of our junior high students can be hard to harness. On particularly difficult nights, I wonder what in the world God was thinking when he nudged me to take on the junior high youth group. It seriously was NOT because I have a gift for patience because I do not possess that gift. It wasn't because I'm all that bright or even that I'm in tune with these kids. Often, I still struggle in understanding what it is that God had in mind, but I'm certainly glad he nudged!

Recently, many of our junior high kids went through confirmation class. Not all these kids will be confirmed but as a group are already following the four expressions of Christian Faith. Oh sure, you are thinking, what could a group of 12 – 14 year old kids do, I'm about to tell you.

First, there is **prayer**. This is an active part of our youth group. We spend a little bit of our "opening" talking about what has happened over the course of our weeks. Soccer games, basketball, parties, dances, science fairs... and then, as leaders, we tuck that little information into our brains and pray for these activities over the course of the week. At the end of our youth group, we have prayer concerns. The kids are quick to tell us the areas in their lives that need our strength and each other's strength. If that isn't enough, the kids will email us and each other prayer requests during the week.

Next, is **presence**. If you haven't spent a Sunday with us, you are missing out. These kids are PRESENT! Most of them attend Sunday school, worship service, and then show up again for youth group. The kids volunteer in many areas too: Joyful Sound, children's ministries, puppetry, and more. They are certainly present in St. Andrew's community!

Gifts is a difficult expression. Many adults have trouble practicing their faith through regular financial giving... and they have jobs! Markie Soposky recently put her leadership skills together to put together a grant to the Drug-Free Coalition of Tippecanoe County. Her leadership gift produced a \$200 mini-grant that will be used for our mission trip on April 18.

Last, there is **service**. If there is one expression of faith that the children don't lack, this is it! This group is called to service by our community, by our church, and by their youth leadership, and they take the call every single time. Our junior high kids have served the congregation meals. The kids are experts at tearing down and setting up our worship area. They have mulched. They have pulled weeds. They have collected money and can goods twice this year. In just a few weeks, they will travel to Indianapolis and put God's word into action through their service with Mission Indy's activities.

Our junior high kids might not all be official members of St. Andrew United Methodist Church, but they are all actively expressing their Christian Faith! I am constantly in awe of these kids. It is quite possible that God nudged me to lead them so they could lead me into a much stronger faith. He does use the most unexpected things to teach us!

April Junior High Events

A calendar of future events to clip and place on your refrigerator

April 5

10a Sunday School

T.O.M., The Intersection -
Celebration for the new confirmation class!

April 12

10a Sunday School

NO YOUTH GROUP - enjoy
Easter with your family!

April 18

6:30a Leave St. Andrew for
mission trip

April 19

10a Sunday School

NO YOUTH GROUP

April 26

10a Sunday School

T.O.M., The Intersection -
Applying what we have
learned