

The CrossRoads Connection



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

Mid-Week Service Takes a Hiatus

After some prayer and not a little conversation, the Mid-Week Worship Service Team is announcing that, at the end of this semester, the Mid-Week Service will be going on hiatus until at least September of 2010.

There are several reasons for this, but the two biggest reasons would be my approaching sabbatical in the spring of 2010 and what the Team felt was necessary time to step back and seek a fresh vision for this service – to make sure we are headed where God calls us to go with this service.

In the first case, and the primary reason for the hiatus, I will be going on sabbatical beginning the Monday after Easter (April 5) and will be gone until the first week of July (July 5). Since I am the primary pastor

chipping in

of this worship experience, I felt it would be an unfair burden upon Pastor Tim to add this weekly service to what will be an already loaded week or to expect the MWS Team to just handle this service for three months with no pastor consistently available. Let me be clear: the MWS Team is a strong and capable team (Robin Thomas, Cathy Sleeth, Monica Arrowsmith and Heather Watkins) and they more than have my confidence that they could accomplish this; I just felt that would be a lot to expect for three months.

It was a tough decision to make, but the Team felt it was the appropriate thing to do given the circumstances. Having made the decision to take some time off, we saw a great opportunity to reevaluate the service and consider 1) Whether to continue the service at all, or 2) What changes in format, if any, we might

make in a new edition, and 3) Is there a particular demographic or faith group we should “aim,” 4) Should we focus “in house” and stay on-site OR is this service better suited for “others” and should be moved off-site – all valuable questions! So, we intend to take the next several months and pray for a fresh vision. In Isaiah 43:18-19, God says: **“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”**

We’ll take a look at this text as we pray and consider next steps.

For those that don’t know, what is now simply known as the Mid-Week Service had its beginnings some 6 years ago in the Fellowship Hall of our old building on Meridian St. The service was known then as “The

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Pat Sleeth is pastor to the CrossRoads community.



Our VISION: The CrossRoads Youth Ministry of St. Andrew United Methodist Church embraces and supports the youth and young adults of our community and their families, seeks to inspire and guide their spiritual growth as Disciples of Jesus Christ, and then, empowers/challenges them to serve each other, the church and the whole world.

Chipping In

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Fusion” and was geared to youth and young adults in this community.

In the beginning, the leadership team was largely a group of grad students and myself, and for a year or so, it had a decided “artsy” flavor to it. We called it a “worship lab” because we didn’t want to be boxed into any particular worship or musical styles. It was probably one of the most creative times in my ministry. What we lacked in consistency, we more than made up for in creativity and flair! We had a couple dozen students and young adults that showed up each week, mostly made up of sr. high and undergraduates and a few “20 or 30 something’s.”

Then our leadership team graduated and moved away so on to phase two! After that, for a year or so we had a very mixed group, ranging from sr. high students to grandparents; rarely more than 30 or so in attendance but faithful and fun. By this time we had a reputation as a strictly “youth” worship event. The problem was, we weren’t (no worship event should be only available to a single group), so the college students didn’t really come because it was “too young for them” and the sr. high’s didn’t come because it was “too old for them” and the rumor that it was ONLY for young people had become too entrenched, so the 30 something’s decided we didn’t want them. We now had the

nucleus of “Waiting to Wake” (our praise band) with Katie Biehl, Cathy Sleeth, Heather Watkins and Matt Harding – a group that is still together today – and their music is consistently excellent.

We decided a couple of years ago that since we were really a mixed-age group now, we needed to re-market it as a Mid-Week Service, and so we dropped the Fusion name. We advertised it as a Mid-Week Worship experience in the bulletins and newsletter; we announced it was for anyone seeking a Mid-Week Worship experience, but some mountains are too big to climb. The die was cast; clearly we were a youth service to our adult members and an adult service to our young people, and so we settled into an eclectic mix of “ages and stages.” Still small, very intimate and focused on growing relationships and faith.

But the “age and stage” myths weren’t the only ones this service had to deal with over the intervening years – which we were never able to completely overcome. There was the myth that, “it’s for seekers, and I’m looking for a mature worship experience.” These persons believed that our casual dress, coffee/tea bar and discussion-based message evidenced that we offered a beginner’s level worship

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experience, and they were looking for something deeper. Fair enough. We wanted a worship space comfortable enough to make everyone, in any faith stage, to feel welcome and not threatened. But, then, of course, there was the myth that “it’s for those that are already comfortable with their faith and I’m looking for an entry-level worship experience.” They felt that our discussions, centered around a group at each table, was too intimidating for someone new to their faith. Sigh...

Then, there were those who made assumptions on who we were REALLY looking for based upon the time we worship – Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. Some with young families suggested that if we really wanted a service for young families, we would have had the service at 5:30 or 6 so they could get their children home and in bed by 8 p.m. Fair enough. Except for the group who felt that if we really wanted them to worship in the evenings, we would have the service at 8 or 9 p.m. so they could get home, change, have dinner and relax for an hour or so before they came out again.

The Mid-Week Service has been, is, and will always be for anyone, of any age, of any stage of faith maturity that is open to sharing their journey of faith with a community of seekers and believers who are headed towards Jesus Christ.



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SEE YOU AT THE CROSSROADS

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Now, the possibility exists that we (the St. Andrew community) are well served, worship-wise, by our Sunday morning offerings. Speaking as a pastor, I think we have two beautiful services on Sunday mornings, offering both traditional and praise formats – I think we do them pretty well. The Mid-Week Service never attempted to emulate either service because we agree that we do them well – we wanted to do something different. We wanted to offer people a chance to talk about their faith and their faith questions and dig deeper if they wanted, or listen to others wrestle with their faith, as they chose. Different isn't bad; it's just different.

Still, wanting to be faithful, I have spent many hours in the past two years in prayer by myself and with the MWS Team about whether we should continue the Mid-Week Service, or if we were wasting our time and staff resources on a worship experience that small. The answers, at least to my personal prayers, were that we were to continue the service and be faithful to those God sent.

We have tried to do this. I, personally, love this service, and it breaks my heart to even put it on hiatus – even if I'm a big part of the reason we have to do it. But, I think this break will give us a wonderful chance to pray through, think through and plan through what the next installment will look like when we kick-off again next fall and I honestly can't wait.

So, we will finish the Mid-Week Service on December 30 with a Taizé/Healing Service (I hope to see you there) and then we will close for what we hope will be a productive season of prayer and planning. I ask you to please join with the MWS Team as we explore where we go from here. I can honestly say I don't know, but, as always, I look forward to seeing where God will lead us. Stay tuned!

Pastor Pat

P.S. For all those requesting more info on where you can send a donation to the organizations we've been talking about in our current Sunday morning sermon series, please Google the **Advent Conspiracy** page (adventconspiracy.org) and click on the "Give Water" link at the top of the page. You'll find more info on **Living Water International** there – including how you can donate. Also, please remember, our Christmas Eve offering will go to LWI.



Our Future Youth in Action...



Congratulations!

Pat Babbs won the beautiful Robin Thomas quilt given away to benefit the CR Cares Ministry.

Again, congratulations Pat, and Merry Christmas!

Senior High Update

Dear St Andrew Members,

I hope this Holiday season finds you happy with the coming birth of our Lord. The Senior Highers have had a great year, and we are looking forward to another super year in 2010. I wanted to share some highlights of our past year and also give some information on what we hope to accomplish in 2010.



First off 2009 started off with a bang (literally), We started the new year with a New Years Eve Party at church that had about 60 or so youth at it. Video games, movies, board games, cards, dancing and watching Dick Clark's Rockin' New Years Eve in the Great Room were all some of the highlights. There was sparkling cider in fun glasses at midnight, and a new year was kicked off in high fashion. At the end of January we had a Super Bowl Party at church, lots of food, played Wii on the video screens in the Great Room, watched the game in the Great Room and had a great time. February brought us to a ski trip in Michigan where 9 youth had a great time. March is usually just regular youth group; we have multiple different spring breaks, and we plan around them. In April, we served breakfast to more than 400 people Easter morning (which almost killed me), but the kids had a great time serving our congregation (Junior High, your turn). April also brought us a baby shower for Joy May. The youth got to play a number of shower games that were exciting and a little gross. May brought us to celebrating the seniors in our groups and their graduating from school. June is always the time of the year that we bring the soon-to-be 9th graders into the fold. We do this the Sunday after VBS, and we also treat the newbies with nothing but respect. (Yeah right!) We had a large contingency of Senior Highers help out at VBS, probably around 15 to 20, including leaders and we all had a great time doing it. July brought the mission trip. I think we all have heard or seen enough of it. In August we had a kick off the new school year party at the Arrowsmith's, and later in the month we helped with the Blueberry Palooza. September was Tour de CrossRoads, and the kids were Gnomes for their SAG stop. October we had a tailgate at church, and November we had our annual Thanksgiving meal and a couple of Senior Highers went shopping for 10 Jubilee Christmas presents. December has brought us the mission trip informational meeting and this Sunday our 2nd annual Senior High Christmas party at Arrowsmith's. Finally the senior higher who sends me the last verse of the 23rd psalm will win a prize (food of some sort).

As I look forward to 2010, I see great things on the horizon. We will draw closer to God; we will work on relationships they have with God, parents, friends and siblings. We will try small group bible studies for those who might be interested in that. We will still do fun events, but the focus will always be on Jesus and what He means to each of us.

Some Events coming up:

Dec 20--- Christmas Party at Arrowsmith's 5:30 til ??? Bring wrapped present up to \$10 ...parents are welcome at 7:30 for a holiday gathering of adults...kids can stay, play games and watch movies..Dinner will be provided

Feb -- Super Saturday at Church, Pizza and Movies --- Possible Ski Trip

March -- March Madness Event

July --- Mission Trip

Finally, in conclusion, I want to wish all members of the St. Andrew family a joyous and happy Holiday Season as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !!!!!

Tom Arrowsmith

