



Five Loaves. Two Small Fish. Enough for a Multitude.

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The Griffitts: Ordinary Time, Extraordinary Moments

The Big Reveals: that's what I call those moments in our faith story when God encounters everyday folks like you and me. Through a burning bush, a pillar of cloud, a great wind, angelic messengers, or Jesus himself, God transforms the lives of peasant girls, shepherds, outlaws, servants, and fishermen. Often unwanted and sometimes downright scary, The Big Reveals usually begin with a variation of "First, don't freak out", then move on to God's proposal for the unsuspecting recipients, most of whom probably had very different ideas of how their days were supposed to unfold. I can just imagine Jonah saying to God "Wait, what? You want me to go to... Nineveh? Really?" Not on his to do list.

I have never experienced God through a Big Reveal, but I've felt God's love surprise me in some of the most run of the mill settings.

Margaret Griffitts, matriarch of the Griffitts family, echoes my feelings. When daughter Katie came back from practice with a new soccer new team and happily told her mom that she knew girls on the team, Margaret just said "Well, you don't think that's an accident, do you?" Margaret pointed out that God, at work in all things, can hang around soccer fields as well as churches.

But, as Maria von Trapp sang, let's start at the very beginning of this seemingly "ordinary" family. Greg and Margaret Griffitts grew up in Los Angeles and met in 1978 at Lake Arrowhead, where both families had vacation homes. Though they never attended the same school, the two teens spent summers on the lake; Greg raced sailboats and gave Margaret, who eventually crewed for him, her first sailing lessons.

They knew each other through junior high, high school, and college – Margaret at UCLA and Arizona State and Greg at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo – but never dated. When Margaret and Greg moved to San Diego for work, they reconnected at a friend's wedding, were engaged 11 months later, and married 10 months after that. Now Margaret tells Tommy, who is entering La Costa Canyon High School this year, to "keep your eyes open, you may just know your future wife already!" Presumably,

Tommy is about as receptive to that advice as Margaret was at his age.

Margaret taught special education for six years, then shifted to second grade for another seven, while Greg worked at Rohr as an aerospace engineer, designing thrusters for commercial airplanes (his travel advice – "always sit on the wing; it's the

safest place"). Tommy was born in 2002, followed by Katie in 2005. After Katie went to kindergarten, Margaret went back to work as a substitute teacher for five years. Now, she "has the best job in the world" as a CAbi stylist. If you have never heard of CAbi, just look around church some Sunday; thanks to Margaret's enthusiasm, many St. Andrew's ladies are modeling items from the collections.

While Katie and Tommy were in elementary school at OPE, Margaret also worked as volunteer mom extraordinaire with stints as PTA board member, yard duty, and class mom. When Tommy moved to Diegueno Middle School, Margaret thought she was finished with school volunteer work. Others had different plans for her, and she became President of the Diegueno PTA. Now that Tommy is at LCC, Margaret is serving on a committee (one of several, no doubt!).



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Letter from the Rector: Ordinary Time

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Because we are just past being smack-dab in the middle of what is called "Ordinary Time" in the church calendar, we decided "Ordinary Time" would be the perfect theme for this month's issue of the Epistle. But what is "Ordinary Time", you ask, and why do we call it that?

Like many things in our liturgical year, we borrow the term from the Roman Catholics. As a result, you won't find reference to the words "Ordinary Time" in the Book of Common Prayer. Instead, in the Anglican tradition, we simply number all 28 Sundays between Pentecost and Advent. This numbering is where the term "ordinary" comes from: the word "ordinal", meaning "counted time".

Instead, we officially refer to this as the "season after Pentecost". There is also a section of several weeks, between the Baptism of our Lord and Ash Wednesday, which is also considered "Ordinary Time", and listed in our resources as the "season of Epiphany".

Over the years, however, church folks have employed the standard definition of "ordinary" to help Christians think about the purpose of this time. We've moved through all the major holy

days including the highs and lows of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter, leaving us with the everydayness of our faith.

The liturgical color traditionally used during Ordinary Time is green, so this period of time is sometimes called the "Great Green Growing Season", because we have the space to consider what renewal might be needed in our spiritual practices. In fewer than 10 weeks, we will have begun our journey back into the seasons of expectation, celebration, repentance, etc.; this long gap in the liturgical calendar allows us to focus on the more routine parts of our faith journey.

Another way to think of these 28 weeks is having the space to connect the dots between what you believe in your heart and how you are living your life. May the stories in this issue inspire you to use these remaining weeks of Ordinary Time doing just that!

In Christ's Peace,

Get Connected and Give Back

Are you ready to get more deeply connected to life at St. Andrew's? There is no better way to meet new people and deepen your faith than to dive into a new ministry area. No matter where your interests lie, there is a volunteer opportunity with your name on it. Some of the areas where you can currently make the biggest contribution include:

- Altar guild
- Choir
- Usher
- Lay Eucharistic Ministers (chalice-bearers)
- Youth Acolytes
- Prayer Chain Coordinator
- Lay youth and Family Ministry Leaders
- Sunday School teachers
- Money counters
- Bible and Community garden workers
- Coffee hour helpers
- Meal providers for Pastoral care team
- Men for Parish Breakfast team

For more information on any of these opportunities, contact Gillian Campbell at gillian@standrewsepiscopal.org or the ministry liason on page 10 of this newsletter.

The Griffiths Family *continued from the front page*

Meanwhile, Greg moved to Ketema to develop parts for the space shuttle, making him an actual rocket scientist! Greg now works at General Atomics on the top-secret Predator drone project. He loves his job and tries to see the planes every day.

Margaret is a cradle Episcopalian with fond memories of playing games on the church lawn as a girl. Margaret and Greg attended St. Peter's in Del Mar; after Katie and Tommy arrived, Margaret and Greg moved to Carlsbad and searched for a church community that was "child friendly". In 2008, they found St. Andrew's; Tommy went to a Sunday school class and told his folks "There are so many kids; this is fun!" With that, the Griffiths knew they had found their new church home.

Continuing in volunteer mode, Margaret became a St. Andrew's bread runner and coordinated the Christmas pageant with me. I remember Margaret's grace and the big grin plastered on her face throughout the creative "process", as well as the coloring pages (once an elementary school teacher, always one) she provided our restless thespians. Greg served as set director and stage manager with steadfast patience as he moved the manger, inn door, and star wherever we needed them. Out of those lively, candy cane fueled rehearsals came an amazingly spiritual interpretation of the nativity story, told in the luminous faces of our littlest angels – a God sighting if ever there was one!

Mother Brenda tapped Margaret for the stewardship committee, which intimidated Margaret due to her numerically challenged nature. She felt better when Mother Brenda assured her she was the designated "fun one"; Margaret coordinated last year's fellowship house parties, along with other in-reach opportunities.

Greg and Margaret want Katie and Tommy to go through confirmation and attend youth group, so the family has a "common language" of spirituality. Margaret says "If you can have other kids to go through crazy high school times with, it's great."

Tommy and his confirmation mentor, Russ Johnson, connected over a shared passion for sports; Russ went to Tommy's basketball games, and the two played occasional pick-up games. One day, Russ called Margaret and asked to "borrow" Tommy for the evening. Russ and Tommy drove through Burger King, bought 42 burgers, and shared dinner with folks living on the streets. Tommy came

back telling Greg and Margaret about his amazing adventure and that he and Russ "prayed with homeless people!" Who needs a tongue of fire when you can share the Good News over a Whopper?

Katie is a wonderful helper in Sunday school. Last summer, I taught one of our summer Sunday school all-age classes, with a particularly large and boisterous group. Katie's calm, smiling nature was a touchstone that day, not only to me, but to the whole class. It turns out God can also join us at craft tables over crayons and glue sticks.

The Griffiths common language was crucial in dealing with the recent passing of Greg's father. Mother Brenda had the family bring a picture of their dad and grandad to church, where she prayed and read scripture passages. She encouraged them to leave the picture in the side chapel, so the family could remember him on Sundays. When one of the kids is having a hard time, Margaret reminds them of Mother Brenda's encouragement to "just pray", including an appreciation of daily blessings.

When not spending time with their church family at St. Andrew's, the Griffiths vacation in Lake Havasu with their ski boat (both kids are good water-skiers!), still go to Lake Arrowhead to see their families, and love to visit their aunt on Catalina every summer. Margaret and Greg are also snow skiers and taught Katie and Tommy at Big Bear; the whole family now enjoy the long runs at Mammoth.

As I was finishing this article, Margaret sent me a message; she hoped the Griffiths family "wouldn't be too boring in print". As treasured members of our church community, boring is impossible; their deep connection to each other and that common language spoken through faith encourages us to look for God in "ordinary" events – summer vacations, carpools, field days, sporting events, music practices, daily commutes. As Robert Benson tells us, "There is no ground that is not holy ground. All of the places of our lives are sanctuaries; some of them just happen to have steeples. And all of the people in our lives are saints; it is just that some of them have day jobs and most will never have feast days named for them". Thank you, Griffiths family, for reminding us that, though The Big Reveals get a lot of attention, our daily lives are made up of rendezvous with the Divine, if we would but open our hearts to notice them.

~Gigi Miller

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Musical Thinking

Our theme this season is Ordinary Time, a time in the church where because there are not a ton of specific liturgical events, we are invited to take one new journey and enrich our spirits in different ways. Music is one of the most significant journeys we can embark on. Not only does it feed our soul, it also feeds our mind, offering both spiritual food and intellectual occupation. I have found that the development of musical ability and knowledge compliments spiritual growth and many themes are echoed.

At the heart of musical growth is becoming comfortable with vulnerability. Trying something new inherently makes us feel vulnerable, and as we practice vulnerability, we inevitably become more comfortable with it. In the St. Andrew's choir, there is so much love and acceptance for one another, yet sometimes people are crippled by fear of making a mistake. If only you could hear the number of mistakes I make during my piano or vocal practice! Practicing, or musical rehearsal, is about making mistakes. Similar to a sculptor chiseling out a beautiful sculpture from a square block, we the musicians chisel away at a phrase or a song, continually striving for greater levels of beauty.

Embarking on any new endeavor requires focus of thought. I encourage all music students to focus on what I call "musical thinking." Musical

thinking includes notes, rhythms, phrasing, sound quality, and really anything that has to do with music. "Non-musical" thinking includes judgments, criticisms, opinions, or sometimes as simple as what you want for dinner. Often, a singer will get halfway through a phrase, then stop and say: "that was horrible." This type of non-musical thinking corrupts the music-making process, and gives voice to our fears rather than our hopes. In a group setting, those types of statements lead to an atmosphere of fear and derision. The next time you find yourself judging your own voice, try to replace that thought with: "I think the next note will be..."

You may know that on Sunday, I strive to provide a music program that is realistic, to schedule hymns that I believe you the parishioners already know. But sometimes, I like to throw you for a loop, to keep things fresh, and to keep us growing. The next time you are expected to sing a hymn or a song you don't know, experiment with focusing your thoughts on the music and music alone. Put effort into your "musical thinking" and disregard the "non-musical."

God bless and welcome back from summer!

~Chris Bingham, Director of Music Ministries

Fall Festival Returns October 1

Have fun with your whole family and find out more about refugees in San Diego County. Come one, come all! A family night is on its way on October 1, at St. Andrew's with fun for all ages. Do you have a favorite chili recipe? Enter it in our chili cook-off and challenge Dan Bozich, our reigning champion. We'll also have mac and cheese and other treats for those who prefer milder fare. There will be face painting, games and activities, opportunity drawings and music.

Let us show you the work that St Andrew's has been such an integral part of for the past 19 years, and why we believe that a small hand-up at the beginning of their life in the United States, is often critical, if these refugees are to become productive, contributing, members of our community. And let's all have fun as we raise a contribution from St Andrew's to further the work that so many of us are still doing because we can see the difference it makes in so many lives, right here, in San Diego County. Watch for more info!



Senior Warden's Corner: Seeing the Ordinary with New Eyes

Experiences take on new meanings when seen through another's eye. That is the philosophy of the Hands of Peace program. Each summer Hands of Peace brings a group of Jewish-Israeli, Palestinian Citizens of Israel, Palestinian (West Bank) and American teens to San Diego for a 3 week, dialogue-based experience to learn about the Gaza conflict from different points of view.

We had the opportunity to host Almog, who is Jewish and from Sderot, Israel, which is on the border with Gaza. He was 8 years old when over 1500 rockets and mortar bombs rained down on his town over the course of 9 months. In Sderot, bus stops and playgrounds are made of reinforced concrete to double as bomb shelters. Indeed in Sderot you are never more than 19 seconds from a bomb shelters, earning it the unofficial title, "bomb shelter capital of the world". In Sderot, ordinary objects take on double purposes.

Almog is 17, practices martial arts, plays the guitar and is preparing himself to be the best he can when he enters the Israeli Defense Force for his three years of mandatory service next year. He told us he likes to keep Kosher at home, but while on this trip he tried bacon, carnitas, and cheese burgers, all big hits. Fast food was a "must" so we went to In-n-Out Burger, Rubio's, and Panda Express (for the orange chicken, of course). When shopping, he was overwhelmed by Target's size and variety of merchandise. He inspired Stephen to learn the guitar and they trained together at Stephen's studio. Almog helped us to experience our lives just a little bit differently as we saw things with a new lens that he helped to create and he challenged himself to see a new part of the world.

Almog came to us as an articulate, curious and mature young man with very strong political views yet a willingness to listen and learn. He experienced a very intense program filled with trust building, leadership training and dialogues. They shared personal stories, stories about the conflict and how the conflict has impacted themselves and others. They explored

complicated and painful issues from many different angles. Almog would come home tired, often frustrated and wanting to talk. After two weeks, Almog was struggling to understand the Palestinian's perspective. The program brought the 40 participants to the US/Mexican border. Almog had seen plenty of checkpoints and border crossings at home. But when he met Mexican



people trapped behind a sturdy fence longing for access to the wealth and opportunity of the US, it took on a completely new meaning to him. A belligerent border patrol agent threatened the group as they got too close to the fence. Almog was able to view the Mexican people with empathy, recognizing their need for dignity and tolerance. He knew he should be able to

feel empathy for the Palestinians, but at home it was too personal. Seeing a border crossing through the eyes of these Mexicans, and the power of the belligerent American, was the new lens that helped Almog see the conflict through the Palestinians' eyes.

Ordinary things take on new meaning when they are put into a new context. A playground or bus stop can be a bomb shelter. Almog could enjoy a very tasty cheeseburger when he experimented with not keeping Kosher, and more importantly his experience at the US-Mexican border helped him see the conflict from another perspective. Indeed hosting Almog provided us with a fresh view of fast food and shopping at Target, and what could be more ordinary than that, and inspired Stephen to take up a new hobby. What would happen if we all slowed down and challenged the assumptions we make around our daily lives? Put ourselves in a new context. Use a daily prayer or moment of reflection to consider another perspective. Perhaps truly listen to your partner or even invite a new acquaintance for coffee. Like Almog, let's challenge ourselves to be open to new ways of viewing the ordinary in order to learn extraordinary things.

~Betsy Vaughn

Vestry Spotlight: Joe Arlauskas

Each month, we will spotlight one of our vestry members. This month, meet Joe Arlauskas, vestry liason for outreach..

I was raised in a small suburb of Baltimore and attended the University of Maryland for both undergraduate and graduate degrees in biology and cellular biology, respectively. After graduate school, I specialized in environmental chemistry and worked for Martin Marietta Corporation (now Lockheed Martin).

I married my wife, Becky, in Baltimore, MD in 1988 and, as a result of a wonderful career opportunity as manager of the environmental laboratory at SAIC, moved to San Diego the same year. I am currently employed with the Department of Defense Naval Facilities Engineering Command as the Quality Assurance Officer for environmental restoration.



Becky and I have one son, Seth of 13 years, two cats (Halo and Shiley) that were hand-picked from the County shelter and named by Seth. Seth's primary interest is sports, has played baseball since he was five and is beginning JV football at Sante Fe Christian school. I am a converted Catholic, attending Holy Cross Episcopal church from 1989 to 2006 where I served as Youth Leader, played guitar, and served on the Vestry, including as Senior Warden.

Since joining St. Andrews in 2006 because of their vibrant youth program, my wife and I have jointly taught Sunday School, played guitar regularly over a five year period with a music group for the Saturday evening worship service, and I am currently a member of the Vestry. I enjoy playing guitar, recently took up trumpeting, and enjoy all aspects of God's outdoor creation.

Visit www.standrewsepisopal.org/ourstories for an inspirational story from Joe.

No Ordinary Goodbye

What an amazing ride it has been!! The last seven years of my life spent at St. Andrew's has been nothing short of a blessing. From the moment I accepted this job in September 2009, this has been our second home and we have felt nothing but love, encouragement and support from you all. I am humbled and it has truly been an honor to know and serve with each of you. Thank you for letting me love on your kids and thank you for trusting them into the care of myself and other leaders as we've had many memory making events; ski trips, confirmation classes, retreats, service projects, mission trips and so many more.

Lastly, I thank each of you who've in turn loved on MY kids. They truly know the meaning of God's love through this church family from the moment they arrived, and nothing can ever replace that.

~Brenda Johnston



Praying Facebook

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Why Does This Form of Prayer Matter?

I could tell you that this is a great way to pray when life is crazy busy. And certainly, as a mother of 2 young children, as a wife, a full-time priest, and friends with many, even I want to buy into the myth that praying Facebook is a way to be prayerful when you can't take more meaningful, more intentional, or more spiritual actions.

But that is the myth. Because praying Facebook is meaningful. And it is intentional. And it is spiritual. It also just happens to be something you can do in your pj's.

Praying Facebook is a way to shift our focus to the needs of others – making the cares and concerns not about us, but rather about the people who share theirs. Rather than be irritated with the fancy dinner photo your coworker shares, offer up prayers of gratitude that she has had such a wonderful experience. We can connect with people and their emotions on an entirely different level when we engage with the people on Facebook with a prayerful attitude. Imagine rather than being annoyed at your college roommate's political affiliations, you are able to put aside your own opinion and pray for her this way, "God, I pray that the hopes and fears that drive Jessica's political beliefs might be tenderly held by you. I pray that you would comfort her in times of fear and hopelessness, and support her in her dreams."

Praying Facebook is also a way to make sacred something that is both meaningless and meaningful. You know this to be true if you have ever unfriended, blocked, or angrily commented on a post that you didn't agree with. In real life – face-to-face – would you ever say to someone, "I don't want to be your friend," stamp your foot and huff off? When you invite the God who longs for wholeness into the global dialog that occurs through social media, perhaps you find more understanding and less to unfriend.

Through my practice, I have started to think less about what people are posting and more about the feelings and emotions that drive what they post. Anger and judgment are rarely because people are jerks. Rather, they are the products of people who are entrenched in fear, feeling powerless and helpless, and often enough, we are too. Meeting those people on social media platforms, and inviting God to be present as well, starts to change fear into compassion.

How to Pray Facebook

This is the great part! Praying Facebook can be done by anyone, any place, at any time. I started by simply saying a prayer for each person I scrolled past, "God, be with Mark. God, send your love to Jim."

My practice then grew to praying for the person and what they were posting about. This does take a bit more reading and thinking about the lives of others, but the results are great. For example, your sister posts about having a hard day at work, or her kids are driving her crazy. My prayer would look something like this: "God, thank you for Sara and the work she does at her job/with her kids. Be with her, God, as she continues her work."

It's not particularly challenging to pray for those you love or with whom you share sympathetic ideas. The next level involves praying for those who make you really angry – the ones you have little connection with, the ones that if they were to disappear from your feed, you wouldn't even care. Before you block or unfriend, pray. It requires a level of wondering about what drives them, pondering where they are in life and how they got there. It is about praying beyond the labels we stick onto people (liberal, conservative, bigot, naive) and seeing them as a beloved child of God. Just like you.

The Rev. Katie Churchwell is the Canon for Community Formation at the [Cathedral of St Peter](#) in St Petersburg, FL. This article was reprinted with permission from buildfaith.org/praying-facebook.

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“It is about praying beyond the labels we stick onto people (liberal, conservative, bigot, naive) and seeing them as a beloved child of God. Just like you.”

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Prayer requests

Prayer requests can be made on our Facebook page, or directly to prayer@standrewsepiscopal.org or online (<http://www.standrewsepiscopal.org/prayer-requests.html>). Please let us know whether you'd like your first name only to be listed, and whether you want to be include in the Prayers of the People on Sundays. Also, if you plan to add someone else's name, please be sure to seek their permission beforehand.

When Life isn't Ordinary Anymore

When you come to a new country with no English skills, no experience with using electricity or living in a large city, then everyday activities often seem impossible to imagine. There are so many things we enjoy without ever knowing what it is like not to know how to survive in this society.

We don't usually thank God for a roof over our head, enough to eat, for being able to understand people who try to teach us what we need to know. We take knowing how to drive a car for granted, and if we do not own one we expect to do so someday, and assume that we are the only ones who do not have one. We do not expect to lose a job soon after finding one, or to become homeless because our hours of work are cut back. All the simple things that

keep our lives on a fairly steady course we forget to be thankful for, until they disappear.

Each year, San Diego becomes home for refugee families whose lives have taken such drastic turns. In order to enter the United States as a refugee, each person has first to be designated, by the United Nations, as an official refugee who cannot return to his/her country of origin because of persecution, which would endanger his/her life. Then there are interviews in whatever refugee camp the official refugee has been screened, by representatives of the US Immigration Service, before they ever set out for the US. RefugeeNet (formerly the Episcopal Refugee Network) is currently working with refugees who have all been in refugee camps for up to 10 years, and have been through very rigorous screening.



They arrive with little more than the clothes they are wearing, and their needs are many. RefugeeNet seeks out those who are in danger of falling through the holes on the social services safety net, and with your assistance, helps them not to fall.

Since 1998, the congregation at St Andrew's Encinitas, has been a major supporter of the refugees served by RefugeeNet. Hundreds of truckloads of donated household goods for tiny empty apartments have made life easier for these new neighbors who come from many different parts of the world. Members of this parish have tutored children and adults who need to learn English. Others have helped us create a website; done the legal work for us to obtain a 501c3; provided a temporary home for a refugee family; given time to mentor a family; gathered school supplies and disposable diapers; invited refugees to join them in activities that helps them feel 'at home' in their new community; provided jobs in North County for young refugees; written grants to pay salaries for our refugee employees, who speak the languages of most of our clients; and provided funds in many different ways to keep our donated truck and vans on the road. Since 1996 there have been at least two members of St Andrew's on the Advisory Board or the Board of Directors of the Network. Currently Frank DeSilva and Elaine McLevie are our representatives.

If you'd like to learn how you can get involved, contact Frank (fjdesilva@gmail.com) or Elaine (emclevie@gmail.com), or visit www.refugee-net.org. And make sure you save October 1 to come enjoy the Fall Festival!

~ Elaine McLevie

Note: The children who came to San Diego on the top of trains from Central America are not officially refugees. Nor are those families walking through Europe more recently. They are asylum seekers, and their requests to enter the country are handled through a totally different set of legal interviews.



Ordinary, Unconditional Love

We've got spirit, How 'bout you!?! – Children's spiritual vitality at St. Andrews

Throughout the year the children of St. Andrews are integrated into our liturgical worship, respond in multiple sensory mediums to the lessons they hear weekly, share the miracle of our Lord's birth as they perform the Nativity pageant, and spread the word of God's Amazing Love in Vacation Bible School.

As Christians we are called to spread the message that "God loves you, no exceptions." During this year's VBS program, volunteers, youth leaders and the children were positive forces in spreading the news to the community and visitors. This year's theme, "Surf Shack",



was the perfect way to demonstrate the easy, unconditional love that our God has for us! Over 40 children from within our parish and the community attended! Several special surfers were visiting from out of state and some were children of missionaries from Taiwan. One of our

We appreciate your love for the kids & teaching them the Bible truth through the VBS. Eliza enjoyed it a lot. She came home asking me about the meaning of the words & phrases she heard/learned from VBS every day. She also repeats wave words & sings songs she learned from VBS. Although she does not know the meaning of all these words, phrases, & songs, I believe these are the little seeds in her heart that will grow one day. Thanks again for you & your team's time & efforts.

*Blessings,
-Emily Wu*

youngest surfers was Eliza; she began attending the preschool here at St. Andrews last year, and does not understand English. Her family's friends, the Pais, had both of their children attend the preschool at St. Andrews as a way to introduce the children to English in a safe, loving, and nurturing environment. So as to make Eliza's time with us more comfortable, we made sure that we always had someone just a call away to help translate. Now, you're thinking, that's nice, but here is where you get to see the spiritual vitality in action! Each day, we introduced a new "wave word" and saying, along with a new song. The next day, Eliza's mother would find me to tell me that Eliza would come home telling her about her day with us, what the wave words were and humming the songs. Now, Eliza didn't fully understand the meaning in English, but her mother would explain it in Mandarin to reinforce the lesson. Every day, Eliza was excited to come and share in God's Amazing Love with us – even with a language barrier – proving that God's Love is universal and is felt and understood in every language on the planet!!

We might not have the biggest and most show stopping VBS in the area, but we definitely have the spirit present! Below is an excerpt of a letter Eliza's mother wrote to me along with our letter to ERD for the mission we chose; if you haven't seen the videos on Facebook – you should check them out! TAG – you're it! Show us your Spiritual Vitality! Blessings to you all!

~Colleen Gritzen

Dear Episcopal Relief and Development,

On behalf of the children of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church's Vacation Bible School, please accept this \$188 donation toward the "Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners" program. The children brought in spare change each day, some even emptied piggy banks, in an attempt to improve the lives of other children. Thank you for doing God's work!



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Five Loaves. Two Small Fish. Enough for a Multitude.

Praying Facebook

What Is 'Praying Facebook'?

Depending on whom you ask, and maybe what time of day, Facebook is either a great tool for connection or a major time suck. Either way, most of us spend moments of each day on some form of social media. Why not turn this routine and sometimes mindless action into an intentional, sustaining prayer practice?

Praying Facebook is something I do most nights, as I check in on the lives of the people on my news feed. As I scroll through, I read intentionally each name. I pause on their profile picture, I read their post, and then offer a prayer to God for them. Sally is out of work? "God, bring meaningful and joy-filled employment to Sally." Frank had a frustrating day with the kids? "God, I thank you for Frank and his dedication to his family. Please give Frank a restful night as he prepares for another day as a stay-at-home dad." I even pray for sponsored ads and political memes!

"God, continue to guide (business) to equal and fair employment practices." "God, please guide (political person) to love of neighbor. May they remember the countless times you say in scripture to not be afraid."



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