

The CrossRoads Connection

Year 8
Issue #9



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

Mother's Day

When I asked for prayers (before I left for Ireland) that I would have the experience that God had in mind for me, I'm not entirely sure what I was thinking. That's always a risky prayer, you know? Because you may not get what you expect. God has a funny sense of humor that way. I have found, though, that it can be well worth it. As I write this, I have only 18 days left before I return to the US on May 14. I could not be more thankful that I've had this experience, and I could not be more positive that the prayers and the spirit of the church have been with me.



I have always drawn inspiration from the women by whom I'm surrounded at St. Andrew, and I hope they don't mind my mentioning them by name throughout this article. It is by their example and their advice that I've become who I am and grown how I have on my trip abroad.

While many women live joyously, Sue Burchill is the one who springs to

mind first for me. I can't remember a time when I have not seen her with a smile on her face and a laugh ready to bubble forth.

I brought that attitude with me when I left behind everything that I knew and began a journey in an entirely new country with people I had never met before. It could have been scary... okay, it WAS scary. But following the example of Sue and trying to always keep a smile on my face and a laugh ready to bubble forth, I was able to find joy in this new place and to really begin to EXPERIENCE it.

I have always admired Monica Arrowsmith for being able to reach out to people, even if they are complete strangers, who look as though they need a friendly face. I can still remember clearly the brief few moments that we were in a women's restroom at a rest stop on the way back from a young adult mission trip. We passed a young woman standing at the mirror wiping tears from her eyes and, rather than walking on, Monica asked if she was okay and then boldly stated that she would pray for the young woman.

I have continually tried to live up to that example and learn to show compassion to the stranger, something I had always assumed "someone else" would take care of. While the Choral Society from University College Cork was trying to get back to Ireland in the aftermath of the volcano erupting in Iceland, one of the girl's grandmother was ailing and would likely pass away before the girl could get home. I struggled in my mind with a voice telling me to pray with her; I argued that it would be an intrusion on her privacy and personal matters.

Remembering Monica's example, however, I asked if I could pray with her, and she turned gratefully to me and said she would like that. It was a powerful moment, crying with her and praying for her, that I will likely keep with me for the rest of my life.

Michelle Akridge encouraged me to audition to be part of the group from the Choral Society that went to Verona, Italy for the International Choral Festival. She insisted that Italy is amazing, and I wouldn't regret going. I had been back and forth on whether or not I should go because it

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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.

Mother's Day

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would mean missing a couple of days with my parents when they came to visit, but her encouragement helped me to take the chance. I was still questioning my decision (not Michelle's wisdom, of course) the morning we left.

I am so glad I went. Even through the struggles to get home in the midst of airspace chaos after the volcano erupted (twice!!), the group had a lot of fun. I was able to be in countries that I never thought I'd be in on that trip. We saw 6 countries in 36 hours—Italy, Switzerland, France, England, Wales, and Ireland. I got to spend time getting to know people that I wouldn't have had the chance to know otherwise. I would not have been able to have the powerful moments with a friend struggling with her grandmother's illness.

Michelle's willingness to encourage me to go on that trip was part of the reason that I had such an incredible adventure that I will never forget. (I also fully believe that it could make a good Hollywood film, so I'm stating that I wrote it down first, and it's time-stamped in my blog. Oh, and royalties should be paid to the University College Cork Choral Society, Cork, Ireland.)

Each of these women and so many more in the church whether they knew it or not, helped to shape my time here in Ireland. Because they set such a great example for me before and while I was abroad, and because the entire church prayed for my experience, I was able to have an amazing time.

This trip, while full of new friend-

ships and travel stories, has also been an incredible one for my relationship with God. When I was home, I became so involved in everything around me that I didn't leave any time for God. Ironic, considering most of my activities were connected with St. Andrew.

Being in a new place with people I didn't know, without a job to take up time, and without classes with heavy work loads allowed me to just be with God. I sometimes

spent three hours or more just reading his Word. I started reading the book of Isaiah on Easter morning, a book that I had always dreaded because I was afraid it was all doom and gloom, but I fell in love with it. It is filled with the love of God, and there is beauty in every word.

I have a thirst for God that I've never known before, and it's so amazing. So I just want to say thank you for your prayers—I felt them. I know that when I come back and jump back into my activities at church, it will be with new commitment and a greater joy than ever before.

I can't, however, finish this article without mentioning the one woman of St. Andrew who was with me the most on this trip. You might know her. She's the one who makes sure you have something to follow along with at the services on Sunday mornings. She's the one who organizes the lovely people

Remember, you can always access the CR calendar on the Web at thecrossroads-umc.org



who greet you each week. She's the one with the caring voice who answers the phone when you call the office. You have surely figured out that I am talking about one Donna Biehl.

And she's my mom. Without her love and support, even across an ocean, this trip would have been horrible. Knowing that she was thinking about me and getting emails from her just letting me know that she was thinking about me really helped me make it through the times when I just wanted to come home.

(Now, obviously, my daddy also sent me wonderful emails telling me to have a good day and asking me how I'm doing, but, since this is the Mother's Day issue, I will be doting on my mommy for a second.)

Mom, I just wanted to say thank you. Thank you for answering my calls when I really just wanted to hear a familiar voice and didn't have anything to say. Thank you for taking time out of your day to answer my emails and look through my pictures. Thank you for being my mommy. Presumably, you'll be seeing this just days before attempting to come to Ireland for a visit and to bring me home. (I say "attempt" because who knows what will happen with the other volcano in Iceland...) So, as you send it off to the post office before you head home to pack and go to the airport, I just want you to remember that I love you. Oh, and that I gave you the best Mother's Day gift ever—an excuse to go to Ireland so you can be with me on your day.



Love always and in Christ.

Katie

Sunday School Project (by Julie Conlon)

Middle school Sunday School has been busy making a “response poster” on which students respond to the curriculum being taught in their own personal ways. During April, the theme was *Jesus is Alive*, and we explored the themes *denial, doubt, forgiveness, and redemption* not only in association with the Bible stories (Judas—denial, Peter—doubt, Jesus—forgiveness, and God—redemption), but what these concepts look like played out in our lives today. To accomplish this, students watched Nicholas Sparks’ movie, *A Walk to Remember*. Processing the movie allowed us to look for these concepts to better understand them. Poster work will continue as students show how their God-given gifts and ways they have already shared them.

The B.I.G. idea for May is: We believe that each of us can serve God, which follows the theme—All people can serve God. To supplement the curriculum used each Sunday, students will be given Bible study/meditations to use at home that supplement the Sunday lesson. The first week’s meditation comes from a book entitled, Bad to the Bone. Miles McPherson, former football player for the San Diego Chargers, wrote it for teenagers because (as he states), “I want you to be a Christian rebel. Fact is, God wants you to be a rebel. Want proof? Just check out the Bible, God’s how-to manual for us. It’s filled with *young people* who lived wild and crazy lives—for God. They threw caution to the wind and allowed God to use them in spiritual ways. They were bad to the bone.

- Josiah was bad to the bone when, at sixteen, he began to seek God on his own in order to bring about a national revival. He announced to the whole country, “I’m reading my Bible, and so will you.”
- Esther was bad to the bone when, as a teenager, she confronted the king about the death sentence on her people. Esther knew she was good-looking, and used her beauty to save a race of people.
- Joseph was bad to the bone when, at seventeen, he believed in God’s dream that he would become one of the most powerful men in the world. Joseph proclaimed to his family, “One day I’m going to be DA MAN!”
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were bad to the bone when, as young people, they defied the king’s orders to bow to his idol. In essence, they asked the angry king, “What part of ‘we will not bow’ don’t you understand?”
- David was bad to the bone when, as a teenager, he killed Goliath with one rock—and talked trash all the while, telling Goliath that he was going to kill him, cut off his head, and kill the entire Philistine army. Think about it; David only had five rocks.
- Daniel was bad to the bone when, as a teenager, he denied the king’s delicacies and instead ate vegetables and water. Daniel knew that the Twinkies would eventually kill him.
- Jesus was bad to the bone when, at the age of twelve, He hung out and challenged the temple rabbis to a debate on the Bible, God’s Word. Jesus IS the Word, so they didn’t stand a chance.
- Rebekah was bad to the bone when she left her family on a minute’s notice to marry Isaac, the man who would father Israel himself. Her true love did not need to wait any longer.

These and other *kids* in the Bible could not be killed, discouraged, beat down, or defeated in any way. They were invincible, incredible, and indestructible. They were committed to God all the way down to the bone.

So what does all this mean for you and me?

God hasn’t changed His tune from Bible times. He’s still looking for people who are not afraid to go against the junk of this world; kids who are not afraid of being singled out for being godly, resisting temptations of teenage life, and being sold out for Jesus.”

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.
--2 Chronicles 16:9

Students will explore the question: Do you know the gifts God has given you? For the next few weeks, we want our middle school students to be influenced by some young people who lived radical lives for God. We want to challenge them, inspire them, and encourage them. We want to invite teens to live an out-of-this-world life of faith

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MAY Junior High Events

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

May 9

10a Sunday School
NO YOUTH GROUP!

May 16

10a Sunday School
6p T.O.M., The Intersection

May 23

10a Sunday School
6p T.O.M., The Intersection

May 30

10a Sunday School
NO YOUTH GROUP!

Habitat for Humanity (Ireland) in Africa

(by Katie Biehl)

I know you all voraciously read every word of the front page article and are left wishing I had talked some more about the people I met here and my experiences... Okay, maybe “hope” instead of “know” you all read it that way.

Upon coming to Cork and starting a new semester-long college experience, I heard about the Iona society connected with the Chaplaincy on campus and decided that I would stop by and check it out sometime. Iona shares a house with the Chaplaincy where tea and biscuits are always available to accompany the fellowship and conversation. Students go to the house to study (or get away from studying), have a cup of tea, and chat with fellow students. I met a number of wonderful people there.

Karolina Pandadzidis is one such wonderful person. She is from Poland and is studying at University College Cork. During the semester, she applied to be a part of the team going down to Africa to build houses with Habitat for Humanity in Ireland. Not only did she make it onto the team, but she was also asked to be a team leader for the experience. She is very excited about being able to help put a roof (or several) over the heads of our neighbors.

In order to be able to go on this trip, she needs to raise a significant amount to cover travel and other expenses while she is there in addition to the cost of vaccinations and her Visa that she needs to get before she leaves June 5.

If you would like more information or if you would like to join me in supporting Karolina’s efforts with Habitat for Humanity, please contact me at katie.biehl@gmail.com. Thank you!

Health Kits for Haiti...



Sunday School

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like they did. Not for *our* (Sunday School teachers, parents, youth leaders) sakes but for their sake and God’s. And here’s how we’re going to do it.

Each Sunday that we’re here at Sunday School students hear and participate in lessons that help them to better know and understand God’s Word. But rebels of God don’t take the weekdays off. That’s why we will include an important section each week for students to study at home. We call this Weekday Warriors. Here, too, students will learn about young people in the Bible. But there’s a twist. Not all of them are positive role models; just like the kids around today, some are living for God, others are not. Either way, teens can still learn from their victories and mistakes. There’s another reason we’ve included Weekday Warriors devotions, however. As you know, weekdays can be “dangerous” times for teenagers. Teens don’t have to look hard for temptations when they’re away from their Christian friends at church.

The first week, the Weekday Warriors meditations will be short—only two—to kind of give students a warm-up and introduction to this possible devotional time they can spend with God, if they choose.

CrossRoads in Action...

