

The CrossRoads Connection



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

Remember Your Upbringing

Summer has always been a time for change in my life. As a child, summer was the season we moved. Dad would often go ahead and once school was over, my mother, brothers, and I followed him to our new hometown. Summer signaled the end of one phase and the start of another phase. Summer brought on the end of school, high school graduations, going off to college, college graduations, and our family reunions where we acknowledged the new births and the passing of our family members.



This summer, our family is acknowledging-



ing a new milestone. Our son, Christopher, is counting the days until he leaves for boot camp in Missouri. I find myself watching him with the memories of meeting him for the first time at the age of nine. He was a tall kid with this great laugh. His brown eyes would dance as he'd tell me stories about his life. It was really easy to fall in love with him. I remember sitting at the table for his 10th birthday with Jeff and Brittany as he blew out the candles on his traditional yellow cake with dark chocolate icing which was required to be homemade by Jeff. It was an honor to be included in his life then, and it is an honor to call him my son now!



Dana Kirkwood is the Director of Programs for the CrossRoads community.

However, I now find myself looking up to Chris, all 6 ft 2 in of him. He still has the eyes that dance and the smile that can melt your heart in a moment. And somewhere over the course of the last eight years, he has become his very own person. Our son now has dreams and goals that come neither from his father, mother, or stepparents. It was this young man that sat down at our kitchen table this spring and announced he wanted to join the National Guard at the age of 17. He presented his reasons and systematically went about walking us through the process of how he came to this plan. The sheer

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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.

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joy of excitement and the thrill of the possibilities showed across his face.

I have to tell you, it was really hard not to just dismiss him with a simple “NO!” After all, there was no way I, a pacifist, could have had a hand in raising a young man that wanted to stand up for his country and nation in this manner. There had to be other ways he could accomplish what he wanted without having to be willing to pick up arms for our nation. However, Jeff had a different view of the situation. He reminded me that we were raising our kids to be independent, to make logical strong decisions, to love God, and to follow their own dreams. We had to at least consider and pray over this before giving him an answer. It was hard to argue with Jeff when he merely quoted back my own parenting motto. Darn him! Didn't he see this was NOT a good idea?

After all, how many times have we said that God is about love and compassion? God couldn't possibly really WANT my son going into the armed services! I quickly mouthed a prayer for guidance. It was quick because I was sure I already knew where this conversation was going! It wasn't my heart that needed changing! It was Chris that needed to get some solid wisdom!

Later that night, I was driving another child to an event when “You Raise Me Up” by Josh Groban came across the airways.

*When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary;
When troubles come and my heart burdened be;
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence,
Until you come and sit awhile with me.*

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas;
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders;
You raise me up... To more than I can be.*

I found myself singing along.... “You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains”. I had to pause because if God can give me the strength to walk on stormy seas, He certainly could walk me through Christopher's decision to head on a path we weren't expecting. He was holding Christopher and giving Christopher the needed skills for his walk too! It was time to admit that God was in control and his love and compassion comes in all kinds of packaging. I needed to stop thinking about me and start listening to Chris. I needed to trust God. So, I opened my mind and my heart to Christopher's plan. I started to ask questions and listen to Christopher's answers on his dream for the future. I found that the more Christopher talked, the more I calmed down and realized this was his calling.

Sure, he wasn't picking the path that I wanted for him. Chris is taking up the pathway that he feels God is calling him. And in silence, I listened. His mother and father listened. His stepfather listened. We all listened and in the end, it was agreed to allow him to join the National Guard as a junior in high school.

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me ...*



Psalm 139:9-10

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If you know me at all, you realize that I didn't just sit quietly back and smile as it all unfolded. As my daughter would say, "We just don't roll that way!" Instead, you will find me saying silent prayers of wisdom for Christopher. After all, we are sending him into the world where not everyone has the same moral compass. He is going into a world that doesn't hold Christ constantly in its heart!

Additionally, I'm holding tight to the words of Proverbs 6:20 which reads "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching." I mutter it as Chris leaves for drills over the weekends or when he goes out with friends. Out loud, I tell him, "Have fun, and don't forget your upbringing!" I pray regularly that we've given him enough training, wisdom, and knowledge to face what the world has for him. However, right now, Proverbs gives me hope. My faith gives great comfort. Just as importantly, in my heart, I know that Christopher is aware that his parents and his God hold him close no matter where he takes his life.



...preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight, they will be life for you...

Proverbs 3:21-22

In truth, I'm not the only parent letting go this summer. The season of change will find parents letting go in all different ways. With this knowledge, I started adding to my whispered prayers the names of Zach and Andrew and Taylor and Samantha and Cole and Tracy and Drew and Brittany and Alex and all the other St. Andrew kids.

I pray that they keep remembering to take their faith with them. I want them to remember their parents' teachings and Our Father's commandments! These kids have an excellent opportunity over the summer to be the leaders of the world by merely taking Christ into whatever they decide to do and being an example of His love to those in their corner of the world no matter where the summer changes take them!

My prayer, for the rest of us, is that we remember our promises to our kids to lift them up throughout the summer. Remember the students finding jobs, the students taking summer classes, the graduating seniors, the college students heading into the real world, and those that remain in our fold with prayer, support, laughter, and most importantly love, just as God loves us! If we all do these things, I am quite sure our whole world will be better for it!

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



Dana



I devoted myself to study and to explore... all that is done under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 1:13

SEE YOU AT THE CROSSROADS

Senior High Update

In the next few weeks, 25 high school seniors from St. Andrew will graduate from all the local high schools. We have many of our seniors going to state schools, some leaving the state and some who are looking for jobs or might go the military route. I wish all of them nothing but success in all their future endeavors. Watch for more bios on our seniors in upcoming issues. This is a time of great joy both for the parents and for the families. This Sunday the CAB will present all seniors with a small gift to honor them. So if you are a senior or know a senior please make sure they come to either service this Sunday so they can be honored.

This Saturday at 8 a.m. the Senior High mission team is having a garage sale in University Farms at 3111 Decatur St. Thanks to Diana & Steve Pennell for opening their driveway to us. If you have anything you would like to donate, bring it to the church by 5:00 p.m. Friday, May 21. We would love to see everyone Saturday morning. Come find a treasure to call your own.

This Sunday night we are having Chris Norris Night !!!! As many of you might know, Chris has joined the National Guard and he leaves for boot camp in Missouri on June 1. If you know Chris, we would love for you to come to youth group Sunday night. We will have PIZZA, drinks, dessert, and games that Chris likes. We are calling this God, Country, and Chris night. So take time from your studying and come celebrate at youth group.

MAY/JUNE Senior High Events

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

May 23
10a Sunday School
6p God, Country & Chris

May 30
10a Sunday School
Memorial Day Weekend

June 6
10a Sunday School
No Youth Group
Graduation Weekend TSC & BC

June 13
10a Sunday School
6p Honor our Graduates

June 20
10a Sunday School
6p Father's Day

June 27
10a Sunday School
6p Youth Group
7p Concert
teenagers from Virginia



**SATURDAY
MAY 22
UNIVERSITY
FARMS
3111 DECATUR
STREET
BENEFITS SENIOR
HIGH MISSIONS**

