



Connecting generations in the Body of Christ

We're inviting families to form meaningful, personal connections with other members of St. Andrew's!

The coronavirus outbreak is unprecedented in our recent history and our practice of physical distancing is confining vulnerable persons to their homes – including the elderly. Social isolation and loneliness can quickly set in. But, even in this time, **imagine two (or more) generations connecting, learning from each other, and sharing faith** – where the wonder of children, energy of youth, and the wisdom of elders can meet!

One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

– Psalm 145:4

Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

– Philippians 2:4

What we're asking of families

Families will be paired with a “partner” (a member of the congregation who has expressed an interest in connecting with others) and commit to:

✓ **Phone calls**

Make at least one personal phone call each week. Suggestions to guide your conversations are provided below. These are rich opportunities to get to know each other – with sharing taking place between generations. These moments will be a blessing for all!

✓ **Personal mail**

Send something in the mail about once per week. This might include a card, handwritten note, colorful drawing, a printed poem or inspirational message, or something else creative. All children/youth and adults in your family can participate. You will brighten their day!

✓ **Prayer partners**

Pray for your partner daily, including specific prayer requests shared with you. Your family will also be able to share your prayer concerns with your partner.

Making your first phone call

Getting ready

- Find a good spot in your home where you can make the call. Make sure everyone participating is comfortable.
- Check for background noise distractions (TV, radio, barking animals, road noise, etc.) that can make it difficult for your partner to hear on the other end. This is especially important if you use a speakerphone.
- Make sure you tell kids what you're doing and why, that the call is about caring for another person in our church family.
- Have a general time frame in mind for your call (such as 15-20 minutes), keeping kids' attention spans in mind!
- Remind everyone to speak slowly and clearly and have only one person talk at a time.
- Say a brief prayer together for your partner(s) and for the conversation you will have.

The phone conversation

- Decide who in the family will be the caller
- Greet your partner
- Introduce yourself and ask if this is a good time to call (see example at right)
- Suggested questions (and remember to provide your own responses to make it a two-way conversation):
 - ✓ I see you live in [city]. How long have you lived there?
 - ✓ Are you from this area? Where did you grow up?
 - ✓ How did you first get connected to St. Andrew's?
 - ✓ If near Easter, you can ask how they will "celebrate" Easter this year, as well as how they have in the past
 - ✓ You can ask other questions from "Cross+Gen questions" below or choose your own, as you have time
- Thank them for the conversation
- Ask for prayer requests they have that your family can include in your prayers (and be ready to write them down)
- Ask your partner if they can also pray for your family in the coming days – and share specific requests your family has
- If you plan to send something in the mail, please ask your partner's permission and, if so, for their mailing address.
- Close with the Lord's Prayer together (see example at right)
- Offer a simple word of blessing (such as "God bless you today") to close your time

Follow up to phone calls

- After your phone calls, talk about them as a family, such as "What did you think of her story?", "What can we ask him next time?", or "What stories might we share with them?"
- Remember to include your partner in your family's prayers.
- **If any additional support needs are expressed or there is a request for pastoral care, please contact Mary Post at mpost@saintandrews.org with details for follow up.**

Starting the call

[EXAMPLE]

"Hello, is this Jean?"

"This is Gretchen from St. Andrew's Lutheran Church. How are you today?"

"Well, I'm here with my daughter Maddy and son Thomas. We are a family at St. Andrew's and we're calling to check in with you and to see how you are doing. Would this be a good time for us to have a conversation with you?"

The Lord's Prayer

"Jean, we would like to close by praying the Lord's Prayer together with you. Please join us if you know it."

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Suggestions for future conversations

- Decide who in the family will be the caller
- Greet your partner and ask if this is a good time to call
- Introduce yourself and anyone else on the call
- Start with a general check in (such as “How are you doing today?” or “How have you been since we talked with you?”)
- Choose questions from the suggested list (see “Cross+Gen questions” below) or one of your own. Start with “We’d like to ask some questions to learn a little more about you ...”
- Continue the conversation or choose another question or two
- You can ask your partner, “Do you have any questions you’d like to ask our family?”
- Tell your partner you have been praying for them. Ask if they have any new prayer requests to share with you, as well as sharing your own with them.
- Thank them for the conversation
- Offer a closing prayer or blessing (see “Closing prayer ideas” below)

Cross+Gen questions

Here are suggested questions you can ask of your partner. Feel free to add your own! Remember to share some of your own thoughts or ask more about what your partner is sharing. Make it a fun, two-way conversation of learning from each other.

1. Tell me/us about your family.
2. What was your childhood like? What stories do you remember from growing up?
3. What are some of your memories of school?
4. How did your family spend time together when you were growing up?
5. When you look back on your life, what was one of your favorite ages to be? Why is that?
6. Where have you lived during your lifetime?
7. What types of jobs have you had?
8. Do you have any memories of your grandparents?
9. Where have you traveled? Do you have a favorite travel experience or place to visit?
10. Do you have any children? What are some of your memories of them growing up? What are they doing now?
11. Tell me/us about your name. Does your name have special meaning?
12. Did you have a nickname growing up – one that your friends or siblings (or others) called you?
13. What is one of your favorite holiday traditions?
14. What is your favorite meal to eat? (Be sure to share yours, too.)
15. What kinds of hobbies or interests do you have? (Encourage them to share more about them.)
16. What types of things do you like to do for fun?
17. Do you have any pets? (Share about your family’s pets, too, if you have any.)
18. What is a game you like to play? (Ask how it’s played, if you don’t know.)
19. How have you been involved at St. Andrew’s?
20. Who first told you about Jesus?
21. What is your first experience or memory of going to church?
22. Did your family have any special prayers for before meals or bedtime?
23. Who is someone that has influenced your faith?
24. How has your faith impacted your life?
25. What gives you hope in difficult times?
26. What was an important lesson that your parents or other adults taught you?
27. What is a dream or hope that you have for the next generation of children?

Other ideas for your conversations

Beyond conversation, you might consider adding something else to your phone calls, such as:

- Read a Bible passage or story (perhaps asking for one of your partner's favorites)
- Read a poem or inspirational message
- Children/youth can sing or play an instrument
- Sing a simple song together, such as "You Are My Sunshine" or "Jesus Loves Me"
- Share a joke with each other
- Share a favorite family recipe

Closing prayer ideas

- Offer a word of blessing, such as "God bless you today" or "Peace be with you"
- Start with "Thank you, God, for this conversation ..."
- Invite everyone to offer brief prayers responding to a prompt, such as:
 - ✓ "Thank you God for ..."
 - ✓ "Lord Jesus, we pray for ..."
 - ✓ "We pray for your blessing for ..."
 - ✓ "God, please help us to ..."
 - ✓ "We pray for these people and places in our world ..."
- Pray the Lord's Prayer together (printed above)
- Offer the blessing (used in worship) printed on the right

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being part of this unique and timely initiative to connect the generations at St. Andrew's. We hope it will be impactful for your family and your faith. As we grow in relationship with each other, we also grow in our relationship with God!

We invite you to share your family's experience with these connections. Email Mark Jackson, Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry, at mjackson@saintandrews.org and share your stories. We look forward to hearing about the creative, meaningful connections you have made.