

## **A BOLD NEW STEP FOR ATONEMENT!**

This weekend, despite sub-zero St. Louis weather, Atonement staff, students, parents, and church members welcomed Pastor Delaney Schlake-Kruse and her husband, Matt (who is also a Pastor) and son, Milo to Atonement.

On Friday, activities with school included a hand-drawing event (see the results in the alcove in Fellowship Hall) and participating in APTO's Book Bingo Friday night.

Saturday, over 100 members attended the Meet & Greet! We heard a bit from the Call Committee and then from Pastor Delaney about herself and her family. She is very excited about the opportunity to return to her roots in North County and sees many opportunities within Atonement and the surrounding community to fulfill God's mission for Atonement. 17-month-old Milo made the rounds of Fellowship Hall, checking it all out!

During lunch, with Men's Club brisket as the main course, members had the opportunity to visit with Pastor Delaney and Pastor Matt and Milo. It was very good to meet Pastor and her family and there was an air of excitement and possibility and feel of re-connection with Atonement members over a meal, one of the first since Covid.

On Sunday, the special congregation meeting was called to order by President Keith Tomazi with 108 people attending. After a brief introduction about the call process, the motion to call Pastor Delaney was made and seconded. Paper ballots were cast, and the team of five "tellers" and Pastor Kendra met to count the ballots. In record time, the counting team returned with overwhelming approval!

The congregation also approved a motion to allow the Congregation Council to negotiate a compensation package with Pastor Delaney.

The air of excitement from Saturday carried over to Sunday. Pastor Kendra has brought her leadership, enthusiasm, and prayerful guidance during this interim period and encouraged us all in our process of discernment and change. We are taking a bold step into a new future!

Council President Keith Tomazi contacted Pastor Delaney that the Call was approved by the Congregation and that official documents were being forwarded to the Central States Synod.

The council will start planning with Pastor Delaney on her starting date and the events leading up to that date.

## Epiphany 2024 Stewardship Emphasis: Growing in Faith Together (GIFT)

Next week you will receive a letter with a 2024 Pledge/Commitment Card. Please prayerfully consider your financial giving to support Atonement's ministries, especially as we enter a new chapter in our life together. We will be presenting our pledges and commitments to be dedicated on Sunday, February 4th. Join us that day to celebrate how we continue to Grow In Faith Together!

Also, if you have not yet turned in your GIFT inventory, we encourage you to do so. You can download a copy of the inventory here: [GIFT Inventory](#)

*"Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!" (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, The Message)*



Year end tax statements, for those offerings of \$200 and over, were mailed on Jan. 23. If you do not receive yours in a timely manner, please contact Cathy Mifflin, (314) 837-1224.



Please take note that the school or church offices may be closed due to inclement weather. Please be sure to call before arrival to make sure someone is here to assist you. The school closures will be listed on the news channels.



### ***CONFIRMATION SERVICE PROJECT***

From Sunday, February 4 through Sunday, February 11 we are asking you to bring cans of soup or stews for our food pantry collections. Each can you bring can be used to vote for the team you think will win the Super Bowl (or the team you want to win.)

The Souper Bowl of Caring is a national effort that began in 1990 when a youth group at a South Carolina church had the idea of using Super Bowl weekend as a time to unify people not only around the big game but the big job of helping hungry people. We can help our local food pantries and encourage this national youth-led effort. Thank you!

*Where Atonement school and church families link together in Christ.*



## JANUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH: The Bridge in New Town St. Charles

What is The Bridge? A Coffee House, a Fair Trade Shop, a Faith Community, with a mission of bridging the gap between God and everyday life by spreading God's love to all in unexpected ways. Their theme verse comes from Micah 6:8: to do justice, love, kindness, and walk humbly. Check out their new website at: [thebridgecoffee.org](http://thebridgecoffee.org) or talk with Chuck and Betty Luebke. When you give to Atonement's Missions of the Month as marked on your offering envelope (or designated with your online giving), you support these many outreach ministries.

We ended last week meeting our Pastoral Candidate! Friday Pastor Delaney stopped in to meet the students and staff in school. She spent some time with all the students, talked with them a bit, and we all traced our hands on a large sheet of paper to show the family of Atonement. Saturday she met with the congregation, spent some time introducing herself, answering questions, and gathered with everyone for lunch. Sunday the congregation voted on calling her as our next Pastor. We're happy to announce that Pastor Delaney will be serving the congregation and school here at Atonement! We will keep you posted on her start date.

We were off Monday for the ice storm. We hope everyone was warm and safe at home! Thankfully, the ice came before school. What a mess it could have been if it had hit in the middle of the day.

As we move through January and plan for February, it's a good time to remember that Easter is a little earlier this year. In fact, Valentine's Day this year is also Ash Wednesday. Join us before church for our Men's Club's Fish Fry (it's delicious). If that doesn't fit in your plans, join us for church at 7 pm to receive your ashes. How great would it be to see everyone head out for their Valentine's Day plans wearing their ashes?

What a week! What a way to "Be the Light"



The 2024 growing season...

Although it's hard to think about gardening when the temps are below zero, it's time to start planning already! If you are interested in working with the Garden Leadership Team in planning for the 2024 growing season, please sign up on the attendance form or contact Jane Meyerkord at (314) 731-2658 or [jmeyerkord@aol.com](mailto:jmeyerkord@aol.com).

Atonement's garden is a combined Community and Youth Garden that is part of the Seed-STL (formerly Gateway Greening) garden network. We have the opportunity to apply for garden supplies to expand or improve our garden or for fruit trees or shrubs. The deadline for applications is already on February 4. More information including planting calendars and class opportunities can be found at <https://seedstl.org>.

**REFLECT AND REVIVE:  
WHAT DID WE LEARN?**

**MOVING FORWARD: TIDBITS ABOUT K.L.C. PROCESS**

KLC Tidbit #3: Leadership is risky - especially if the action involves change. You may feel like you're out on a limb or that you'll be perceived as "rocking the boat." It's possible the recently-created Worship Team is currently experiencing this.

The Team has gained a better understanding of the flow of the Lutheran liturgy and the flexibility it permits. Based on that work, it has adopted updated terminology, introduced new actions in liturgy (such as readers sitting with the congregation until the lessons are read), and worked to introduce new hymns. For some, that change is welcome, while others may regret that prior practices are being lost. It's risky.

Ask yourself: Do I see leaders that are taking risks that support Atonement's mission? How can I support them?



**Adult Forum** - Jan 28  
9:30 a.m. in the Chapel

We will continue to discuss **The Way**, *Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus*, by Pastor Adam Hamilton. This session is "The Healing Ministry of Jesus in Capernaum."

We look forward to walking through this series with you and hope you will join us for learning, discussion, and of course, donuts and coffee.



At its January meeting, the Church Council accepted, with regret, the resignation of David Cole as Treasurer, effective February 9th. Dave has served Atonement in many roles, including Vice President of the Church Council. He continues to serve as a representative from Atonement with the Great Rivers Collaborative. He has worked tirelessly, striving to keep our ministry on a solid financial foundation. Please join the Council in thanking Dave for his many years of inspirational zeal and dedication to the Treasurer's position.

The Council will be appointing someone to fill out the term of Treasurer until an election is held at the Congregational meeting in May. We are grateful for Dave's willingness to help with this transition. We ask that you continue to keep Atonement's congregation and council in your prayers.