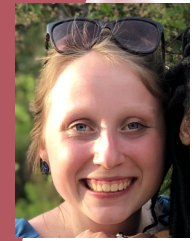


# CONGRATULATIONS and GODSPEED, GRADUATES!



## BRITTANY BARAJAS, B.A; Spanish.

I will begin my master's in Spanish at Northern Illinois University and a master's in bilingual speech-language pathology this summer. My goal is to become a part-time bilingual speech-language pathologist in a rehab clinic and to help start outdoor excursions that incorporate speech-language pathology exercises for adults with language disorders.



## JOHANNA BÜRKERT,

Law (not from UIUC)

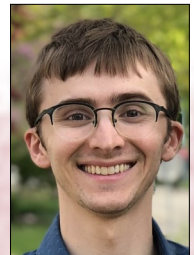
Future plans include returning to Germany and likely a Research Master at Utrecht University.



## TAYLOR MULLIN

B.A. Political Science, Business

This summer I am returning to work at my local state senator's office and I am currently waiting to hear back about offers for next year.



## ALEX MUNGER

Alex has served as our Music Minister and seasonal choir director for this academic year. He is moving on this summer to commence work as a pianist with the Houston Grand Opera in Texas.



## HENRY ROTHENBERG

B.A. Integrative Biology (Honors)

I will pursue a master's in science secondary education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



## STEPHEN SHERMAN

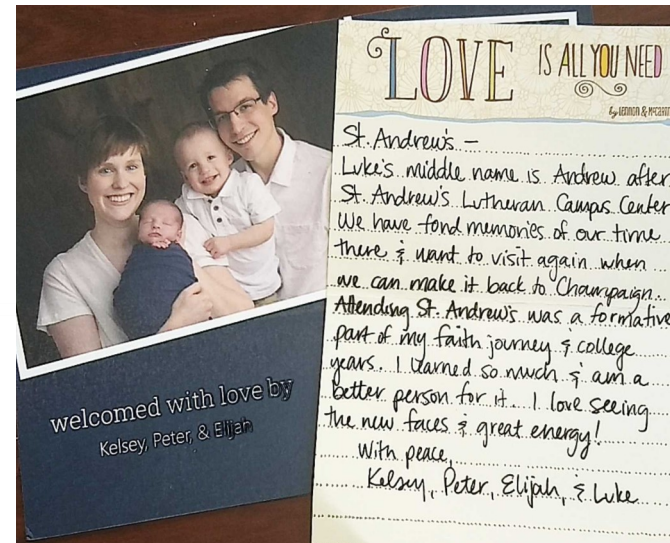
PhD, Urban Planning

"Governing bodies through space, governing space through bodies: planning, police power and race in central Atlanta." Currently deciding between job leads in New Hampshire, Minnesota, Oregon or Connecticut and maybe even staying in Urbana.

## CLAIRE BRANIGAN

Leaving for Buenos Aires to conduct dissertation field-work on the #NiUnaMenos movement.

## WELCOME LUKE ANDREW KEEFE!



**(Spring break, con't)** Christian organization working to reduce homelessness and poverty within the community. Through the various tasks we did with them, they taught us much about community building, empowerment and the Kingdom of God. Throughout the week, we also had a ton of fun! We went on a ghost tour (Athens is one of the most haunted places in the country!), we visited local coffee shops, shared many rocking van rides, and we stayed up late talking about life.

As one of the planners for this trip, this adventure was even more incredible than I could have imagined beforehand. We learned so much about mining, the environment, poverty, and systemic injustice within the region (Athens specifically), we got to connect with an incredible organization and incredible people, and we had tons of fun and bonding time. It was such an impactful trip, and I can't wait for what's in store for next year's trip! ✕



### BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Janet Lepp, President; Heather Pierce, Treasurer; Jim Anderson; Bob Coverdill; Priscilla Geerdes and Cheryl Light Shriner.

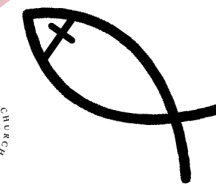
### COUNCIL 2019-2020:

Brendan O'Shaughnessy, President, Molly Banwart, Melanie Rohla, Ray McDermott, Joel Muller, Maddi Vogel, Daniel Zhu.

### STAFF:

Amy C. Thoren, Pastor/Director  
Simon Tiffin, Music Minister, class of 2022  
Melanie Rohla, Student Minister of Faith in Action  
Molly Banwart, Student Minister of Communications  
Rachel Rasmussen, Office Administrator

Summer 2019



# ST. ANDREW'S

LUTHERAN CHURCH AND CAMPUS CENTER

909 S. Wright St., Champaign, IL 61820 | lutherancampuscenter@gmail.com

## Surprised by Joy

"... that indescribable  
deeply-settled, light-filled  
sense of being..."

Molly Banwart, class of 2020  
Student Minister of Communications

Raised in a Christian family, I knew that when coming to college, I needed to go to church to make sure my "good standing" as a Christian didn't diminish.

After an apathetic period of church-hopping, I settled on one that was a convenient five-minute walk from my dorm. I saw faith as another box on my checklist, and I went to Sunday services to meet this minimum that cleared me of my "Christian obligation" for the week. I didn't view church as a burden to my life however; after every Sunday morning, I felt energized for the week ahead, yet perhaps this was more so from the cups of coffee in my hand from the after-service fellowship than from my actual spiritual fulfillment. My faith was complacent.

## St. Andrew's has radically changed my perspective on faith

In sermons I was half paying attention to, I've heard the difference between happiness and joy explained before, but only now am I starting to truly understand it.

My previous college experiences with church gave me happiness. Sure, I didn't agree wholeheartedly with the sermons, or stick around to interact with other members of the church, but after having "done my time" after a weekly service, I experienced that instant gratification of superficial happiness. But my time at St. Andrew's has radically changed my perspective on faith, and now after being involved in this (quite literally) life-changing community, I feel joy.

I've been able to see first-hand how the church extends beyond the physical building to its people and the love they share, and it has brought me that indescribable deeply-settled, light-filled sense of being. Joy. In the midst of the chaos of college student life, St. Andrew's has not only given me a sense of calmness, belonging, and acceptance, but it has restored my faith after a spiritual crisis that I didn't even know I was in. ✕



Photo: Darrell Hoemann

## My heart soars talking to future leaders

Rev. Janet Lepp, New President of St. Andrew's Board of Trustees



On May 5th my husband and I attended the St. Andrew's end of year celebration. We gathered around the barbecue grill and feasted on goodies, and I marveled while chatting with the students in attendance about their summer plans. Young adults from this community of faith are heading to Washington D.C. to work on public immigration policy, San Diego for an engineering internship, Argentina to study community life, and numerous areas throughout the United States and the world.

Others are staying in Champaign Urbana to work and learn more in their field of study: medical practices in a local hospital, nuclear energy, clinical psychology, environmental concerns, etc. Still others are returning to their homes where they will provide leadership in their churches and communities. My heart soars when I think about these young leaders who are striving to make a real difference in our world!

This kind of compassionate leadership doesn't happen without companions for the journey and intentional mentoring. The Lutheran Campus Center provides both! I have been privileged this year to witness first hand the strength of the St. Andrew's community in empowering one another to reach out to the world with Christ's love for the sake of all people.

As I'm sure you understand, true leadership development can only happen with a commitment of time, resources, and financial support. I hope you will prayerfully consider how you can support this incredible and life-changing ministry. Your prayer and financial gifts are great blessings.

May God bless us all as we seek to support campus ministry at the University of Illinois! ✕



Please  
prayerfully consider  
supporting St. Andrew's:  
companion on students' journeys  
toward joy for the world.

You may use the enclosed form or give  
online at  
[www.lutherancampuscenter.org](http://www.lutherancampuscenter.org)

## From the Pastor



Pastor Amy and her dog, Lady, co-pastor of unconditional love to all.

Do you remember jumping off a diving board for the first time? A parent, aunt, or uncle is likely in the pool below waiting to scoop you up, encouraging you, and saying, "I'm right here! You can do it!" The jump is a great leap of faith.

At St. Andrew's, we are seeking support as we prepare to take a leap of faith into God's future for us. We have taken intentional steps to empower students to be the primary leadership in our ministry, and God has raised up those leaders in abundance. With two part time Student Ministers already preparing for our 2019-2020 academic year, we have seen a noticeable increase in student attendance in worship, participation in our Bible studies and events, and visibility on campus.

Our facility, however, has fallen far behind in its ability to support our mission, and it has become a stumbling block to

our ministry. A few years ago, we opened an Accessibility Fund we hoped would allow us to install an elevator or lift so our many active students in wheelchairs would be able to get around our entire building. After more study and talk with contractors, we discovered other serious maintenance problems and design flaws that make retrofitting impossible. For this reason, we are putting on hold further collection of funds for the Accessibility Fund. *Our pledge is to put all the Accessibility Funds already raised toward accessibility, regardless what our next steps will be.*

Our mission and identity are clear; we are in need of a facility that supports that mission and identity. The lively corner of this huge university where St. Andrew's sits is too valuable a gift to lose for the ministry of the Church, so after much prayerful and informed

***With you we will be able to jump into the future God has in store for us.***

discernment, our hope is to stay, explore our concrete options for more significant facility work, create a plan, and take the leap of faith. This can feel like standing on a wobbly diving board, both thrilled and terrified of the waters below. We gather strength when we see the Gospel of Jesus change lives in this place, and we hope you will get a glimpse in this newsletter of what that change looks like for some of our students.

Our planned expenses for 2019 are \$157,000, and this year we have a revenue shortfall of \$10,000. As a campus ministry without income earners in our pews, we depend on outside gifts to keep our ministry alive, and we are actively working toward more sustainable support. *With your partnership, we will be able to stay in this place and take the leap of faith we believe God is calling us to take.*

Thank you for the support you have already shown! Please keep us in prayer and consider a financial gift to St. Andrew's Lutheran Campus Center. *With you, we will be able to jump into the future God has in store for us.*

Grace and Peace in Christ, *Pastor Amy C. Thoren*



***This Easter at sunrise***, we brought compost to our new prairie pocket garden, similar to the way the women brought spices to anoint Jesus' body Easter morning. In our age of anxiety about the future of God's creation, it was an act of faith and witness to the hope we bear: that God is not done breathing life into this earth or its creatures.

## Spring Break in Appalachia: Faith and the Healing of Creation

Melanie Rohla, class of 2020, Student Minister of Faith in Action



Over spring break, nine of us traveled to Athens, OH for a week of learning about environmental degradation and systemic injustice and God's call to us. Led by Josh Richardson, a former St. Andrew's alumnus/geologist/currently in seminary/from Athens, we held daily Bible studies to explore our role as people of faith in the healing of creation. We explored the town and surrounding area: an old mine, a power plant that took over a whole city, an iron furnace, a Carnegie library, and many other powerful sites. At most of these places, our team was floored by the injustices and degradation present in the situations.

After multiple days of learning about and visiting different sites, we served with Good Works, a local *(cont'd back page)*



## God's Work, Our Hands... brains, hearts, backs, achy muscles ...



***A lot of students are drawn to St. Andrew's in order to find service opportunities within a supportive community.*** Whether it's river clean-ups, volunteering overnight at a local women's shelter, walking against hunger, reading letters from incarcerated people and picking out books for them, our students come to worship on Sundays to prepare themselves for service in, with and to others. A new service opportunity this past year was provided by free ESL classes we began offering in Fall 2018. Students could sign up to be English conversation partners. For students like Daniel Zhu, a PhD candidate in physics (pictured below) it was his first entry into a Christian church. Now he is on our church council!

## New Council Pres Promotes Christ's Love in Art & Science

Brendan O'Shaughnessy, class of 2021, Council President

Studying both Art (Sculpture) and Natural Resources/Environmental Science, I am very excited to use my interests to serve as St. Andrew's Council President this upcoming year. As President, I am eager to continue expanding our ministries of inclusion and environmental sustainability.

Under my leadership, we installed a native prairie garden on a section of the front lawn of St Andrew's in the past academic year. To express our commitment to care of God's creation, we hope to extend this garden each year to create a comprehensive landscape that fosters biodiversity. [Brendan applied for and received a grant from Wild Ones Illinois Prairie Chapter of nearly \$500 in native plants.]

In addition to our annual Sangamon River clean-up (canoe trip) and our onsite vermi-culture composting, I also want to incorporate our exploration of environmental sustainability with our plans for the future of St Andrew's facility.

As President, I will also further increase St. Andrew's presence as an LGBTQ inclusive congregation by promoting the truth of Christ's radical love. Continuing this mission is extremely important, as St. Andrew's has provided me a place to strengthen my faith where all are truly welcome, with no exceptions. ✠



Showing their stripes: R to L: Daniel Zhu, Molly Banwart; Brendan O'Shaughnessy and Brittany Barajas pictured on the spring break trip.

## Unexpected Bible Study Restores a Sense of Safety

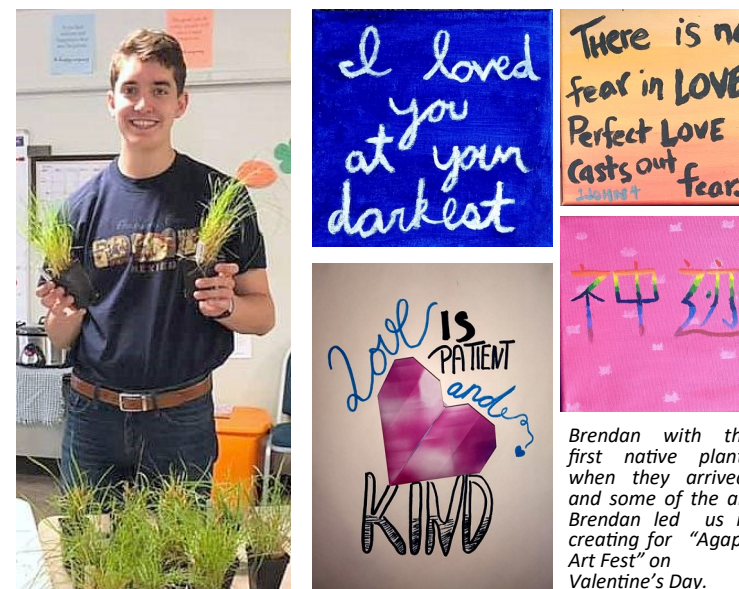
Brittany Barajas, class of 2019

If you would have asked me a few years ago whether or not I could imagine myself joining a liberal Lutheran church, my answer would have been "no." I was raised Mexican Catholic, so I spent my first year and a half of college going to Catholic masses. Occasionally, I did not agree with many Catholic doctrines, but I had just accepted that my feminist values would always be at odds with religion.

But, one day during my spring semester of my sophomore year of college, I learned that St. Andrew's was going to host a Lenten Bible study called "Challenging the Biblical Glass Ceiling: Jesus and Women in the Gospel of Luke." I couldn't believe it. Or rather, I believed that St. Andrew's was hosting it, but I certainly did not believe that any glimpse of feminism could be in the Bible.

Just four years before, I had gone to a Catholic Charities center's counselor to process my experiences of surviving sexual abuse. At the end of the session, the Catholic Charities counselor asked if I had any questions, and I responded, "Yes, I do. What does the Bible say about my situation? About a female's right to control who has access to her body?" The counselor had no idea.

I left there certain that Jesus and my right to control my body had nothing to do with each other. But, through attending St. Andrew's Bible study, I learned that Jesus absolutely was a feminist. That enlightenment is the reason why I feel safe exploring my faith again. ✠



Brendan with the first native plants when they arrived, and some of the art Brendan led us in creating for "Agape Art Fest" on Valentine's Day.