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### How My Way of Life Reflects My Christian Faith to Others Daily

As Christians at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, we are people of God. We are called to proclaim, called to serve, and called to nurture through the good news of Christ. We are people of God grounded in the word, called to live in the love of Christ. These are the words of our mission statement here at St. Andrew Lutheran Church. But what do these words mean exactly? If I am to live by these chosen words, how am I to demonstrate them to others?

I was baptized here at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in 1991. My parents began attending worship at St. Andrew in the mid '80s, after being invited by former St. Andrew members, and their neighbors across Walker Road, Alvan and Frances Kauffman, and officially joined the congregation in 1988. Since then my family has not left the St. Andrew community, as we still regularly attend worship. My twin sister Minda and I were confirmed in the spring of 2005, and now all four members of my family are voting members in the congregation.

Growing up in the St. Andrew community taught me many things. I can remember every Sunday during the school year going to Sunday school and learning about the teachings of Jesus Christ. My parents always made sure that we had "Hide Them In Your Heart" videos in stock, and Vacation Bible School cassette tapes in the car to listen to on long car rides. They also concerned themselves with teaching me the "Golden Rule" which is to treat others, as I would want to be treated. My dad

even taught me the "Platinum Rule" which is to treat others, as *they* would want to be treated.

Throughout elementary and middle school, I experienced many days of hazing and teasing. I always wanted to fight back, but I remembered a lesson in Sunday school in which Jesus told us to turn the other cheek. Although my feelings were always hurt, I made sure that I still treated those who bullied me with kindness and respect. My parents always told me to be nice to everyone, even if some may not be my favorite people. When I saw others who were being mistreated, I made sure to come to their aid. Jesus was a friend of all the lowly people. The beggars, the lepers, the sinners, the meek, the lowly, the poor, the thieves, and all others who were considered on the bottom rung of the social ladder were all befriended by Jesus, and looked with favor over the rich and the Pharisees.

My friends were never the most popular kids at school, nor were they the richest. My friends were those like me, who experienced social troubles throughout early childhood education. When one of my friends did not have any lunch at school, I always made sure that I shared some of mine with them. I know that while my family may not be the most affluent, I know that I am in a much better situation than others.

In high school, I found many opportunities to express my Christian faith, and most of these opportunities were due to my involvement in the youth group at St. Andrew. When Todd Gibbs was the Youth Director at St. Andrew, we participated in many events. Whether it was going on Peer Ministry retreats, helping in service projects at Holden Village, or volunteering at the Portland Rescue Mission, we

always found time to help out others who are less fortunate than us. We worked with Lutheran World Relief, putting together school kits for young children, and thanksgiving food boxes for the hungry. With Jen as our youth director, we have participated in even more volunteer work. The youth group has gone to the Oregon Food Bank and Brooklyn, NY to help others in need. Thanks to the Peer Ministry training I took when Todd was our youth director, I have been able to be somewhat of a youth counselor to some of my friends when they are in a tight situation, and are seeking advice. I have told my friends that in times of struggle, that God is always there for them, and that all they need to do is call on him for help and that he will carry them through their hard times.

Through my years at St. Andrew, I have learned that God's love is unconditional, that I do not have to ask for it, or do anything to earn it. When I sin, God is disappointed with me, but he never stops loving me. I have also learned that one of the easiest ways to show others the love of God is to portray it. By showing God's love through our own actions, we are explaining to everyone what God's love means to us, and what his love can mean for them if they so choose to open their hearts to God's never-ending, limitless love.

Luke 6:31

“And as you would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise.”