



ST. ANDREW'S CROSS

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew

Prayer, Study, and Service

OCTOBER 2025

The Episcopal and Anglican Newsletter of Men's Ministry



LONELINESS AND ISOLATION HOW YOUR MEN'S MINISTRY CAN OFFER SUPPORT

WE ARE THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW, A LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL MEN'S
EPISCOPAL AND ANGLICAN MINISTRY.

OUR AREAS OF MISSION FOCUS: DISCIPLESHIP AND MENTORING, PRISON MINISTRIES, RACIAL RECONCILIATION, RECOVERY,
SOCIAL JUSTICE, VETERANS MINISTRIES, YOUTH AND SCOUTING.

BROTHERSANDREW.NET



WIN FOR YOURSELF, WIN FOR OUR
BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW VETERAN'S
MINISTRIES

THE SWEEPSTAKES FOR VETERAN MINISTRIES

By Jeff Butcher, Brotherhood of St. Andrew Stewardship and Generosity Commission Chair

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew has been actively involved in promoting and supporting ministry with veterans and their families since World War I. Sixty-six Brotherhood member Episcopal congregations have signed up to be a part of the Veteran-Military Friendly Congregations (VMFC), a program coordinated by the Military Chaplains Association (MCA). There are currently 234 VMFC organizations in the United States. One of our goals is to increase the total number of Brotherhood VMFC congregations by at least 10%. The mission of VMFC is to bring our service men and women closer to God and highlight the healing power of God.



The Brotherhood of St. Andrew "Year of the Veteran" grant giveaway goal is to raise not less than \$25,000. \$2,500 of the funds raised will go to five \$500 sweepstakes winners and the balance of the funds will go to the Brotherhood "Year of the Veteran Grant Fund." The fund will provide competitive grants for congregations that have applied to expand or develop a ministry designed to support active-duty military, guard, reservists or

military veterans. Additionally, these grants may be used to support Gold Star and Blue Star family members and veterans or service members experiencing conditions of disability.

The tickets for the sweepstakes giveaway sell for \$10 per ticket or 10 tickets for \$100. Five (5) winners will be computer-selected and **announced on November 30**. The remainder of the funds raised will go into the "Year of the Veteran Grant Fund" managed by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

Ticket sales are **open to any individual or faith-based congregation regardless of denomination via ONLINE** (see link below) **or by USPS mail with a check**. Checks must be written to the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, P.O. Box 1382, Louisville, KY 40201 with "2025 Sweepstakes Tickets" in the memo line. Also your email address and phone number must be written **LEGIBLY** on your check. All checks must be postmarked by **November 10, 2025**.

Any faith-based congregation can apply for one of the nine \$2500 competitive grants to be awarded by March 2026. Applications will be available after January 1, 2026 on the website BrothersAndrew.Net.

The number of grants awarded will, of course, depend on the number of sweepstakes tickets sold.

BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE





LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

HOW YOUR MEN'S MINISTRY CAN OFFER SUPPORT

If you just look around, it probably doesn't come as any surprise that we're a society plagued by loneliness and isolation. Statistics from the Pew Research Foundation tell us that 16% of all Americans indicate they are feeling lonely or isolated all or most all of the time, while an additional 38% say they sometimes feel lonely. Numerous studies have also indicated there are special issues associated with men and loneliness. Social conditioning around attitudes of stoicism, toughness, self-reliance and other traditional male qualities mean it can be tougher for many men, especially older men, to self-report or show vulnerability with others. Consequently, this resistance to openness can mean they feel loneliness in a much more deeply profound and even secretive way. While all may appear "normal" on the surface, many men can be devastatingly lonely privately. This can be most especially acute with men who are experiencing significant life transitions, such as the illness or death of a spouse/partner, divorce, their own deteriorating health issues, situations with aging parents or children, retirement, or even economic or employment struggles.

With over half of us experiencing significant loneliness and isolation, and many men struggling with this phenomenon in a much more intense and private way, how does this impact your ministry as a Brotherhood Chapter or men's ministry? And, how can you---individually and collectively---be more effectively present in the midst of this?

1. **Become more aware** of what's happening with the men who are already in your Chapter or group. Learn to recognize the quiet struggle—men who may appear strong,



dependable, and full of faith but who have an inner sense of isolation that can affect their spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being. Keep your radar out about this and look deeper than the persona men typically present as they are interacting in a public group or setting. Think about the losses you know they have been experiencing and consider how that may be impacting their interior life. Remember---everyone is facing quiet daily struggles that only they know about.

2. **Frequently talk about loneliness and isolation** at your meetings. Recognize and share statistics that indicate it is a significant societal challenge. Set a consistent tone of acceptance, confidentiality, and safety for all who may be struggling. If you are an individual who has worked through some of these issues---or are in the process of doing so---realize that your own open communication about yourself can help encourage and profoundly impact others.

3. **Consider approaching the issue Biblically.** While many men have been taught to suppress their emotions or equate vulnerability with weakness, scripture reminds us that even strong men in classic Biblical stories felt alone. Elijah fled to the wilderness in despair (1 Kings 19) and David poured out his heart in lonely psalms. Men need to see that acknowledging loneliness doesn't make a man less faithful—it makes him human. When men bring their loneliness before God, they take the first step toward healing. And good Bible study around the topic of loneliness and isolation, followed by very open prayer with powerful intercessions, is an excellent place to start.

Continued on page 4.

Veteran's Day Is Coming November 11

THREE THINGS YOUR CHAPTER OR MEN'S MINISTRY CAN DO

1. **Connect with others** in your community who are already planning veterans-recognition activities. Find out what your group can do to participate and support these events.
2. **Recognize and appreciate vets** in your own parish, using strategies such as note cards, certificates, invitations to share their story, or a reception in their honor.
3. **Invite vets** to come to your next Chapter or men's ministry meeting. Assure them you want to learn more about them and their experiences defending our country.

- 4. Help men in your group develop strategies** for deepening their personal relationship with God. While the support of your group or individual friendships within your group can help, nothing ultimately changes the fact that loneliness and isolation is also a very personal spiritual struggle. Loneliness often means an emptiness that only God can truly fill. A strong relationship with God provides a foundation of peace and purpose. Even when fulfilling human companionship is lacking, through prayer, Bible study, and worship, men can find comfort in God's presence. Jesus modeled this balance—seeking solitude to pray but always returning to fellowship with others. A consistent interior spiritual life helps men remember that they are never truly alone, for God has promised, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).
- 5. Be genuinely authentic as a Brotherhood Chapter** or men's ministry, as a means of reaching even more men in your wider church. Churches are filled with men who are quietly longing for deeper connections. Many attend services or group activities but still feel somehow disconnected. Who may those men be among your own congregation? Authentic relationships grow when men reach out, invite, and encourage. When they move beyond surface-level conversations about sports or work and begin sharing real struggles, hopes, and victories. If your Brotherhood group or men's ministry develops a solid reputation for inviting, being authentic and safe, being unafraid of shared vulnerability, and holding space for honesty and even real accountability, men in your church will be drawn to you. Your shared vulnerability can build powerful bonds that help you reach out beyond your own church to your whole community.
- 6. Serve others with real purpose.** Service is one of the most effective ways to overcome loneliness. When men use their gifts to serve others—whether by mentoring youth, volunteering in outreach programs, or supporting those with human needs—they shift focus from their own emptiness to the joy of helping others. Serving creates shared experiences and a sense of belonging within the church body. As Paul wrote in Galatians 6:2, “Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”



- 7. Seek balance in life.** Loneliness can sometimes stem from imbalance—too much work, too little rest, or isolation caused by technology and the general stresses of day-to-day life. Church men must intentionally cultivate balance: spending quality time with family, engaging in hobbies, and maintaining physical and emotional health. Building a rhythm that includes rest, fellowship, and recreation strengthens relationships and helps keep loneliness at bay. One of your important roles as a Brother can simply be to say to another Brother, “So, what are doing for self care these days?”
- 8. Don't hesitate to seek professional help** for yourself or encourage others who are hurting to do so. Help break down those stigmas. Sometimes, you or men in your parish who are struggling need more than just the support of your Brotherhood Chapter or men's ministry group. Always remember and communicate that there can be strength in asking for additional help. Pastors, counselors, physicians, and other professionals can offer guidance, direction, and support. Talking with a professional can help men process root causes of loneliness and isolation and help them address their needs in a healthy, constructive way.
- 9. Overcoming loneliness and isolation** is not a one-time event but a journey of health, faith, and connection. As you and the men in your Brotherhood Chapter or men's ministry group learn to more intentionally lean on God, open up to others, and live with purpose, all can discover that true community is found in Christ and Christ's church—a family like the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, where no one has to walk alone.



BROTHERS AND FRIENDS

By Roy Benevaides, President, Brotherhood of St. Andrew

When Brothers meet, pray, study, or serve, we reinforce a condition or relationship we call “friendship.” We know that when we gather to participate in many of our Brotherhood programs and fulfill our expectations, we actualize and identify ourselves as Brothers of St. Andrew a.k.a. friends. What is particularly notable is that we grow, nurture, and develop a human response of special associations, including friendship, companionship, collegiality, affinity, fellowship, altruism, and also *gemütlichkeit*. Looking forward, we are excited to join our good friends for some memorable moments. It is a safe environment for our men’s group, and it is a place where we can share meals, stories, and personal concerns without fear or vulnerability. This typically occurs during our regularly scheduled meetings or events.

We know from experience that friendship is a condition or relationship that we immediately understand as a “special” status or category afforded to those individuals with whom we have a mutually shared view of a relationship. Much has been written and studied about the status of friendship and the conditions associated with our “friends.” Even then, we easily separate friends into sub-categories such as work friends, social friends, hunting and sports friends, etc. one category of

friend that is a bit different is “close friend,” which is generally attributed to about five people in our lives. Close friends are friends that we can call frequently or infrequently without any loss of feeling or understanding. We pick up where we last left off. Important to know that we share and support at a different level than other categories of friendship

Over the years, we have formed groups that are unique and are focused on a specific friendship area. It differs from the concept of teams and team cohesion in that individuals can enter and exit a Brotherhood group at any time without altering the group's dynamics.

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, as an organization, is synonymous with other similar terms of friendship that we often assume and anticipate whenever we gather, pray together, meet, share meals, and work, among other situations. The simple understanding is that we, as active members of the Brotherhood, engage with other Brothers during various activities together or simply as lay persons in our parish communities. What most of us discover is that there is something special whenever we witness, study, pray, or work together as laymen. Our identification is generally viewed by others as “men grounded in faith.”

One category of friend that is a bit different is “close friend,” which is generally attributed to about five people in our lives.

JOIN US FOR OUR BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW MIDDAY PRAYER

WEDNESDAYS

AT 1 P.M. EASTERN TIME VIA ZOOM

ZOOM MEETING ID 893 4148 8609

PASSCODE: 0723



MONTHLY WEBINAR

FIRST WEDNESDAY WEBINARS

Our monthly webinars are always on the first Wednesday of each month at 8 p.m./Eastern.

HERE'S THE LINK:

[BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT ANDREW MONTHLY WEBINAR](#)

MEETING ID: 851 3889 2685

PASSCODE: 0723



THE LONELINESS EPIDEMIC AND How to Push Through It

By Tom Welch, Executive Director, Brotherhood of St. Andrew

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that in 2025 a whopping 37.4% of adults in the USA report moderate to severe loneliness. It carries significant risk in both mental and physical categories. The question is, "What to do about it." I think all of us deal with it from time to time. Sometimes it may be when we are in the middle of a crowded room. This number is significantly higher than it was prior to the pandemic.

For me, an extended sense of loneliness existed following divorce almost twenty years ago. The couples/groups I used to run around with had suddenly become somewhat distant. Suddenly, someone becomes a 5th wheel at the dinner table. Many don't like the venues to build new connections, often for good reasons. For some, the literal loss of a loved one from this life to the next can create a great sense of loneliness as well. When my father died in 2015, for the first time in my mother's entire life, she was living alone. For her, from childhood to college roommates, to marriage just three months after college graduation, to raising children and 55 years of marriage the home was never empty and rarely quiet.

There's something many of us have heard (hopefully) over our lifetimes about a great place to meet new people: church. When I moved as a single man to a new city shortly after college, I visited every Episcopal church in town and a few Methodist churches. This was back in the day when one would simply show up rather than cruise a parish website. Almost in desperation, I visited a church I had passed by nearly every day for almost two years because it looked more like the old Taco Bell and Pizza Hut designs side by side. It just didn't look "churchy." When I finally walked through the door, more people had spoken to me in that one day than all the other churches combined. I found a home.

This issue of acute loneliness is particularly rampant among those under 40 today. There just isn't an app to download to the smartphone that fills the void in a healthy manner. In fact, it often supports the problem rather than helps it. How do we push through that as a community of faith for ourselves and others could take pages and pages to describe. One of the mental health issues involved with loneliness is an increased risk of suicide. Early this month a church I know well back

in Mississippi experienced the suicide of a 37-year-old. It completely caught everyone off guard.

There are countless references in Holy Scripture about dwelling in the company of Believers. My grandmother used to always say, "Son, if you want to meet nice people, go to church." That is certainly a start, and that's where I have found 70% or more of my closest friends. How can we as a ministry of the church help to curb the loneliness epidemic? Ask someone to join you for a cup of coffee. To those who are part of a Brotherhood Chapter at your church, invite them to a meeting. Ask a neighbor to go on a walk with you. It's good mental and physical exercise. If you have physical limitations, involve yourself with a Zoom call or FaceTime routinely. The silence of loneliness can be deafening.

September was "Suicide Awareness Month." If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call 988. That resource is real and makes a difference.

A key for all of us to push through times of isolation and hopelessness is to center ourselves in prayer, seek a community of faith, find a new "close buddy," and look for self-accountability. Sometimes just asking another to join you in prayer builds connection that can lead someplace wonderful. We have a dedicated prayer line at the national Brotherhood Service Center for your requests. We've taken calls before. They are typically taken by either me or our Office Manager, Libby Craven, and held in pastoral confidence.

Pray with others in good times just as part of your week. When the bad times come, think how much more equipped you will be to handle them. What better advocate than a prayer buddy. Come to think of it, isn't that what we've been about since 1883?

I close with a words from page 829 in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. You may pray it for others or for yourself. As you do, know I prayed it for all of us on this day of publication. **"Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in His steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you and their neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."**



LONELINESS OR ALONE?

By Brother Conrad Jones, Past President Brotherhood of St. Andrew

Ever since COVID-19 sent us running into a state of isolationism, we have heard the term “loneliness epidemic” being used repeatedly and numerous books and articles and studies have been published about this condition. But it’s important to put into perspective, I think, that there are and will continue to be influences in this world that shape if someone is “alone” or “lonely,” which we should all recognize as not being one in the same.

Many of us, in fact most all of us, have at one time or another have been alone. Whether it was the first time you lived by yourself in an apartment or when you lost a spouse, there are no doubt many times we as individuals have been alone. I remember leaving home after graduating from college and being separated from my family and friends as I planted roots in a town hours away from the familiarity of home. And many times I felt alone during the first few weeks, until I began to interact with new people and make new friends through work, church, or in social settings. Oddly enough, it seems like dinner time was when I felt the most alone, whether it was sitting in my apartment eating by myself, or walking into a restaurant where I didn’t know anyone and getting a “table for one.”

But I wouldn’t say I suffered from “loneliness.” Perhaps initially I experienced social loneliness---a “perceived deficit in the quality of social connections,” but not emotional or spiritual loneliness. The Bible addresses loneliness by emphasizing God’s enduring presence, the importance of community, and the sufficiency of Jesus Christ as a source of comfort. It teaches that while loneliness is a real and painful human experience, Christians are never truly abandoned, as God promises to be with us. Even if we should feel forsaken by people, the Bible reassures that God will not leave or abandon us. Scripture encourages believers to trust in God’s constant presence and seek Christ’s comfort and strength, as seen in Isaiah 41:10. Jesus experienced loneliness, but found comfort in His Father’s presence, reminding us that even in abandonment,

The Bible teaches that while loneliness is a real and painful human experience, Christians are never truly abandoned, as God promises to be with us.

we can find solace in God’s companionship.

Christians are called to reach out to others who are lonely, share their own struggles, and build deeper relationships to combat isolation. When feelings of loneliness arise, the Bible encourages turning to God in prayer, seeking God’s presence and guidance. Reading and memorizing Bible verses can provide comfort and a reminder of God’s faithfulness during lonely times.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for addressing loneliness among Americans, we should recognize as men of Christ that we can offer friendship, support, and comfort to those we know are experiencing environmental factors in their lives that may create a feeling of loneliness: a college student leaving home, a person who lost their job, a grieving widow or widower, or so many other conditions or situations.

But here’s something very interesting: while loneliness can affect individuals of all ages, studies show that some age groups are more vulnerable to experiencing feelings of isolation and disconnection.

According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, young adults aged 18-24 report feeling lonely at higher rates than other age groups. In fact, 25% of young adults report feeling lonely “often” or “always.” This may be due in part to factors such as transitioning to college or entering the workforce, which can disrupt social connections and routines. However, older adults aged 65 and over are also at high risk for chronic loneliness due to factors such as retirement, loss of social connections, and mobility limitations.

By understanding the unique challenges faced by different age groups, we can work toward creating more inclusive and supportive communities for all.

As Brothers Andrew, that’s our mission, right?



GET READY FOR ST. ANDREW'S DAY NOVEMBER 30

St. Andrew's Day, celebrated on November 30, honors Saint Andrew the Apostle — the fisherman from Galilee who became one of Jesus' closest followers and Scotland's patron saint. For the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, this feast day is more than a historical remembrance. It is an invitation to live out Andrew's example of faith, humility, and service. Observing St. Andrew's Day can become a meaningful opportunity for the men in your Brotherhood Chapter or men's ministry to strengthen their discipleship, fellowship, and witness.

The story of Andrew begins at the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus called him, Andrew did not hesitate. He left his nets and followed, later bringing his brother Peter to meet Jesus. That simple act of introducing another to Christ captures the heart of St. Andrew's Day: evangelism born from relationship and faith. Brothers can begin their observance by reflecting on Andrew's readiness to share Christ. A special morning devotion or prayer breakfast could center on the theme, "Come and see" — the very words Andrew spoke when he found the Savior. In the spirit of Andrew, this day can be a time of inviting new men to join you as you share the upcoming plans you have around the Brotherhood's mission focus around Prayer, Study, and Service.

After worship and prayer, you and your Brothers might turn reflection into a day of action. Andrew's



example challenges believers to be fishers of men, so outreach is a fitting tribute. Visiting hospitals, prisons, or inadequately housed persons to offer encouragement and prayer could help bring Andrew's spirit to life in your community. Even small gestures — sharing a meal with someone who is lonely, helping a struggling neighbor, or mentoring a young man — mirror Andrew's quiet but powerful witness.

Fellowship is another important aspect of the day. St. Andrew was known for his humility and cooperation; he worked alongside others rather than seeking attention for himself. A men's fellowship evening could be organized, featuring

Continued on next page.



Proposed Changes to be Considered at Brotherhood of St. Andrew National Council Meeting, December 6

MAKE SURE YOU READ THE **JULY 2025** ISSUE OF THE ST. ANDREW'S CROSS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST. ANDREW NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING ON DECEMBER 6, 2025. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS AND BYLAW CHANGES ARE TO BE CONSIDERED.

faith storytelling and perhaps a shared meal of fish, symbolizing Andrew's trade. Such gatherings remind participants that faith grows stronger in community. Discussion could focus on how to live as modern disciples in work, family, and service.

Worship experiences can also include symbolic acts that honor St. Andrew's life. Lighting candles in the shape of the St. Andrew's cross — the diagonal "X" on which he was said to have been martyred — can serve as a reminder of sacrifice and steadfast faith. Brothers could take turns reading passages about calling, obedience, and service, such as Matthew 4:18–20 or John 1:35–42. Singing hymns that celebrate mission and discipleship, followed by a moment of silent reflection, could help deepen the spiritual experience.

Finally, St. Andrew's Day offers a time for renewal. Brothers can use the day to examine their personal calling around Prayer, Study, and Service. Where is God asking me to cast my nets today? What relationships can I nurture for Christ's sake? What can I learn today that would help me to become a better or more faithful person? What acts of courage or humility can I embrace? These questions echo Andrew's own journey from fisherman to apostle.



In observing St. Andrew's Day through prayer, service, fellowship, and reflection, Brothers not only honor our namesake but emphasize the ongoing call to follow Christ wholeheartedly. Like Andrew, our Brothers are invited to lead others to the light of faith — quietly, faithfully, and with open hearts.

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS AND STORIES

ST. ANDREW'S CROSS loves to share photos and news from you or your Brotherhood group. Send them along anytime. Here are a few basic ideas to help you.

We welcome...

- General stories and photos about your Chapter or men's ministry activities.
- Stories and photos about your Province meetings or activities.
- Reflections about how you solved a common Brotherhood challenge, such as building attendance or increasing involvement in your project or ministry.
- Points of pride about your Chapter milestones.
- Personal spiritual or biblical reflections.
- Ideas related to the Brotherhood seven areas of mission focus.
- Stories about how you helped mobilize partnerships in your community.
- Practical tips/helps related to common Brotherhood activities out of your own expertise or experience.
- Photos of Brothers you have encountered in other places. For example—at a church you attended during your summer vacation.

Send your contributions in standard MSWord 12 point type with no formatting.

- Attach photos—don't embed them in your story.
- Attach a separate Word document with photo ID's, from left to right, that correspond to your photos. Don't forget to double check the spelling of any names you include. If it isn't obvious, describe what we are seeing in your photo/s and where/when they were taken.
- Email your material to editor@brothersandrew.net. If you have questions or just want to brainstorm an idea, call Kathy at 502-345-6406.

*For all you do to make ST. ANDREW'S CROSS
fun and informative to read, thank you!*

STAY IN THE CONVERSATION

Stay Connected with the
Brotherhood of St. Andrew



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