



May 1, 2020

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## **Wear a Mask for Jesus**

When we consider these days, they are not ordinary. We are called to new patterns of life, forced into modes that quickly shift between preserving ourselves and protecting others. It seems strange to go about as if we both have COVID-19 and are very vulnerable to it, yet we know that this is necessary. We also know that the impact of this virus is altogether, devastatingly real.

The one thing that has become clear, this is not going away soon. We are too used to getting sick, bundling up with Ramen Noodles and Green Tea for a few days and then moving on. This is more than simply a cold or flu season. This is something that has not been seen for generations. Until we create, test, manufacture, and fully distribute a vaccine for this, it will shape our world for years to come.

I don't want to think about it.

I want to hide my head under a blanket and binge watch Netflix until everything is over.

That is one thing that I cannot do, we cannot do. This is a time when we have the conditions of Matthew 25:31-46 laid before us. In this passage Jesus also describes people hungry, thirsty, naked, isolated, naked, sick, and imprisoned and repeats the refrain. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

This means, when we bring food/groceries/toilet paper and other necessities to our neighbors whose mobility or vulnerability we are bringing Jesus those things necessary to life. When we find ways to reach out to those who are alone and exposed by the necessary response to the pandemic, we are extending welcome, wrapping them in God's love, and embracing Christ, too. When we find ways to connect with people who are directly affected by COVID-19, on both sides of the healthcare system, and recognize their essential humanity and seek to understand their struggles, we are connecting with Jesus and taking part in the ministry that he calls us all to.

Even the weight of writing these words makes me want to throw another layer on and bury myself even deeper. Yet, I know that whenever I am reaching out in safe and helpful ways, I am serving God. Whenever, I don the mask at a shop, I am humbling myself for the support and protection of others. When we avoid large gatherings, God is thankful that we are not

doing anything to spread the virus, but instead are taking those extra precautions to protect the vulnerable.

When I look at the precautions, the masks, and the change in routines through this lens; everything we do in these extra-ordinary days, to prevent transmission of the virus is service to God.

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## God's Work, (Wash) Our Hands

### Five ways to live out your faith during COVID-19

Saint Andrew's mission statement has four pillars: worship, learning, witness, and service. The last two, witness and service, sometimes feel elusive to us - especially when isolation and social distancing make us feel more alone. But rest assured, we are not. Christ-like love takes on all kinds of forms. Here are five ways you can witness your faith, active in love and serve your neighbors during this time of pandemic.

#### **Wear a mask. Wearing a mask is not about you.**

Research suggests that wearing a mask is NOT about preventing from getting the infection yourself - it's about you masking to make sure that if you have the infection - you're not giving it to others. As many as 25% of people have the infection - but are asymptomatic. That's a good thing. But if we can prevent from passing along something we don't even know we may have with one simple step, it's worth it.

#### **Get the care you need.**

Our healthcare facilities and doctors offices all have hotlines, procedures, and protocols to protect you. If you are sick in any way and in need of care, don't hesitate to make a call. Or if there's a doubt or a question in your mind about what a visit would look like, call. Putting off care that is needed can impact you mentally, physically, and emotionally - which in turn can impact you spiritually. Oftentimes there are good telehealth options available, including a visit with a counselor. Jesus shares the greatest commandment, to love our neighbor as *ourselves*.

#### **Cultivate patience.**

It's hard to wait to gather with family or friends for any reason. It's difficult when relationships with others seem to wear and tare on your spirits every day. Here are some good questions to ask when you're feeling impatient. *What's making you feel so hurried?* In other words - what's the real source of the irritation or pain? Anger and irritation are contagious - *How can you set the tone for your day? What is your relationship to "discomfort"?* While comfort is desirable, pain has its purpose - it pushes us to find solutions. In times like these when much is uncomfortable, how might we befriend discomfort to help us settle into more patience with ourselves or others. Go to God with your burdens, too. God can take 'em.

#### **Take a break.**

Life's changes are a little unrelenting right now. How we shop, learn, worship, eat, and live are different than just a few months ago. There's a reason you're tired. Many of the pathways in your brain are re-routing and it takes energy to do things in new ways. It's not necessary to respond to a text or an e-mail right away. You can take a break and go for a walk, read a book, take a nap, or watch a tv show. Life's "work" will wait for you and people are understanding. God put breaks into the design of creation: remember the sabbath!

## **Listen to the advice of Leaders like the Marathon County Health Department and the Wisconsin Department of Health.**

Many of us are resilient in problem solving but not many of us are epidemiologists or public health experts. Saint Andrew is doing everything it can to be aware of what the health care community is suggesting at this time. We are connected to leaders across the church and the state and have a contact at the Marathon County Health Department who is guiding us - even as we make plans to resume gathering one day. God has given us these leaders as a gift. Let's pray for them.

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## **Helpful Hints for Worshipping Online**

Worshipping online is just not the same as meeting together to worship God, sing together, or share in communion. These are odd times - singing at your screen, hunting for the live stream, trouble shooting technical difficulties.

One of the best things you can do to make sure you don't miss a live stream is to *Like* or *Follow* the Saint Andrew page. Then watch for an alert to tell you that worship is about to begin. If the live stream fails or updates, a new alert is sent that will prompt you to the right live stream.

At 8:30 am each Sunday, look for a post that will contain the bulletin, a link to share an offering, and "At home" Sunday school. Settle into a comfortable place, breathe deeply and welcome God's spirit into your living room or kitchen. When you're ready for worship say "hello" in the live stream comments or test the "like" or "love" button.

If you are not comfortable with Facebook or worshipping online, check out the website: [www.salc-wausau.org](http://www.salc-wausau.org). The weekly bulletin and "taking faith home" are posted there and can be read as you worship God in your own way. God gathers us together even when we are apart as we praise him for the life and peace God brings!

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## **High School Senior Recognition**

Saint Andrew would like to recognize the high school seniors in our congregation. On Sunday, May 17 during the 9:00 service, your confirmation mentors, pastors, and the church would like to surround you with a special prayer and blessing in worship and celebrate with you all of your accomplishments. We would also love to learn and celebrate your plans for the future, whatever those may be: working in town, heading off to college, serving our country, taking a year to think about what lies ahead, etc.

Please fill out this short [google form](#) and upload a picture that we can share with SALC.

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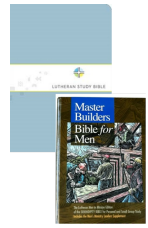
## **Sparkhouse Family Sunday School**

Sunday school is now online! We are inviting families to take advantage of the free Sunday school lesson offered weekly through Sparkhouse.

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## Weekly Bible Studies

The weekly men's and women's bible studies are still going strong and meeting via Zoom. Both groups meet on Wednesday mornings - the men's group at 7:15 am and the women's group at 9:30 am. If you would like to tune into the men's group, [click here for the link](#) or contact Bob Wiederhoeft at [bob.wiederhoeft@gmail.com](mailto:bob.wiederhoeft@gmail.com). To join in the women's group [click here for the link](#) or contact Pr. Jenn at [pastorjenn@salc-wausau.org](mailto:pastorjenn@salc-wausau.org).



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## The Weekly Wave in Your Inbox or Your Mailbox

During this time, we are not mailing the Network Newsletter because it requires significant office time and collaboration. Instead you can expect The Weekly Wave to hit your email inboxes on Fridays with a brief pastoral letter and any other points or pieces of communication about activities or updates.

We recognize not everyone has e-mail so will mail paper copies of the Weekly Wave to those who are on this mailing list for the Network bi-weekly. If you know of someone who is not receiving updates because they do not have internet or e-mail, please contact Joy Mitchell to add their name to the mailing list: [joy@salc-Wausau.org](mailto:joy@salc-Wausau.org).

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## Fraud Alert

Over the last year, several different attempts have been made by online scammers to use Pr. Jenn's information for personal gain. These requests have come to members in the form of texts or e-mails that are similar to Pr. Jenn's contact information. Usually the scammer requests that gift cards be purchased and submitted online for people who are "sick." These messages are usually very formal and will sometimes include misspellings or improper grammar.

Pr. Jenn, Pr. Justin, and the staff at Saint Andrew will never ask for personal favors of any kind that involve gift cards or individual contributions. Please be vigilant and double check with Pr. Jenn if you receive such a message. The best thing to do if you receive a text or an e-mail from a supposed scammer is to delete it right away.

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## Face Masks Available for Saint Andrew Members

As things continue to shift and change almost daily, so are efforts to change with it. The quilting ladies would like to offer face masks to Saint Andrew members. All you need

to do is call or email Linda at 715-573-4866 or [lindaksp@aol.com](mailto:lindaksp@aol.com) to let her know you would like one. When masks are finished they will be put in a plastic bag with your name on it and placed in a plastic tote outside the north entrance of the church.



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## Submit Your Video Easter Greeting

Send your Easter greeting to the folks at Saint Andrew by creating a short 5-10 second video and emailing it to [salc.live.stream@gmail.com](mailto:salc.live.stream@gmail.com) to be included in the Sunday livestream. Please call or text Pr. Justin at 715-544-8925 with questions or technical support.



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