



August 14, 2020

Shaped by Mission

Following a mission is hard. Jesus' mission to usher in the Kingdom of God gave his life a cruciform shape. God will shape us, too, through service to our mission. It may not be cruciform, but it is still hard. In the entire Gospel of Luke, there is one person whose life is completely shaped by Jesus' mission: Zacchaeus.

We think of Zacchaeus as a little man, when in reality he is a spiritual giant. Jesus' mission shaped him into more than just a tree climber. He gave half his possession to the poor, then repaid people he cheated 4 times what he stole. If he only gained 10% of his wealth from cheating people, then he gave away 40% of what he had. But this was after Zacchaeus gave 50% of his wealth to the poor. Jesus' mission shaped Zacchaeus's life by joyfully giving 90%, or more, of what he had away. This didn't gain him anything, but was done in response to the gift of faith that we share with Zacchaeus.

Saint Andrew Lutheran Church has a mission and a vision to be “Open to All.” This is what shapes us. This is our final determination in the decisions our leadership makes, but these decisions are not always simple or easy. “Open to All” pulls us in at least two different directions.

We are pulled towards the Open, to throw open the doors and rings the bells and call all who feel alone and isolated and in need of companionship and fellowship to stream into our sanctuary to praise God. We recognize that such gatherings have been incidents of transmission and we know what members of our congregation have gone through because Covid-19 seized the world this year.

We are pulled towards the “All,” knowing that planning and preparation will create a clean environment where more and more people will feel safe enough and comfortable enough gathering with us in person. We know that doing this well will prevent us from having to close the doors again. We appreciate that “All” also includes those who are already willing to gather, those whose spiritual struggles are soothed in the gathering, and those who cannot access our livestream services.

This is why we are publishing Marathon County’s health information for the past 4 weeks in the Weekly Wave. We want to share with you what we are tracking as we discern how God is calling us to live out “Open to All” for such a time as this.

If Marathon County’s burden drops to 50 and we have a clean facility, we can begin to gather in larger numbers. If we can sustain a burden under 50 for four more weeks, then we can begin to gather in the building for worship. These deliberate steps towards bridging the gap between Open and All have other practical factors such as having staff, volunteers, cleaning products, and procedures in place to ensure that when we are Open, All will find a clean and sanitary facility.

Our mission not only shapes our leadership’s decision making, but also our lives. While we feel like we have already given away half of ourselves in not gathering from worship for the past four months. There is a real opportunity to give out community four times more than we have taken and serve in a meaningful way.

We all have the ability to help with the mission by wearing masks and social distancing to help lower the burden in Marathon County. We have a volunteer opportunity because Shannon will be reaching out to volunteers to help conduct a deep cleaning of our facility, and to be prepared to clean the spaces we will use for worship when the time comes. We all have the ability to help prepare not just Saint Andrew, but the entire county to open and open safely.

While we have this plan in place now, the Plan to Gather Taskforce is keeping their eyes out for developments that may change the pace at which we are

moving. Updates will be posted regularly in the Weekly Wave and the latest Plan to Gather documents will have a home on our website so that you can watch the bridge between Open and All be built and know where we are in the process.

Pr. Justin Smoot (he/him)

SALC COVID-19 Tracker

Here are the Marathon County numbers regarding COVID-19. We hope that providing this information will help keep all of the congregation informed and lead to a better understanding of progress with our Plan to Gather.

Date	Burden	Burden Number	Trajectory	SALC Status
7/22/2020	High	130	No change	Phase One
7/29/2020	High	150	No change	Phase One
8/5/2020	High	144.7	No change	Phase One
8/12/2020	High	111.3	No change	Phase One

Cultivating Kindness

I cannot always wrap my head around the current situation we are all in, as we are not necessarily meant to be separated from each other on a regular basis. As Christians, we are meant to gather, to worship, and to live in faith with one another. I am a firm believer that kindness matters. God did everything for us by sending Jesus to die on the cross-there is no act that is more kind than this. Because Jesus showed us the ultimate act of kindness, we are also called to show each other kindness. I live to serve; however, I have found myself struggling with is how to maintain my acts of kindness while unable to be in person with others. In doing some reading, I came across Ephesians 4:32-



“31 Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, 32 and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

This got me thinking: how can I be kind to people from afar? I love giving people gifts, but my favorite thing to do is bake people treats. In thinking of the safety of my loved ones, I have felt stifled in my acts of kindness. This led me to this question: how can I cultivate kindness in a time of disconnect? So I got to thinking. Here is a small list of ways to cultivate kindness in a contact-free way.

- Write Letters

I have always been a huge fan of writing letters and sending greeting cards. Being able to receive a little piece of physical mail might not seem like much but is a small reminder that someone is loved and cared for.

- Phone Calls/Video Calls

In the age of technology, it is so easy to send a quick text or instant message. So many of us have likely been glued to our screens. There might be an understandable reason to want to take some time to disconnect, however, I’ve found myself really enjoying intentional time to set aside to catch up and reconnect. I have had wonderful phone calls with family and friends where we have completely lost track of time and really connected.

- Reconnect with God’s Creation

Kindness is not just limited to other people. We must remember that we were put on earth as stewards to tend to all of creation. Whether or not it’s weeding a garden, going out to watch a sunrise, or picking up garbage outdoors, we are servants of the earth-it deserves to receive our kindness as well.

Although there are times that we cannot be together, that does not mean we cannot maintain our sense of community. I hope you remember to release bitterness, wrath, and anger this week and to meet those around you with unending love and kindness.

Michelle (she/her)

Supply Drive to Benefit Aspirus Family House

Saint Andrew is organizing a supply drive in support of the Aspirus Family House as part of the VBS lesson on Service. The Family House is looking to stock up on their basic necessities such as: paper goods, cleaning supplies, and prepackaged snacks.

View their full wish list [here](#):

Donations can be placed in the plastic bin outside the north (Chapel) entrance labeled "Family House Donations" through ***Saturday, August 15.***

Don't Forget: Confirmation Parents Meeting

We will be hosting a zoom meeting for parents of 7th and 8th grade confirmation students on ***Tuesday, August 18 at 6:15 pm.*** This meeting will be to go over our plans and expectations for hosting in-person confirmation classes this fall and to answer your questions. If you still need to register your student for confirmation, you can do so [here](#).

Zoom Meeting Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84831366348?pwd=S0lzNWRUZWxTUHhqSTUra1BPRkJKQT09>

Meeting ID: 848 3136 6348

Password: 574493

A Reminder: Lutheran World Relief (LWR) Quilts and School Bags

Thank you to everyone who made quilts and school bags for Lutheran World Relief this last year! With the shipping date soon approaching in October, completed quilts and school bags will need

to be ***returned by September 1*** so they can be prepared and boxed for shipment.

Please place them in the plastic bin labeled "Items to Pick Up or Drop Off" which is located outside the north (Chapel) entrance. If your items are too large for the bin, please call the church office at 715-842-3333 and arrangements will be made to meet you at church to receive your quilts and/or school bags. Again, thank you to all who have shared their time, talent and gifts to make another shipment possible for those in need in other countries!



Fall Programming

tRIBe (to Remember I Belong)

Sunday school reimagined! Starting in September small-group learning opportunities will be offered for families and members of all ages! SALC will provide the curriculum and resources for everyone to succeed to grow in their faith outside of the traditional classroom setting. Groups of around 10 people (adults and kids) will meet weekly to engage in a 12-week independently run program that covers the life of Jesus. For more information and to register: <https://www.salc-wausau.org/learning/sunday-school/> **Register online by August 31**

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