



October 2, 2020

Dear Pastors, Deacons and Lay Leaders,

Grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

I write following the synod assembly this past Saturday where the Rev. Anne Edison-Albright was elected bishop of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin. Bishop-elect Edison-Albright currently serves as campus pastor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, though previously she served a congregation in this synod, Redeemer Lutheran, Stevens Point.

On Sunday I spoke with Bishop-elect Edison-Albright, congratulated her on her election and pledged that I and my staff will do everything we can to support her in this transition and ensure a strong start-up for her ministry among you beginning December 1.

As I noted in remarks to the assembly, this office is going through a number of staff transitions. Ben Stepanek, Communications Manager, resigned his position to join his spouse in her new call in Colorado. We were awaiting the bishop election and a churchwide reorganization before determining the future of the position of Director of

Evangelical Mission. Finally, the call of Pastor Amy Engebose as Bishop Associate is co-terminus with my call. All of these positions and future staffing will be addressed by the Bishop-elect in due time. Thus we ask your patience and understanding as we begin the transition to a new chapter in the life of the synod.

For me personally I am in need of some time to rest and reflect, to ponder and pray about all these matters. I am grateful for good health, energy, and drive. I will wait to see to what God might be calling me and what God might have in mind for the next chapter of my life.

I have greatly enjoyed serving as bishop of this synod, working with all of you and the elected leadership and staff. Anita and I will cherish the memories and the friendships. There is still much work to be done in the weeks ahead for all of us. So I invite your prayers for Anita, me and my staff and for the Bishop-elect and her family as we all transition to a new day.

In Christ's love and peace,

Bp Jerry

Bishop Gerald L Mansholt  
East Central Synod of Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
[16 Tri-Park Way](#)  
[Appleton, Wisconsin 54914](#)  
920-734-5381 (office)

---

Dear church,

I want to write you from my heart and tell you how I long to be together face to face in these odd and difficult times.

I'd like to stand in "the handshake line" after church and hear about your broken ankle or learn about how I can continue to pray for your mom. What I wouldn't give to shove a piece of wine-soaked "green bread" into my pocket to keep visitors from questioning whether or not our communion bread is "moldy." I'd



love to surprise a little boy by knowing his name and asking about his day. It would be nice to sit after service and have some coffee together with a mug that says “World’s Greatest Grandpa.” I’d like to feel goosebumps from the choir singing and see relief on the face of a person who really needed the peace and assurance communion provides.

These little losses, and a thousand others like them, add together into one large pool of grief. I know you feel it, too. Many of us are doing the very best we can considering the great amount of loss that’s taking place. Grief is a process with several stages.

1. **Denial.** Denial may just be the reason you see your friend posting pictures on social media at a party without masks on or social distancing, as though the whole pandemic were a hoax. Denial might be the reason you carry on with plans anyway, even though you might feel in your gut it is better to stay home. Remember, denial is a coping mechanism that the body puts in place to keep a person from feeling too many emotions at one time and allows time for a person to adjust to how things are now going to be. Listening or simply being patient with friends or family in denial can help people cope with reality in time.

2. **Anger.** Anger is a secondary emotion. It is always sourced in something deeper like loss, confusion, or frustration, and is often more of a state than a stage. When grief is expressed as anger, it can lead to violent or aggressive behavior expressed as disappointment, bullying, or more frequently, keyboard warriors that just need to get the anger out of them by telling you how they are angry with you or your decisions or with the world. To avoid anger from coming out “sideways”, seek support or a creative outlet; vent, cry, isolate – do what you need to to let anger out so it doesn’t fester, create personal injury, or injury to others.

3. **Bargaining.** The normal reaction to the helplessness and vulnerability that comes through loss is an attempt to regain control. At this stage of grief, we start the hypotheticals... “If only ...” we might say. Or we might attempt a trade in this stage – “If you do this, then I’ll do this...” The truth is, no amount of negotiation can stave off the inevitable outcome of the loss. And when the bargaining doesn’t work it can lead to...

4. **Despair.** Pr. Gary once caught me crying as I coped with several complex losses at the same time. As the tears flowed, he told me several times, “It’s okay to cry... It’s good to cry.” Different than sadness, although certainly sadness is included, despair is the empty feeling that nothing in life can be seen separately from the loss. Every moment, every thought encounters grief and this is exhausting. “Is there any point to keep on going?” It is important to remember that overwhelming sadness is a very appropriate response to overwhelming loss. At this phase, it’s important to know when to seek professional help. If this phase lingers a long while, if suicidal ideations begin to surface, if consequences from this stage begin to impact everyday life, it’s

important to find help through an objective person trained to help this individual. Being present, showing love, and connecting your loved one to resources is an important step.

5. **Acceptance.** Acceptance doesn't ignore the loss or make everything feel right again; it simply means that a person can look honestly at a new reality and resume responsibility for themselves and their actions. It's even possible to reach contentment when this stage is met as people realize that even in spite of the loss, there can and will be good days ahead.

Grief in the time of Covid is happening for each of us individually, but there is also a corporate grief process to account for that is showing itself in various ways in society. It's at times like these when survival kicks in and we fight, flee, or freeze. The best thing to do when you or when someone you love is grieving is to just "be there." To be gentle with one another and ourselves, to listen, to encourage, to care... and finally, to trust that the words that Jesus said in Matthew 5 are true, "Blessed are those who mourn. They will be comforted."

Dear church, we will get through this with God's help and with each other.

Pr. Jenn

---

## Who You Are

All of us are created in the image of God, uniquely formed to play a part in God's world. Whether or not we know it, God is continuously working through us to do good work for the glory of the kingdom of Heaven. This is easier to realize when we are together, seeing each other, communicating well, and involved in each other's lives. While being separated and isolated, removed from normal communities we are involved in, self-doubt steps in. How do we remember who we are while we are not surrounded by the people we know and love?



Identity is not always attached to community; however, many people find hope in being surrounded and supported by others who are like-minded and share similar life

experiences. I have been struggling personally with feeling disconnected from the communities I have come to love. Despite this, being isolated has given me ample time to get rid of all distractions and break down the different parts of my identity.

I am a bookworm. I've spent countless hours reading titles across many different genres to learn new things and escape into new and different fictional worlds. This fuels my love of writing and storytelling, both things that inspired my studies in college as well as my current work.

I am an avid lover of the outdoors. I've had the time to take hikes at Rib Mountain, go for jogs on different outdoor trails, and taken long drives in the beautiful Northwoods on sunny afternoons. The opportunity to appreciate and absorb all elements of creation- lakes, rivers, hills, and trees, has continued to remind me of the immaculate elements of the earth that God has created. I deeply value my role as a steward to the earth as God intended. The peace and serenity that I have found while being deep in creation has been immeasurable.

I am a musician. I have studied music consistently since the age of four and it is truly something I cannot live without. I have performed music in unforgettable places with very talented musicians. I have played instruments in orchestras, bands, musical pits, sung in choirs, vocal jazz groups, as a soloist, and have shared my gifts to serve God in many ways. I feel closest to God when I am deep in song. I find solace and peace when sharing musical experiences with my loved ones. I feel a call to be a musician deep within me.

I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community. I love someone for their heart, their soul, and the light within them. I feel called to let everyone know that queer people do exist in the body of Christ and are working for the glory of the Lord every day. It is so important for everyone in this community at Saint Andrew to feel loved, supported, and represented within this congregation. I hope that those of you who also identify in this group find comfort in your call to serve Christ and don't let anything stop you on your journey to the cross. I have felt nothing but joy and peace as I have come to terms with this part of myself, and especially this: I have been created in God's image, known and loved by Christ deeper than I will ever be able to comprehend.

All these elements (and of course more) come together to make one young woman. A young woman created in the image of Christ; beautifully and wonderfully made. These are things that we all need to be reminded of. All our siblings in Christ are made up of unique attributes, but in the end, we are still created in God's image, being used for the good of the Kingdom every single day. This week, I hope that you remember to realize what makes you unique, special, and fearfully and wonderfully made.

Michelle she/her

---

## Confirmation Worship Rescheduled

When it comes to the end of the confirmation journey – the goal is to provide a moment for our 9<sup>th</sup> graders and families to experience an affirmation of the promises made in baptism. This blessing from God through family members, Godparents, pastors, and friends strengthens, nurtures, and sustains students to continue with God in their life of faith. It is just one stop along the way – but we hope, a meaningful milestone for everyone involved. Since we are yet at Phase 1 of the Saint Andrew *Plan to Gather*, and gathering in groups of any size is not recommended we have made the difficult decision to **postpone confirmation worship to the afternoon of Sunday, May 23, 2021** – the day of Pentecost. [This letter](#) details opportunities for those involved in 9<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation to end the confirmation journey well and with intention.

---

## An Update from Crossways Camping Ministries

Thrivent members are such generous supporters of camping ministry. We give thanks for all of the partnerships that Thrivent and Thrivent members have made with camp. If you are a Thrivent member and haven't utilized your two Thrivent Action Teams for 2020, we would love to partner with you to use them in supporting camp. Remember if your Action Teams go unused at the end of the calendar year, they expire and two new Action Teams are available at the new year. Site Directors are ready to give you details for service opportunities and projects that take our ministry further than we are able to alone.

Contact [Jess@CrosswaysCamps.org](mailto:Jess@CrosswaysCamps.org), (Imago Dei Village),  
[Robyn@CrosswaysCamps.org](mailto:Robyn@CrosswaysCamps.org) (Pine Lake Camp), or  
[Ben@CrosswaysCamps.org](mailto:Ben@CrosswaysCamps.org) (Waypost) for more information.

---

## Social Ministry Summer Update

While it seems that church has been closed, God has been working through the ministries at Saint Andrew Lutheran Church to do some wonderful things. The Social Ministry has been consistently providing for different groups in need in the Wausau community including:

- Provided six bunk beds for Wausau Keeping Area Teens Safe Inc.
- Provided assistance with laundry and other tasks throughout the summer at the Wausau Warming Center
- Prepared and served eighty meals at the September 20 Community Dinner



-Continued work with the Saint Andrew quilting group to send quilts and school bags for Lutheran World Relief, to be loaded on October 3

The Saint Andrew food pantry is closed, however, you can contact the church office for assistance and it will be provided. Fair Trade Coffee is still available and can be ordered online.

## Plan to Gather Weekly

### Update: 9/30/2020

For now, Saint Andrew remains in Phase One of the Plan to Gather. As soon as there is a consistent downward trend, we will move forward to Phase Two.

# SALC COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 9/30/2020

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	SALC Status
9/9	63.1	No change	Phase One
9/16	101.7	Increasing	Phase One
9/23	236	Increasing	Phase One
9/30	461.6	Increasing	Phase One

**Current Burden Status: Very High**

[About](#)   [Worship](#)   [Learning](#)   [Calendar](#)   [Contact Us](#)

**Saint Andrew Lutheran Church**  
150202 County Road NN | Wausau, WI 54401  
(715) 842-3333  
[office@salc-wausau.org](mailto:office@salc-wausau.org)  
[www.salc-wausau.org](http://www.salc-wausau.org)

