



November 24, 2020

O, Give Thanks Unto the Lord!

Psalm 136 recounts all of the reasons that God's people have had reason to thank God throughout the ages. God who created the heavens and the earth is the same God who liberates and delivers. God who restores and rescues is the same God who provides good food for God's children. You can get lost in the nature of that psalm as the repeated phrase, especially in the King James Version, repeats again and again: *His mercies endureth forever!*

This week we pause for gratitude. Even this year, filled with pandemic and politics – we pause for just a moment to breathe. To thanks God for the gift of life, the breath in our lungs, hearts that beat, fingers that move, lives that love.

Here at Saint Andrew we pause as the season turns from Pentecost green to Advent Blue. Even as the seasons change, what does not change is our gratitude for you. For all that you share, all that you do, all those you love and serve, thanks be to God. Happy Thanksgiving.

Pr. Jenn

Thanksgiving Week Office Hours

In the coming week, many will give thanks for the blessings we've received from God. The pastors remain thankful for the staff at Saint Andrew who have worked so diligently through this pandemic. Please join them in praying for their health and wellbeing in body, mind, and spirit as many will be using PTO in the coming week.

Monday, Nov. 24 – Tuesday, Nov. 25

8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 26 – Friday, Nov. 28

Office Closed

As many return from Thanksgiving gatherings, out of care and love for our staff, please be mindful of your visits to Saint Andrew in person if you have been in large groups of people or are feeling under the weather. Thank you for your ongoing care, love, and support.



SALC Military Families

Are you or a family member currently serving in the military? SALC would like to be in touch with you for Christmas. Please send in the name and contact information of

your loved one to info@salc-wausau.org to receive something special this Christmas season.

Confirmation Update

Through much discernment and under the advisement of the Saint Andrew Plan to Gather Task Force, we will be suspending all confirmation classes until **January 13, 2021**. For consistency, we are suspending both in-person and virtual meetings to help ensure students are all on the same page when we resume.

Advent Resources

This year's Advent theme is inspired by the angels' message in the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke. *Do Not Be Afraid* "explores what it looks like to hold hope when life feels really uncertain, to bring peace in the face of fear, to practice joy when everything seems burdensome, and to choose love, when sometimes, it's just really hard". To help engage in and dive deeper into Advent this year, we have a variety of resources and programs available:



Illustrated Devotion- a self-guided devotion for individuals or small groups that includes readings and discussion questions. Download the full devotional [here](#).

Advent for Families- weekly devotional with readings, discussion questions, a craft or activity, and an advent calendar. Download the full resource [here](#).

Virtual Christmas Pageant- A fun program telling the story of Jesus' birth. We will be asking members to help contribute videos that will be edited together to create a Christmas Program that can be premiered on Christmas Eve. More information coming!

Adult Advent Study- We will be hosting a virtual study group to allow for deeper discussion of our Advent readings. Join us on Tuesday evenings from 8-9 PM starting December 1st.

Online Advent Study -We will be hosting a virtual study group to allow for deeper discussion of our Advent readings and our theme, "Do Not Be Afraid". Join us on Tuesday evenings from 8:00pm-9:00 pm. Join us for one week or all five; everyone is welcome!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82193247765?pwd=aUFPRmlwenFvWWJ1MUd6OHJTaVY1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 821 9324 7765

Passcode: 640272

Christmas Food Baskets

If you or someone you know would appreciate receiving a Christmas Food Basket (in the form of a Lamb's Fresh Market gift card), please call the church office by **Monday, December 14** at 715-842-3333. Gift cards can be picked up in the church office on **Friday, December 18 between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.**

Plan to Gather Weekly

Update: 11/24/2020

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 11/18/2020

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	Burden Status
10/28	1357.4	Increasing	Very High
11/4	1657.3	Increasing	Very High
11/11	1925.9	Increasing	Critically High
11/18	1903.7	Decreasing	Critically High

Current SALC Status: Phase One

Dear Pastors, Deacons, and Lay Leaders,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

This week begins a time of transition, both in the Church Year and in this office of bishop. The First Sunday of Advent is approaching and the next day, November 30th, will be my last in office as bishop of this synod. The Rev. Anne Edison-Albright will begin serving as bishop of the East Central Synod of Wisconsin on December 1. She and I have been meeting on a weekly basis during this time of transition.

Thanksgiving Day is this week also, so the week is about transitions and thanksgiving. For people of faith Thanksgiving is more than a national holiday for feasting and counting our material blessings. Thanksgiving is a time when we remember the Giver behind the gifts. It's more than a day and more like a lifestyle. Profound grace leads to deep gratitude. We praise God the Creator and Redeemer whose coming in Jesus Christ evokes an even deeper thanksgiving within and among us.

This year we observe Thanksgiving in the midst of this awful pandemic, when people are suffering from loneliness, sickness, disruption, economic hardship, and sorrow. At times like these I am reminded of the line in the liturgy of the Great Thanksgiving that says, "...it is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should *at all times and in all places* give thanks and praise..." And then we do, singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy" to God who has come to us in the flesh, in Jesus Christ, and keeps coming to us in water and Word and bread and wine. We give thanks and praise because of the Good News of God's Promise of eternal help and healing for this wounded and broken world.

As my time in office comes to an end I give thanks to God for the opportunity to have served among you. Moving to Wisconsin was never in my bucket list of things to do. But Anita and I both have enjoyed living here immensely and serving among you. When Paul wrote letters to those Christians living in places like Philippi and Thessalonica, he often wrote with deep love and affection, his emotion pouring forth. I feel the same way, giving thanks to God for all of you. I am so deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served in this part of Christ's Church, to have served among and with you, and to have experienced this part of God's creation. I will cherish the memories and rejoice in the many ways you have blessed my life and ministry.

I came to this synod in January of 2014, a frigid polar vortex with blizzard conditions blowing from the north the very day I arrived. I served about 5 months as interim bishop and then was elected to a six year term. As I look back over these years, I take some measure of satisfaction in having led the synod through those tumultuous times to better days of peace and unity. With staff and synod council we sought to focus our energies upon the mission to which God has called us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paraphrasing one of the Church's prayers, I pray that wherever we have missed the mark, God will reform things; wherever we have been right, God will strengthen it; and wherever we have inadvertently dropped the ball, God will provide. But I also leave knowing that our time together is finally not measured by successes or failures but by the loving embrace of God's mercy and assurance of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

When I was first elected to the office of bishop in 2001, a more senior bishop sent a note of congratulation along with a quote from St. Augustine. Printed on an 8 ½ by 11 piece of parchment looking paper, the quote read, "the task of the bishop is to keep the Church alert until the coming of Jesus Christ." I have always seen the work of the bishop as primarily tending to the Good News of God in Jesus. While there is oversight of congregations and pastors and deacons, and administrative work and a host of other duties, I have always sought to keep the proclamation of the Word and the

administration of the sacraments central. For this is our life and our hope, and this is the Good News we have to offer the world.

November 30 is the Feast of St. Andrew, brother of Peter and one of the first of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Andrew was a missionary in the Mediterranean world. As we begin a new Church Year and a new chapter in the life of the synod, Andrew is lifted up as an example of our calling to follow Christ in faith and to let the love of God show forth in our lives.

Since my three-year old grandson is named Andrew, with the middle name Gerald, I will add, I take some delight in ending my time as bishop on the 30th of November. My last day as bishop will be one remembering both an apostle of the early Church and the seemingly boundless energy of a three-year old. The faith we share is one that has been passed on, generation unto generation, from those first female evangelists that visited the tomb on Easter morning to us today. We do this work and share this Good News so that the whole world, including lively and life-giving grandchildren and generations after them, may know the hope and healing that is ours in Jesus Christ.

Since people have asked, I will say that at least for the present Anita and I intend to remain living in Appleton. I remain open to serving the Church in some capacity somewhere further down the road. But first there will be days of rest, reflection and prayer. We shall see what God has in mind and entrust our lives and our future to the grace of God.

Finally, I want to assure you of my love and prayers for the synod and for Bishop-elect Anne Edison-Albright. I look forward to her installation when we shall promise to receive her as a servant of God and shepherd in the Church of Jesus Christ. With all of you I will promise "...to pray for her, help and honor her for her work's sake, and strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ."

The peace of Christ be with you all.

Bishop Jerry

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