



December 29, 2020

“Hindsight is 20/20”

I’ve been thinking about that old saying all year long – how good it will feel when the year is brought into some kind of clarity. This, of course, can only be done with the passing of time.

How we navigated this year, the way we sacrificed and yet were kind, innovated when we were tired, spoke our truth when it was very hard, made the tough decisions about who to visit, where to go, and what to do – the way we were at our best and worst as a human species – these things will either vanish with the passing of time or be relegated to a history lesson for students fifty years from now.

As the year comes to an end and 2021 sits on the horizon, here are a few friendly reminders. The pandemic isn’t over, as much as we all want it to be. It’s important we stay vigilant in our care for one another and focused on our mission. With good care to social distance, limit travel, wash hands, and avoid gatherings, we will get to the time when the vaccine will reach us and life together establishes its new rhythms.

The reset you hope for in the new year will come only with intention, prayer, and effort. Whatever the goal: it will not happen without sweat equity. But it must be worthy if it floated to your mind. How can you break down the quarter sized goal into nickels and dimes?

As much as it may seem, 2020 was not all bad. As you review the year that was and put it to rest, where did you find moments of connection with other people? Where did you shine? What lessons about yourselves, others, the world, or God will stick with you?

In May of 1981, renowned Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon delivered a sermon on Psalm 31:5, which says, “My times are in your hands.” He writes,

"My times", that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth-all those are in the hand of the Lord, who arranges and appoints according to his holy will the length of my days, and the darkness of my nights. Storms and calms vary the seasons at the divine appointment. Whether times are reviving or depressing remains with him who is Lord both of time and of eternity; and we are glad it is so.

2020 was a gift from God. We were given time: time to make a difference. Time to discover. Time to love. 2020 was in God’s hands – as is 2021. Happy new year, dear church.

Pr. Jenn

Poinsettias May Be Taken Home

Thank you to all who contributed Christmas poinsettias for the altar. They were beautiful, as always! If you would like to take yours home to enjoy, they may be picked up any time during office hours this week, Monday through Thursday 8:30 am-4:30 pm, on Sunday, January 3, 10:00-10:30 am, or next week.



A Simpler Christmas

2020 was an unconventional year to say the least. The year began with wishes of “clear vision”, strong convictions, and the hope to make it one that was unlike any other. Goals to become stronger, smarter, more compassionate. Many people were ready to make 2020 a year that was meaningfully different; a year of transformation. Then whispers of this unknown virus began on the other side of the world. Little did any of us know how drastically life was about to change.

In March, lockdowns were implemented all over the world. For once, all of humankind was at a standstill. Thoughts of how long this would last, what this virus was, and how serious things were all came to the forefront. The world became still and calm but experienced an undercurrent of fear for the unknown future that was ahead. Maybe this is what the world needed. Maybe we were born for such a time as this.

The soft stillness that was brought forth this Christmas put things into a different perspective. This Christmas, there was no gathering. There was no in-person worship. There were no hugs from family or friends, no shared egg nog and Christmas cookies. There was no big fanfare, no public celebration. Maybe this was to remind us of the matter of Jesus' birth.

Mary and Joseph, two scared young teens, traveled far just to be told there was no room for them to rest. They were offered a cold outdoor space shared with the working animals. No type of medical care was available for Mary during her labor and delivery. Mary and Joseph were not yet married yet were bringing a child into the world. The birth of our Savior was likely welcomed with the bleating of sheep and the blowing of the wind against the stable walls. He was not met with blaring trumpets and crowds of adoring fans; the cry of Jesus' entry into this world likely pierced the silence of the inky black night.

Maybe this Christmas was meant to remind the world about who Jesus truly was. Maybe this Christmas was to remind the world of the quiet simplicity of Jesus' birth. Born as a vulnerable child. Born as a fragile babe. Born to change the lives of everyone in the world to come.

As we enter into this new year, I challenge you to dive deep into learning about who Jesus truly was. To remember how much he sacrificed. To remember how much he served his friends, neighbors, and strangers. To remember that we, too, are called to love so unapologetically, to accept our brothers and sisters in Christ despite our differences, and to reach out to those who are different than us. Love, light, and blessings to you all.

Michelle (she/her)

New Member Orientation to Take Place Virtually

Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 1:00 pm-3:00 pm via Zoom

Membership is about naming a deeper connection of relationship to a community of faith. The benefits of membership include the ability to give voice and vote at congregational meetings, serve in leadership through ministry or council leadership, and assurance of pastoral care for the valleys and mountaintops of life.

New Member Orientation tackles the basics of what it means to be a Lutheran Christian, the history and mission of Saint Andrew, and ways to integrate more deeply through worship, learning, witness, and service. It also gives members a chance to connect to others and begin building relationships. Led virtually for the first time, those interested in membership will be given a link through the free platform, Zoom. If you're interested in participating, call the office or e-mail joy@salc-wausau.org with the subject "New Member" and she will reply with the steps to register.

If you are hesitant to participate virtually and would rather schedule a one-on-one socially distant in-person conversation with the pastors, simply call the office to schedule an appointment, indicating interest in membership.

2021 Annual Meeting Has Been Scheduled

Mark your calendars for February 14, 2021: Be on the lookout for more details to follow soon.

A Thank You for Service Members

As the holiday season continues on, time can feel like it moves slow. Things can feel extra lonely, especially when families are not gathered together. Dear service members, thank you for the sacrifices you make every day to protect and serve. Here is a prayer just for you before and during your deployment:

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces, and all who serve this country at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils that surround them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Lord God of Grace and power, stretch forth your almighty arm to strengthen and protect all those in the armed forces of our country. In the day of battle, watch over them; when peace prevails, guard them from evil; and in good time, bring them safely home. Give them courage and loyalty, and grant that they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Plan to Gather Weekly Update: 12/16/2020

Due to Christmas, the information from December 16 is the most updated information that has been released from the county. For now, Saint Andrew remains in Phase One of the Plan to Gather.

SALC COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 12/16/2020

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	Burden Status
11/25	1444.3	Shrinking	Critically High
12/2	1094.1	Shrinking	Critically High
12/9	974.5	No Change	Very High
12/16	853.5	Shrinking	Very High

Current SALC Status: Phase One

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