



January 5, 2021

The festival of Epiphany closes the Christmas season and transitions us into the smaller of the two “green” seasons of the liturgical calendar. This calendar focuses on the two big events in the Christian life of Faith: Christmas and Easter. The birth of the Savior and the Resurrection of the Savior. Those festivals are marked by white and gold colors, reminders of the dawning of the new day of our new lives in Christ, the glory of God, and the treasure that we have in heaven.

The green of this season reminds us that we are called to grow. Even if there is little green outside, the seeds are in the earth, ready to thaw and grow as the days lengthen. It seems to be a filler space in the calendar, but that is exactly what



growth takes; space for seeds to open and roots to sink, time for nutrients to be absorbed, transformed, and stretched into stalk and stem, leaf and flower.

We will grow until Transfiguration Sunday, when we will see Jesus finally opened from the plain looking flesh of human incarnation we first spied in the manger to glimpse of the glory God, God seen on Easter morning. This happens in the same dramatic fashion our Easter lilies will transform between now and April as winter's cover is pulled back to reveal the beauty of new life.

Something we may want to happen fast, but needs the time and the space to grow into its full beauty. Coming to the place where the light that shone over the darkness of creation, that came to dwell among us first in the manger, and shone out of the empty tomb will shine through the new life we see coming into being around and within us.

May the light of Christ grow within you daily. Amen.

Pr. Justin Smoot (he/him)

Answered Prayers: Adam Wurz's Story

Adam Wurz, a member of Saint Andrew Lutheran Church, is a COVID-19 survivor. He wanted to share his story. This is the letter he sent to be shared with the Saint Andrew community. We thank God for Adam's recovery and his continued health.

Greetings to all, God is good!

Christmas! Time of year we should be reflecting on God's great gift to the world, his Son. I think back through my lifetime of 65 years what Christmas has meant to me. It was never about the gifts I was going to get. Oh, I would wish for great things! But I knew at an incredibly young age that there would be only one great toy and rest would be warm clothes to work in the barn and new clothes for school. But I do recall it always being special! Church on Christmas eve, the big box of mixed chocolates, big box of Red Delicious Apples, downtown Wausau all lit up, making cookies with my sisters, stringing popcorn and cranberries with little brother and my sisters, plugging in the tree in a dark living room, family gathering. Later years leaving my house with my family driving through Wausau and finding all business closed, except the 7-11 stores. The gathering of my siblings and their family in one place, a tradition that started over 50 years ago! Our 2021 Jan. gathering may now have to skip a year.

Kathy said I need to tell my journey, which I believe is more a personal Easter story. But this is the season to give thanks for all we have. It is 40 days from Ash Wednesday

that leads up to Easter, 40 days Easter to Ascension Thursday. You will see the connection in my COVID journey. 'God is good'! I am aware that many of you know most of it, but not the details of how I fell through the early medical cracks! Just how close I was to not being here! Easter became my tum around point from near death to the road of life.

On March 20th, I came home from work and had Kathy take my temperature, it was 99.2. I was concerned that I may have contacted influenza A. I was exposed to it at the Wausau Warming Center on March 15, where I volunteer at most weekends Nov. 1st through March 15th. After hours of taking my temperature, I decided that I would take Monday and Tuesday off. I told my dispatcher that I would call him on Monday to let him know about the rest of week. I went with my gut, thinking that I may have influenza and I did not want to leave him without a driver at 4 am on Monday. Kathy called emergency on Saturday the 21st and I spoke to them. Since the symptoms I had was only a low-grade fever, they told me to stay home and quarantine ourselves which we already had done. Oh, I told them I was expose to influenzas A and that I was a truck driver that was in areas that had cases of COVID-19, Madison, Twin Cities, Chicago area, Milwaukee, and Green Bay. They still told me I did not meet the symptoms required to be tested. They did not want me to come in. This was the first time I fell through the medical crack. I should mention, everything was locked down at this time as you may recall.

On March 25th I decided to take Tylenol for the low-grade fever, it spikes on March 26h, to 102 *, Kathy called emergency again this time they let me come up. 5-blood samples, a chest X-ray, a swab for influenza, and 3-hours later sent home with pneumonia and pills. The second time I fell through the cracks. On March 29th, after a week of drinking fluids and having soup, resting in bed, my conditions starts to worsen. Kathy noticed my breathing changed when I was napping. Kathy tells me to get dressed. We are going back up to the emergency room again. So, at around 6pm, Kathy and I are back at emergency. They grab me before Kathy gets the car parked. As she walks in, they are already wheeling me away, I didn't have a chance to even say bye. Kathy did not see me in person for 40 days. After taking another 5-blood sample, chest X-rays, hooked up to a heart monitor, oxygen to the nose, and another swab to the nose (this time for both influenzas and COVID). They send Kathy home (she was in the waiting room). After I tested negative again for influenzas, they admit me into the hospital at 8:45, move me into a room only hours later to be moved into the ICU at midnight. At some point early morning I was vented and on full life support until April 26th. 28-days on the ventilator. At this time, I did not know I had COVID until the doctor told me on, I believe it was April 25th. I went in thinking my pneumonia had worsen; COVID test results did not comeback until after I was on full life support and completely out.

God is good! I recall tearing up after Dr. Stysly, told me about my miracle battle with COVID, I knew God was with me. How bad was it? I was as close to death as you can get. I have read my 2,235-page report! I was in deep trouble for about 10-straight days. The term: 'The patient is now 'under Salvage therapy' Ventilator was maxed out at 100% oxygen and the peeps were at 16 spiking to 20 on my worst days. Kathy was called twice and was told that there was nothing more they could do! This was April 4 & 5th. There was the one time a male nurse called her and ask if I coded when they are positioning me into the prone position if there was a DNR in play. Easter Sunday was the last day I maxed out the ventilator. On Monday April 14th, I took a small turn for the better. I was not out trouble yet! But there was at least hope. It took another 13 days to get off the ventilator. On April 22nd, I showed signs that the vent could come off soon, they went down the tubes to clean out the debris that was collecting in my lungs from winning the battle against COVID. What would have been my father's 103rd birthday, April 23rd, I won the battle against the virus, but I had to stay on ventilator another 3 days due to the pneumonia that developed after being on the vent for so long. I was taken off the vent on April 26th and put on a respirator for less than 24 hrs. To my doctor's surprise, I was able to breathe on room air on the 21st. I completely had beaten COVID. During my 28-days vented I was completely out I do not remember anything. From the 2,235-page report of just my ICU hospital stay, I had acute respiratory failure, acute kidney failure, liver count was elevated, bladder control problems, problems with lack of bowel movements for days. They daily noted multiple organ failures. To say my body had to do a reset at one point is not an exaggeration. I had to be in the prone position which I subconsciously did not want to be in (hospital notes say I fought this position). I loss over 43 pounds and all my muscle core from being on the ventilator. I could not even lift my head off the pillow. I was so frail and thin, the first time I saw myself in a mirror in rehab, I could not believe it was me. Not quite concentration camp thin but remarkably close. But! My mind and heart were strong. God is good!

I recall; still in ICU, I thought four of my nurses were family members! Granddaughters Ava and CeCe and I could see daughter Denise was out in the control room, I wondered why she never came in. Daughter Caryn fed me my first meal (the swallow test); she was hiding my pills in the pudding. I commented that she was treating me like an old man hiding my pills. I recall taking comfort that my family was up there volunteering. There was the time that I thought Ava was sitting next to me and she gave me a Sharpie. I wanted to reinsure her that I was going to be okay, I tried to write "God is good". I found out later from the nurse that this did happen with the nurse, not Ava. She said I was so frustrated that I could not write. I was so weak I could not move the pen in any controlled motion. This was on April 25th because I could not speak; tubes were down my throat. At this point I did not know the tubes were from a ventilator. Found out on the April 27th that I was vented. On April 28th, Kathy and I had a face to face web visit. I complained that the meal I had tasted like seagull

(chicken fingers). Why Seagull? I was on drugs; a guy I worked with back in the early 80 's was a sailor and said some of the ports they were at never had many seagulls, but there were always chicken vendors (funny how the brain works-to pull and connect this thought at that time). Kathy said I was funny (my motto; keep them laughing). I recall that the nurse holding the iPad was laughing. At the time, I did not have my head wrapped around the fact that it was 30 days since we last spoke. When I was leaving the hospital on May 8th, the nurse that came over from ICU to say good-bye from the ICU staff sounded like CeCe, and that is why I thought CeCe was there. I even told this nurse one time how concerned I was for Ava that she was always there, that she needed to tell her sister that I was going to be okay (nurse informed me that no family members were there, they were not allowed). Oh! This nurse would walk in and ask me "How are you doing" every time she came in. I even told her one time (thinking it was CeCe) how annoying that was. One morning all four Ava, CeCe, Caryn and Denise came in my room to break me out and take me to the Dairy Queen. I finally had to stop them. I told them I did not even know if I could even walk; to slow down. Turns out, it was drugs-one of many weird dreams I had those last few days in ICU. The brain is amazing!

God is good! The whole month of April is lost to me! I recall bits of the last 5-days. From what every nurse in ICU told me, I survived a horrific ordeal. When I was moved to post-surgical, another doctor I had came in and told me he thought he was going to lose me on a couple nights. Since coming off of drugs, I cannot recall his name, but after reading notes it had to be the doctor who called Kathy on April 4 & 5 and told her the grave condition I was in.

What I went through does not compare with what Kathy and kids went through. I was out while Kathy and my family had gone through the whole month not being able to talk or see me. Kathy drops me off on March 29th and does not speak to me until after Easter. It was a onesided conversation on the web feed. The 12 days leading up to Easter were the worst. I maxed out the ventilator; my peeps went from 8 to 20. Kathy and the kids on Saturday morning before Easter had the talk on the deck, the what if meeting. Good Friday was a very rough day for me, and I was already on the ventilator for 12 going on 13 days. At that time the max for being on a vent was 14-days. The odds of needing a life supporting device for men is over 50% after 14 days. I had so many organs in the process of shutting down leading up to Good Friday through Easter that it looked like a decision may be needed to be made and Dr. Stysly would call her with updates. Kathy could always call the nurses to get info, which she did daily after 9pm. But God answered our prayers. Monday after Easter, COVID started to lose the battle for my soul. Kathy received the support from so many of our church family, from phone calls, cards, and letters. So many longtime friends called and sent cards. Our children stepped up: Denise would shop for Kathy, Daniel did small errands, Richard was here for her, Caryn kept 3 Facebook pages updated, son-in laws Josh and Dan, did many errands for Kathy. There were so many of you that were there for her

that I will miss some by naming you. Just know you made her month bearable. God blessed us with abundance of friends, relatives, and great family members. I greatly appreciated all your prayers and being there for Kathy and our children.

Update after 8 days of inpatient rehab of learning to walk and rebuilding core muscle, I came home on May 8th after 40 days in hospital; again beating the odds of being able to climb our 20 steps stairs to the main floor. Family was told to be prepared for me to come home on oxygen and in a wheelchair. Son in-law Dan had plans in place to get me in the house up our hill from outside using our deck. After doing 3 months of rehab walking up to an hour a day, lifting 35lbs weights, I returned to my normal duties of driving semi (in Chicago, Milwaukee and Twin Cities traffic) and unloading by hand complete window units on Aug. 3rd. It took until end of October to return to the muscle strength that I had to lift windows back in March. I still get a little stronger each week. I still have some lingering health issues and survivor's guilt I call COVID PTSD; but my heart, liver, lungs, body muscle core and brain are strong. My hands are another issue that may force me to retire earlier than I may want. I have been asked if I knew where I contracted the virus. When I was in the hospital I did not know. Since no one in my local circle of hundreds of people had the virus, it had to have happen out of the area. I now believe I know where and when it may have happened: Madison, March 11th, I made a delivery at a distributor in Madison. It is the only place to date that had people go out with the virus in March.

God is good! I have my health. I made two trips to Kidney lake this summer. I have been asked if I had any out of body experience during my journey. Answer is? No! No Jacob moment, wrestling with angels or God! So, I still go by Adam. But I knew I was never alone; from the moment I was told that I beat COVID, I knew God had a plan for me. I was aware of what COVID was before this happened to me. There is some good that has come out of all this. I have a blood type that is compatible with many others blood types and I have been able to donate plasma with the anti-bodies many times since to help other local COVID patients. Each time I donate 2-bags full, they then get split in to two, which provide 4-treatments. God is good!

To survive it was a miracle. Answer to all your prayers. I do not know what my path is yet, but things have been falling into place for that journey to start on any day. I look back to Easter! How bad it was then; I am incredibly grateful that no one gave up on me considering how strong that I am now. I turned 65 in September. I have my Medicare plan A & Bin place. I leave you with this chorus... Here I am Lord, Is it I lord, I have heard You calling in the night, I will go lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart.

Merry Christmas!

Adam Wurz

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.



Service of Welcome

*celebrating the gift of baptism
and the beginning of ministry
with Bishop Anne Edison-Albright*

Saturday, January 9 @ 1pm

*Stream the service on Facebook Live or join
the Synod Zoom*

**ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
will be preaching**

Welcome Worship for Bishop Anne Edison- Albright

***Saturday, January 9 at 1:00 pm
via Zoom***

Our new bishop, the Rev. Anne Edison-Albright, will be welcomed among us this

Saturday through a special zoom worship with members and pastors from all across our synod participating. Saint Andrew will share in the leadership of this special service with presiding bishop of the ELCA, Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, preaching. The link to attend is below or you can stream the service through the Facebook page for our synod, the East Central Synod of Wisconsin.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81012981531...>

Meeting ID: 810 1298 1531

Passcode: 365758

2021 Annual Meeting Has Been Scheduled

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

2021 Altar Flowers

Honor a loved one or special event with altar flowers in 2021. Bouquets are routinely ordered weekly unless otherwise requested. A letter or email will be sent to you the week prior to the Sunday you signed up for flowers outlining the process, confirming what will be printed in the bulletin. Payment - \$24.00 – can be mailed, dropped off or sent online through the SALC website. Your flowers may be taken home to be enjoyed following Sunday worship between 10:00 and 10:30 am or they can be picked up during the week, 8:00 am-4:30 pm. Stop in or call the church office to request the Sunday you would like. ***The remaining Sundays in January are all currently open.***

Poinsettias May Be Taken Home- Last Call

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 Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm. Any that are remaining at the end of the day on Friday will be disposed of.



Christmas Yard Signs

Are you wondering what to do with your “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” yard sign? You have a few options. You can keep it, throw it away (they are not recyclable) or you are welcome to bring it back to church to be “recycled” to be used again for another

purpose down the road. Signs can be brought into church or you can leave it outside against the building – at the main entrance.

With Deep Gratitude

Thank you to the many who made Christmas so special at Saint Andrew! We give thanks to God for...

- Those who came to the luminary walk, the hundreds who helped with the passing of the light, and for the Christmas planning task force that came up with ideas and helped make them happen.
- Choir members who shared music for Christmas livestreams.
- Those who helped clean, decorate inside and outside, and prepare for the celebration of Christmas.
- The stream team and communications ministry, those who created billboards, signs, websites, graphics, pieced together movies, edited, supported, and produced.
- Those who shared so generously to make this a cozy Christmas, beautify the church with poinsettias, wreaths, swags, and trees.
- Those who shared personal gifts with pastors and staff as signs of support, care, and blessing. For the cards, baked goods, and gifts, thank you.

Almost 200 people helped with the production of the livestream whether it was sending a picture, lighting a candle, or sharing their time and gifts. This Christmas celebration was a community effort and for your part, thank you.

7th and 8th Grade Confirmation to Resume

Confirmation classes will resume **Wednesday, January 13** and will continue through **February 10, 2021**.

6:00 pm-7:00 pm: 8th Grade in-person

6:45 pm-7:30 pm: Virtual Small Group (meeting link below)

7:15 pm-8:15 pm: 7th Grade in-person

Confirmation Virtual Small Group

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87402980926?pwd=Y1I3OWQvTmIpL0lMeHNXS3I3NIRvQT09>

Meeting ID: 874 0298 0926

Passcode: 350812

SALC Library Hours

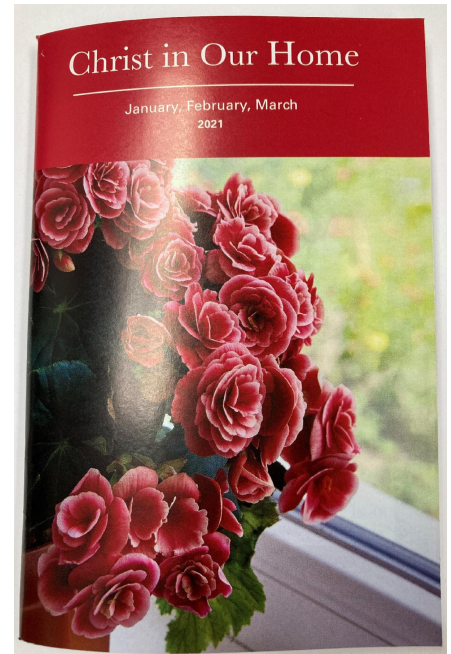
Sundays

11:30 am-12:30 pm



Christ in Our Home Devotional-2021 1st Quarter Now Available

Christ in Our Home quarterly devotional resource encourages readers to live out their faith daily. Each reflective reading is accompanied by a daily scripture reference and prayer for the day that follows the Revised Common Lectionary. ***The first quarter devotional (January-February-March) is now available at church in a plastic bin outside the north (Chapel) entrance or please feel free to come in the building and pick up a copy during office hours.***



Services Available on Public Access

If you or someone you know does not have access to Facebook to view the livestream services, here is where and when the service is available to watch on Public Access, which is on Charter/Spectrum Channel 980:

2:00 pm on Tuesdays

10:30 am Thursdays

6:00 pm on Fridays

7:00 am on Sundays

Plan to Gather Weekly Update: 1/5/2020

For now, Saint Andrew remains in Phase One of the Plan to Gather.

SALC COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 12/30/2020

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	Burden Status
12/9	974.5	No Change	Very High
12/16	853.5	Shrinking	Very High
12/23	671.7	Shrinking	Very High
12/30	584.1	Shrinking	Very High

Current SALC Status: Phase One

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