



March 9, 2021

Some Thoughts on Death

On Ash Wednesday, I was caught off guard when tears started to come in the middle of the sermon. I had practiced. I had prepared. But the truth is, sometimes we preachers don't hear our own words until we say them from the pulpit. Here's what I said:

You know what it is to feel like dust - Finite human beings with beginning and end. People who live that will die. We are, you and I, carrying the spark of life for this time and place. But our flesh and bones, made up of cells and atoms, are mattered material. And there will be a time when we rejoin the earth from which we came. We are dust.

As life goes sometimes, I did not expect what would happen in the phone call after worship. One of my most treasured friends, Beth, called with the news that her husband of four years, Eric, had been diagnosed with stage 3 colorectal cancer at the age of 39. I told her that no matter what was going on around here – that if she needed me to come and sit with her so that she could be there for Eric, I would be there.

As I listened to Beth and Eric, their fears and hopes, the mantra in my head was “Just listen, Jenn... friend, not pastor... friend, not pastor...” On Monday, March 8th, Eric started chemo.

And on Monday, March 8th, I spent the day with Don’s mom. For those unfamiliar with the name, Don is my significant other of almost two years. One year ago, on March 8th, Don’s father Dennis passed from death into eternal life. While he had some ailing health, it was unexpected, and death is always an interruption.

The last time I was with a group of people from different households for my own personal reasons was the day we gathered inside a small country church for Dennis’ funeral where his Pastor declared life over death and reminded us of the promises of our baptism. My mantra had been, “Just be there, Jenn... girlfriend, not pastor... girlfriend, not pastor...”

As a pastor, I’ve had front row seats to death. It is one of the most privileged things to witness when death comes as a release at the end of an arduous health struggle or at the end of a long life well-lived. But when death comes suddenly, to the young, as an interruption, it rips a person in two and reminds them of how little control we have in this thing called, “life.”

As Christians, our whole faith centers on the death of Jesus. Not an idea about death... not a fantasy or fairytale where death is “less than death” – but actually death. The interrupting kind. The painful kind. The unexplainable kind. Of all the world religions, what Christianity uniquely has to offer is that God *personally* experiences death on the cross.

Here's what that does. It reminds us that there is no part of the human experience that God has not experienced. We are united with Christ, in death. And in death, we are united with Christ in resurrection. I wish I could make death prettier or take the sting and stench away. But the truth is, I cannot.

What I can do is try to make life-giving decisions for myself and on behalf of others. What I can do is try to help others see that it’s worth making those choices too. We are all headed toward the resurrection. But we are not dead yet. While there is breath in our lungs, there is time to make a difference, time to do better, time to love more deeply, time to care, time to give.

I know you know this – but it’s all temporary. Here is what is eternal: the love we share in Christ. That love is the thread that sews us together as a community and keeps us connected in communion from death and into life. I believe with every fiber of my being – that there is not a reason to be afraid. While we grieve, there’s a thread that holds us together in death and life called love. It’s holding Don and his family, it’s there with Beth and Eric, it’s holding you together, too.

Pr. Jenn Collins

Easter Altar Flowers

Help beautify the altar for Easter with Tulips, Chrysanthemums or Easter Lilies - \$15 each - or Begonias for \$20 each. Order forms are available in the Narthex or you are welcome to call the church office to place your order (715-842-3333). Order online [here](#). **Order deadline: Sunday, March 14.**



This Week in Lent

To access the Lent mailer, click [here](#).

This week in Lent, we remember that we have been created in community with *our neighbor*.

The featured text for this Wednesday, March 10 is Mark 2:1-12: A community comes together to bring a neighbor to Jesus

Neighbor to all people, you call us into human communities to serve and be served by one another. Open our hearts to the needs of all our neighbors, and teach us to recognize the gifts you have given each of us to use in service to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

This week, we pray for our neighbors in partnership with The Neighbor's Place who will be receiving the proceeds from this week's soup donations.

Join us for worship via Facebook livestream or by using the Zoom information listed below:

Click [here](#) to join the Zoom Meeting.

Meeting ID: 818 0905 7687

Passcode: 484955

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,81809057687#,,,,*484955# US (Chicago)

+19292056099,,81809057687#,,,,*484955# US (New York)



Ministry Night Taking Place Tonight

Don't forget to attend Ministry Night which will be taking place this evening, ***Tuesday, March 9 at 6:30 pm.*** Make sure to check in with the ministry you are part of to see whether or not you are meeting in person or via Zoom. To join the Zoom meeting, click [here](#).

Soup for Community

SALC is be serving Lenten Soup To Go as a part of its Created for Community mission for this season of Lent. Proceeds from soup this week will be going to The Neighbor's Place.

You can place your soup order [online](#). Orders for the week are due by 4:30 on Mondays.

When picking up your soup, enter through the main door (near the bell tower). Follow the signs to the Fellowship Hall where volunteers will assist you.

If you ordered for **curbside pick-up**, please pull up to the north entrance (near the Chapel) and call the number listed on the sign to let our volunteers know you have arrived. They will then meet you at your car with your order.

Easter Food Baskets Available and Donation Opportunities

At the beginning of the pandemic, Social Ministry needed to donate or dispose of all the food and supplies that were on hand in the food pantry. Now all these months later, the ministry has decided to resume some of the pre-pandemic activities.

A collection area is set up in the Narthex for items to be donated to the Wausau Warming Center and the Saint Andrew Food Pantry. Emergency food baskets will also begin to be distributed as well as Easter food baskets for those in need. If you know of someone who could use an Easter food basket, please contact the church office no later than ***Wednesday, March 24***. Easter food baskets will be available for pick-up on ***Saturday, March 27***. Any donations are appreciated for any of these outreach ministries. Below are items currently needed:

Easter Items Through the Saint Andrew Food Pantry: canned yams, canned corn, canned green beans, cream of mushroom soup, canned fried onions, canned cranberry sauce, jello, gravy, canned pie filling and Easter candy

Emergency Through the Saint Andrew Food Pantry: pasta, marinara sauce, macaroni & cheese, canned vegetables, canned fruit, cereal, crackers, ketchup, mustard, salad

dressings, mayonnaise, jams & jellies, canned soup, canned tuna or chicken, rice, boxed potatoes and beans

Wausau Warming Center: cleaning supplies to include general disinfecting cleaners, toilet bowl cleaner, laundry detergent, dish soap, disposable coffee cups, disposable to-go containers and individually wrapped plastic forks

Hygiene Drive: shampoo, conditioner, feminine hygiene products, diapers in sizes 4-7, baby wipes, toothpaste, deodorant and toilet paper

Thank you from the members of the Social Ministry of SALC.

Art in Verse

This new social media series features the art work of members of the SALC congregation and how art connects them to their faith. To read a WSAW news feature about this new series, click [here](#). Last week we featured Paul Nelson, a beloved artist and woodworker in our congregation. Read on to learn about Paul's relationship with his art.



One of my more recent big projects was to start to organize my wood collection. I suppose that I have been thinking about this since I was a kid but never formalized my thoughts until recently. A big question was how to make the pieces of wood so they would be attractive yet show all the aspects of the wood. My son helped me arrive at an egg shape. Using my Dad's old lathe and a grade A large egg as a pattern, I began to turn my first pieces of wood for my collection. Soon a dozen species were turned into eggs that filled an old carton leading to more and more eggs as I was able to acquire more different wood samples. At last count I have turned over 250 different species of woods from all over the world (thank you eBay). Each wood is different and testifies to the creative mind of our God. I have turned Lebanon cedar and thought of the beams in the Temple built by Solomon. I have turned olive wood from the Holy land thinking of the importance of olives in the past and continuing today. The widow's jar of olive oil never ran out while she hosted Elijah. Many of the woods have significant roles in history while others play minor but important roles in their ecosystems. All parts of the body are important.

As I work on the lathe I feel a connection to my past. I started woodworking my first year in 4-H over 50 years ago and am thankful for my woodworking leader and my shop teachers along the way. With all of the different wood scraps I have from turning my eggs, I started making Christmas ornaments as well. I have also made special Easter eggs, none of which I actually have as I gave them all away figuring that I can always make more. I have also made bookshelves, bowls, beds, and some cabinets, such as the specimen cabinet last summer for some of my rocks.

People who look at my eggs seem to be interested in how different they are from one another. One of the first questions they ask is "Can I hold them?" The organic shape fits perfectly into your hand and draws you into picking up another one with your other hand. I must confess that I still do the same thing.

Working with my hands has a calming effect, as anyone who stitches or sews also knows. The worst day can be made better by spending time alone in the shop with tools and a piece of wood. It gives me an idea of how the Master Potter must feel after setting our world in motion.

Videos Available on YouTube

Did you miss worship live? Was there something in particular that you'd like to listen to again? A children's sermon that tickled your ear? Facebook not your thing? Church is uploading these video resources to our YouTube channel. Check out [this link](#) or search for Saint Andrew and hit "subscribe" to see and share the latest content.

Plan to Gather Weekly Update: 3/9/2021

Last Thursday the council again updated the Plan to Gather which you can find in full detail at www.salc-wausau.org/covid. Some have shared it would be helpful to have a different visual to show how the number in our graph correlates to our plan. The various lines on the graph below are the bench marks we have currently set in order to gather in person. The grey line is our current bench mark for outdoor worship. We're so close!

SALC COVID-19 UPDATE

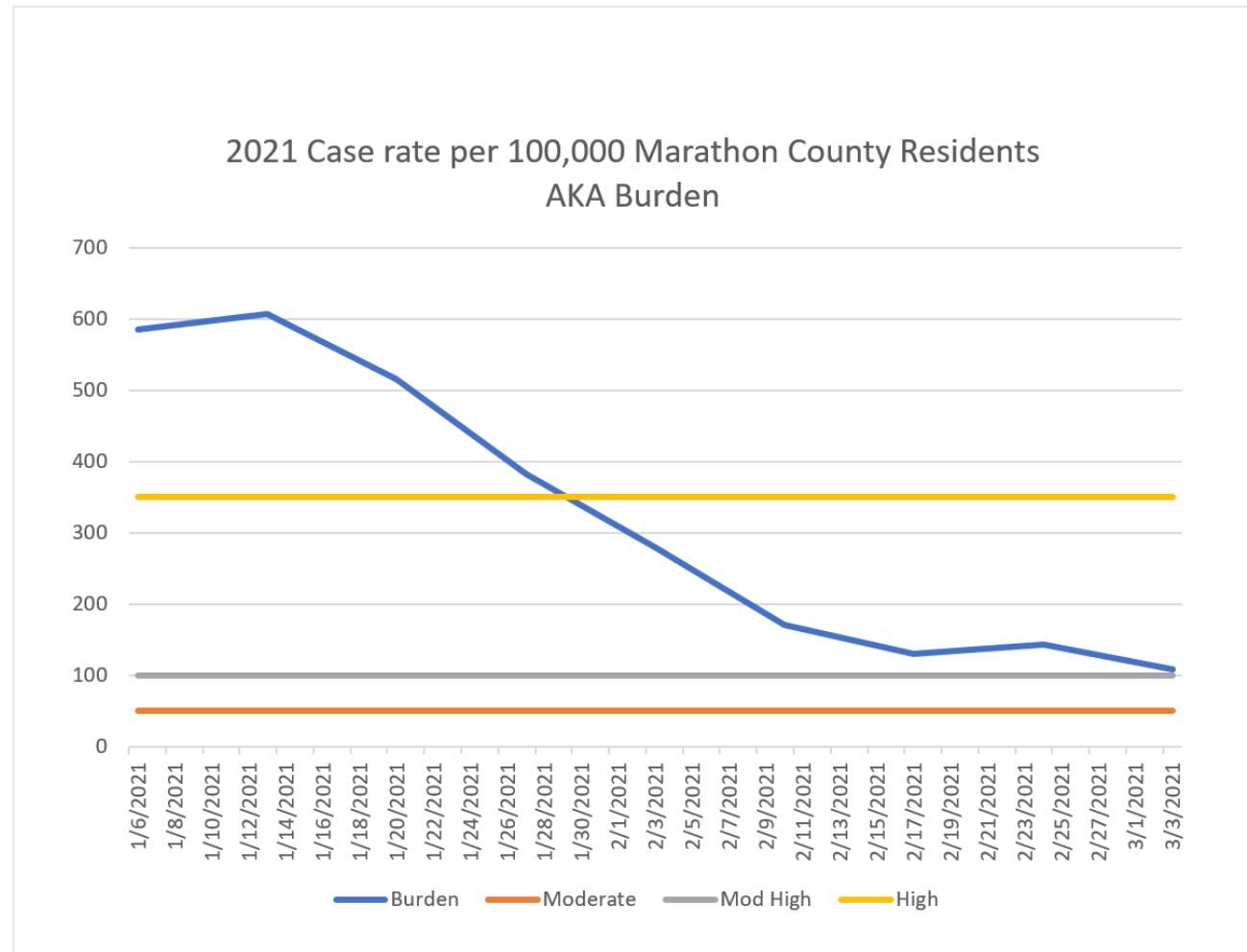
As of 3/3/2021

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	Burden Status
2/10	170.7	Shrinking	High
2/17	129.9	No Change	High
2/24	144	No Change	High
3/3	108.4	Shrinking	High

Current SALC Status: Phase One

In the coming week, the Plan to Gather Task Force will meet to reassess and talk about the following:

- Procedures and priorities for re-gathering
- Reassess the plan itself and the criteria for phase transition
- Addressing frequently asked questions of members and a communication plan



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