



April 27, 2021

Sacrifice

It is not a sacrifice if your life is not disrupted.

It is one thing to be generous with another person, but another to sacrifice that they may have life. Many of us are of the disposition that giving someone else the shirt off our backs is a good thing, but continually helping them leads to dependency. We also have an intrinsic understanding that first responders, law enforcement, and the military make a sacrifice for the sake of others to a degree that is not present in other vocations. While this is true, it does lend a flavor of scale and drama to our understanding of sacrifice that is not present.

At its core, sacrifice is an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy. Like a sacrifice bunt in baseball, the advancement of another runner is more important than your batting average. You would not willingly give up your Queen in a game of Chess, but if it would lead to a quick checkmate, you'll sacrifice a powerful piece. When we speak of religious

sacrifice, we have images of Lenten disciplines, of stories of animal sacrifice from the Old Testament, and Jesus being nailed to a cross. But what is the valuable gain of these?

In the Old Testament, the sacrificial system was a way to put before the eyes of the people the cost of sin to your relationship with God and with the community. The animal's death should have been the death of the sinner, honestly deserved since the Fall. It is easy to reduce the sacrificial system to a transactional reality (God requires x animals killed for y sins), but participation in this system gained one more than a clear conscience. It was the understanding that we value our connections to God and to one another higher than ourselves and would make sacrifices to maintain that connection.

This connection is upheld by the prophets like Isaiah who, in the first chapter of his book, condemns Israel's religious spectacle; "bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation— I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity." What is prescribed in place of these forms is the essence of how Israel's sacrificial system was to form them. "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."

The system of seeing the death our sins bring being placed upon another should bring us into the awareness of the deaths that others live through each day. The struggles that make each day a chore, the divisions that leave a person isolated and alone, the broken world that convinces us that we do not matter.

Addressing these struggles requires sacrifice. We cannot simply just give them the shirt off our back and make things okay. We are called to sacrifice our ability to say "it worked for me, it should work for them". We are called to sacrifice our convenience for the health precautions that will keep them safe. We are called to sacrifice our own understanding of how the world works to hear their experience of life. We are called to sacrifice the assumption that we can live without them for the very real truth that without one another, our lives are diminished.

The reality of sacrifice in the Christian faith is that it is a daily endeavor. We are empowered by the promise of Easter resurrection that when we die to ourselves each day, we are reborn in God's Kingdom. Christian sacrifice is not only the deep gifts given once to dramatically impact another, but the simple presence in the lives of the community that serve others in small ways that add up. It feels like an inconvenience because when we live for the sake of the community, we understand that everything we do has an impact on the life, the health, the wellbeing of everyone we meet.

Pastor Justin Smoot, he/him

Highway Clean-up Volunteers Needed

Highway Cleanup will take place on **Saturday, May 8 at 8:30 am** if the weather permits. Volunteers must be eleven years of age or in the sixth grade and older. Suggested attire includes full length pants, long sleeves, sturdy shoes, work gloves, hat, eye protection/sunglasses, and sunscreen. Come join the Saint Andrew family and have some fun caring for creation on SALC's stretch of Highway NN!

"God doesn't need your good works, but your neighbor does." - Martin Luther

A Successful Blood Drive

Thank you to everyone who volunteered for the blood drive on Thursday, April 22. There was a great turnout of volunteers and donors. We are grateful for your continued support for the blood center and the difference your donations make in the community. Thanks be to God for your generosity!



Celebrate the Class of 2021!

Saint Andrew would like to recognize the high school seniors in our congregation and would love to celebrate their plans for the future, whatever those may be. If you would like to recognize a high school grad,



please fill out [this short form](#) and upload a picture by **Wednesday, May 12.**



Singers and Readers Needed!

Are you looking to be more involved at church? SALC is in need of members who would like to pre-record both readings and hymns for future services as well as read live for 10:30 am services on Sundays. If you are interested, please contact Al Freiberg at (715)574-2138 or call the church office.

Sundays in Easter

Join us for worship on Sunday mornings. Don't forget, livestream worship will be at 9:00 am followed by an outdoor in person worship service at 10:30 am. There is no need to register. Come as you are! You are loved by God just how you have been created.

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: 4/27/2021

On April 15, the council met to consider the timing for indoor/in-person worship but due to the rising case numbers of Covid-19 for Marathon County and the regression back to Phase One, for now the Plan to Gather includes in person **outdoor worship only**.

What did change was the waiting period for phase transition from three weeks to the burden number itself.

Stay tuned for more

information coming soon

from the church council and visit

www.salc-wausau.org/covid to review an updated *Plan to Gather*.

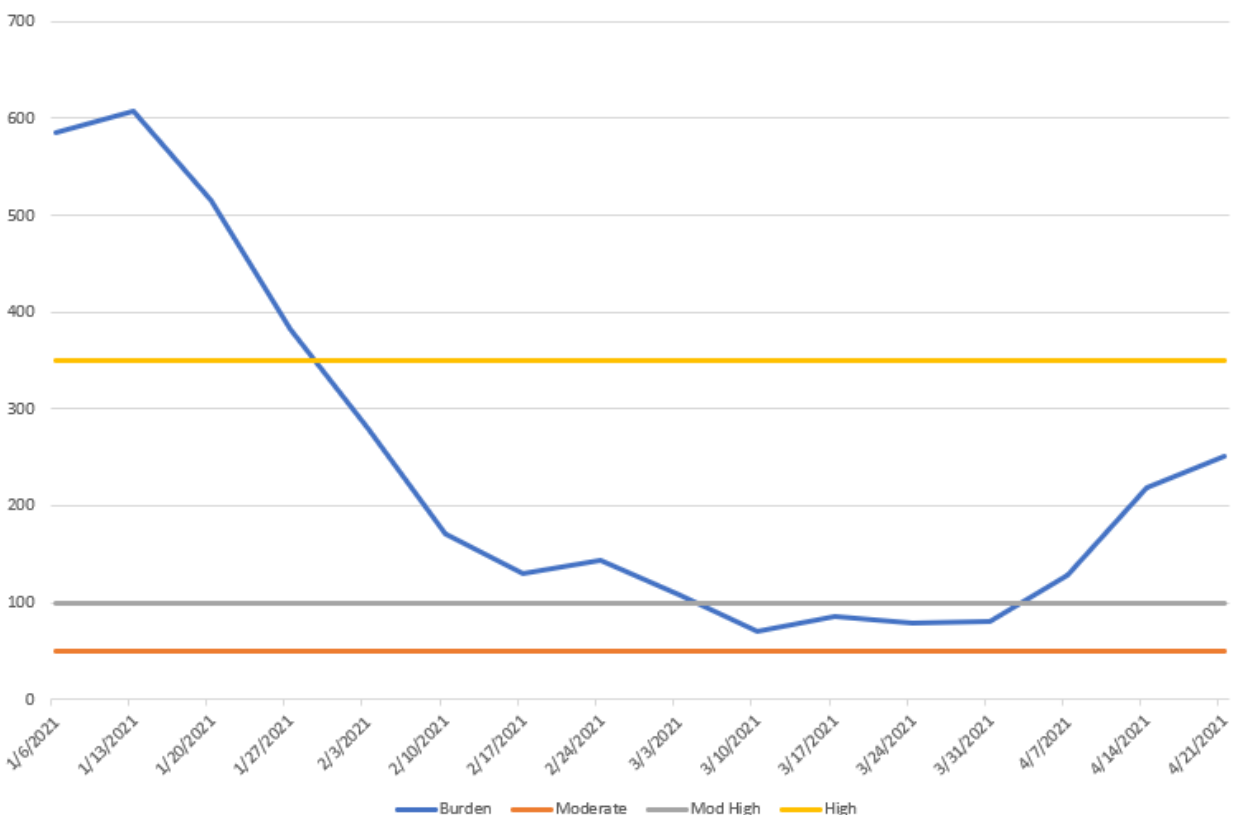
SALC COVID-19 UPDATE

As of 4/21/2021

Date	Burden #	Trajectory	Burden Status
3/31	80.9	No Change	Moderately High
4/7	129.1	Increasing	High
4/14	219.7	Increasing	High
4/21	251.6	No Change	High

Current SALC Status: Phase One

2021 Case Rate per 100,000 Marathon County Residents
AKA Burden



About

Worship

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