"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope…" (Ps 130:5). With these words the psalmist reminds us of one often-overlooked dimension of mature faith: waiting. Isaiah, anticipating the coming Assyrian invasion of Israel, declared, "I will wait for the Lord…" (Is 8:17). Jeremiah, in the midst of the siege of Jerusalem, likewise called for patient waiting: "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." (Lam 3:26). And Micah, after lamenting his countrymen's faithlessness, confessed, "But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (Micah 7:7).

In the New Testament Paul calls us to patient waiting. In 1 Corinthians he calls us to "wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:7). In 1 Thessalonians he calls us "to wait for [God's] Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1:10). In Titus he calls us to wait "for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (2:13). And in Romans 8 Paul calls us to "wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23).

Mature faith includes waiting. For this reason the church dedicates an entire season to waiting. Advent reminds the church to wait. More specifically, Advent, which means "to come," reminds us that we are waiting for Christ to come. So, throughout Advent our texts focus on Christ's coming.

On Advent 1 (Nov 30) Isaiah cries to the Lord, "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down" (Is 61:1), while Paul calls us to "wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7), and Jesus exhorts us to be watchful and ready for His second coming (Mk 13:24-37).

On Advent 2 (Dec 7) Isaiah cries, "Behold, the Lord comes with might!" even as he writes of the voice in the wilderness preparing His way (40:1-11). Peter writes of the coming Day of the Lord and calls us to holiness and godliness as we wait for and hasten that Day (2 Pt 3:8-14). And Mark announces that the voice of which Isaiah spoke has come in John the Baptizer, who will prepare the way for Christ's public ministry (Mk 1:1-8).

On Advent 3 (Dec 14) Isaiah points us to the Servant of Yahweh who will come to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Is 61:1-11). Paul prays that the Holy Spirit would sanctify us in preparation for Christ's coming (1 Thess 5). And John the Baptizer announces that he is the voice crying in the wilderness to prepare Israel for Christ's first coming (John 1).

On Advent 4 (Dec 21) Nathan the Prophet surprises David by telling him that David won't build a house for the Lord, but that the Lord will build an everlasting house for him, thereby moving Israel to watch for the coming of this One who would forever establish David's house. Paul doxologizes God through Christ (Rom 16:25-27). And Luke narrates the astonishing message of Gabriel to Mary regarding the One who will come to build David's house and through whom future generations will doxologize God (Luke 1:26-38).

Then, on Christmas Eve and morning, the Church celebrates the glorious coming of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Isaiah calls us to "break forth together in singing" (Is. 52:9) while the author to the Hebrews glories in Christ's supremacy (Heb. 1:1-6) and John announces that the Word has become flesh and tabernacled among us (Jn 1:1-14). The faithful waiting church has cause to sing:

Let the earth now praise the Lord,
Who has truly kept His word
And at last to us did send
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

While Christmas marks the end of the season of Advent, the Church's Advent focus remains as we still wait and look for Christ's Second Advent. Thus we sing:

Then when You will come again
As the glorious king to reign,
I with joy will see Your face,
Freely ransomed by Your grace.

May we wait with joy!

Watch & SHARE

Sharing our First Fruits

God's people share their first fruit offerings weekly as part of their worship. Thanks to the many members who bring their weekly gifts in their offering envelopes or through their designated electronic withdrawals. (Contact Amber Neumann or Jeff Hargens to learn more about this opportunity.) Your sacrificial gifts have blessed Zion to meet the budget commitments throughout the year. If you have not been able to contribute regularly toward the mission and ministry of Zion throughout the year, please consider a special end-of-year gift. The 2014 budget for Zion is $259,875. It is the privilege and responsibility of Zion members to partner in offering worship opportunities, maintaining facilities, nurturing the faith of our children, ministering to one another and our community and bringing the Gospel to the world. Questions about the budget or financial needs can be shared with the pastors or the financial team (Financial Secretary Amber Neumann, Treasurer Karen Kienast, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Hargens). The 2015 budget will be presented at the annual Voters' Assembly meeting on December 14.

Sharing with "Generations"

Praise God for the generous "over and above" gifts to the "Generations" campaign. Many members joined in making three year commitments to the campaign. Those commitments can be presented at any time. Please include them in a "Generations" envelope or clearly note "Generations" on the check. If you have not yet made a special gift, the "Generations" campaign committee welcomes additional gifts at any time during the campaign. Contact Campaign chairperson Rick Lohrmann with any questions or for additional information.

Your generous "Generations" gifts have enabled us to pay for all improvements to date (pews, nave flooring, etc.) The additional chancel furniture (pulpit, lectern, font, etc.) will arrive early in 2015. Projects that will get underway early in 2015 are an updated electrical system, a handicapped family restroom in fellowship hall, and a new youth room in lower level. The building committee will explore the schedule for other updates and include the congregation in the conversation.

Gifts to the "Generations" campaign can also be made in non-traditional ways—load of grain, stock, etc. Planned Giving Counselor Jim Schroeder can assist with those gifts. Jim plans to visit our congregation early in 2015 with additional opportunities that will bless your family and the church.

Watch & SAVE

For many people it's only a season of spending. Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) is our partner in SAVING. As a ministry of the church LCEF seeks to save souls. It also seeks to invest savings in building churches and schools around the world. Consider an LCEF "Young Investor Club" membership for your child or grandchild (a great gift). Contact Warren Puck for more information. LCEF "ConnectPLUS" offers a great 3% investment rate for new investors ($500 minimum for 2 year term). LCEF offers Steward and Family Emergency investments so families have resources for emergencies or savings for next Christmas. Retirement and other investments are also available. Visit www.lcef.org for more information, contact Vice President Carole White (877-439-5233;carole.white@lcef.org), or contact Pastor Riggert.

MINISTRY APPS—Zion Lutheran – December 2014

Advent Watch—Zion Newsletter
December 2014

Advent people watch. God's people of His Old Testament promise watched for the fulfillment. God's people blessed with the Promise fulfilled watch for Jesus to come again. In a secular sense children watch for the days to fly by anticipating Christmas celebrations. With His church God's children watch in the peace and joy of Jesus the Savior born for each of us.

Watch and WORSHIP

Centuries before shepherds watched an angel choir announce the birth of the Savior, shepherds waited and watched as God shared His promise with them. The midweek Advent series will introduce the worshippers to shepherds Abraham, Moses, and David. Midweek services will begin at 5:45 p.m. on December 3, 10, and 17. The special services provide an informal family-friendly opportunity for everyone to step away from the busy routines of the season to listen to God's Word, sing favorite Advent hymns, and meditatively "watch" and pray. Join us each week. Invite your family and friends.

Midweek classes will begin at the regular 3 p.m. after school time. In addition to their regular class lessons midweek students will be practicing for the children's service. The special Advent services are considered part of the Midweek experience and students are expected to attend the services. (Families are encouraged to join them!)

The new church year begins on November 30th! The Sundays in Advent prepare us to celebrate Christ's coming to earth at His birth and to celebrate His second coming. Join us each Sunday at 9 a.m.

Special services of the season include:

- Christmas Eve worship at 7 p.m.
- Christmas Day worship at 10 a.m. (informal hymn sing; table fellowship; members bring brunch food)
- New Year's Eve worship at 6 p.m.

Watch TOGETHER

The Advent/Christmas season is a family time at home AND IN THE CHURCH. Following each Advent service (which end at approximately 6:30 p.m.) the Zion youth and their families host special Advent suppers. Those attending the meal are encouraged to support Zion youth ministry and their mission service with a free-will donation. Zion youth are blessed to grow in their faith in Bible study and through participation in District and national youth gatherings. Thanks to youth leaders Bary and Karen Kienast and youth parents for blessing the youth and hosting our fellowship times.

The Christmas Day service will again be a special time for fellowship and informal worship.

Watch WITH CHILDREN

The faith, gifts, and energy of children are celebrated in every season. The annual Children's Christmas Service shares the Good News of Jesus' birth in a special way. Join the children as they lead worship on Sunday evening, December 21 at 6:30 p.m. Preschool through Grade 1 children will share "Let's Dress Up for Christmas." Grades 2-8 will share "Fact or Fiction: The Christmas Edition." Thanks to Jill Arp and Susie Ulrickson, the Sunday school staff, and the children for this special worship opportunity. The whole congregation (and the community) is invited.

Same-sex Marriage and The Thruple: Defined by Desire

While same-sex marriage continues to gain legal acceptance in America, Brazil is starting down the road of the married "thruple" as they recently recognized the legality of a married threesome. Unfamiliar with the word "thruple"? It's the latest neologism (new word) in a wave of new words designed to erode traditional language for marriage, gender, and family (other words include genderqueer, bi-curious, heteroflexible, wiggly, xe, xem, xyr, ze, hir, and hen, which we'll cover in the coming months). Thruple refers to a couple of three.[1]

No one has brought the "thruple" to court in America… yet (of which I'm aware), but it has raised the question and people are beginning to ask, "If same-sex marriage is okay, what's wrong with thruples? Why arbitrarily limit marriage to two people?" As many perceptive thinkers have long pointed out, once we remove the God-ordained boundaries to marriage (as with same-sex marriage), any subsequent line in the sand becomes completely arbitrary. So, if same-sex marriage is accepted as a legitimate marriage, thruples and a whole host of "marriages" will soon follow. Case in point: just recently New York's highest court recognized the legality of a form of incest (a man's marriage to his half-niece). How much longer until the word "marriage" ceases to have any meaning at all?

How do we as Christians wade through the matter of marriage? It should go without saying, but Christian ethics are built on Scripture. As such, the Bible clearly reveals the Creator's will for marriage: marriage is designed by God for procreation, for the one-flesh union of husband and wife, and for the mutual support, comfort, and delight each spouse should receive from the other.[2]

Further, marriage is not built on loving feelings built on God's created order. Loving feelings certainly live in marriage, but loving feelings ebb and flow throughout marriage and are no foundation upon which to build the marriage house. Because marriage is built on God's created order, His purposes for the vocation of marriage are hardwired into marriage. We can no more change them than we can change gravity or the speed of light.

No matter how powerful loving feelings may be among same-sex couples or thruples, same-sex and thruple marriages cannot join in a one-flesh or procreative embrace. Same-sex couples cannot join in the procreative embrace or join in a one-flesh union and thruples cannot really join three persons in one flesh or in the procreative act.

Some are eager to point out that same-sex and thruple attractions are not limited to sex and we must readily acknowledge that. But! Same-sex and thruple proponents must acknowledge that these arrangements don't exclude sex. If they were simply

[1] The word "thruple" reveals how meaningless words have become in our culture – a couple of three. A couple is specifically defined as two, but we are fast approaching a world where we are free to define words however we please: couple = three, four, seventeen, whatever we wish. It's the same thing that happened with marriage. We have given individuals the freedom to define the word however they please. C.S. Lewis called it "verbicide." It's essentially the murder of words and it marks the demise of a culture.

[2] This brief article addresses the matter of God's revealed will concerning marriage. For two excellent works that address the will of God that is apparent in God's creation see J. Budziszewski's *What We Can't Not Know* and Girgis, Anderson, and George's *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*.

arguing for same-sex or group companionship/friendship, there would be no moral objection. Both same-sex and thruple arrangements fall outside the Creator's clearly revealed purposes for marriage.[3]

The Heart of the Matter

At heart the entire redefine-marriage movement is driven by the belief that we are defined by our attractions, desires, and preferences:

- I have hetero-sex attractions, therefore I am heterosexual man or woman who may enjoy sex with any heterosexual person I love.
- I have same-sex attractions, therefore I am a homosexual man or woman who may act on my desires.
- I have same-sex and hetero-sex attractions, therefore I am a bi-sexual, bi-curios, heteroflexible, or a "wiggly" man or woman who may act on my desires.
- I don't prefer male or female labels, therefore I am a genderqueer person who may adopt my preferred label.
- My gender preferences change daily, therefore I am a gender-flexible person who can act according to my changing preferences.

No matter how sincere and loving people may be, they're beginning in the wrong place. Defining ourselves by our attractions, desires, and preferences not only lifts the lid to the Pandora's Box of the human heart, but it legitimizes every desire of the heart. In the original Greek myth Pandora lamented her lid-lifting, but we are celebrating it in our culture as the sexual liberation of humankind and the results are sure to be no different than the evils Pandora unleased on her Greek myth-world.

As Christians, we should know better. The Bible (and experience!) tell us that human desires are innately selfish and inwardly turned. As Christians, we are not defined by our desires. In fact, Scripture says that we are destroyed by them. Just think: do the names Tiger Woods, Jerry Sandusky, and Lance Armstrong ring any bells? They were defined and driven by their desires which destroyed them.

When Jesus calls us to follow Him, He doesn't invite us to affirm the desires of our heart; He calls us to die to them – because He knows affirming them will destroy us. As Christians, we are defined by Christ. We have died to the desires of our hearts through Baptism and now live "in Christ." Our identity is bound to His.

This has huge implications for ethics, especially sexual ethics. It means we begin with the assumption that our desires need to be redeemed and not affirmed because they are inherently selfish. Further, we believe that the God who made us knows us better than we know ourselves and has ordered His creation in such a way as to maximize our well-being. He calls us away from our fallen desires to trust Him. We, therefore, begin with Him and His will for us, which He has clearly detailed in Scripture. When we find our desires at odds with His will, we bend our desires to His will and not vice versa. Notice the difference:

- I am a redeemed man or woman who battles against hetero-sex attractions for people to whom I'm not married, but I choose not to act on them.
- I am a redeemed man or woman who battles against same-sex attractions and chooses not to act on them.
- I am a redeemed man or woman who battles against sexual desire (fill in the blank) and chooses not to act on them.

[3] The market has been flooded with pro-same-sex marriage arguments as of late, many of them claiming Scripture endorses it. For a thorough and loving response to these claims, see *Can You Be Gay and Christian*? by Dr. Michael Brown.

- I am a redeemed male or female who struggles with gender confusion but who trusts Jesus every day for grace and mercy.

See how we define ourselves first by our redemption? We were called out of darkness (1 Peter 2:9), ransomed from futile ways (1 Peter 1:18) and washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11) so that we won't gratify our sinful desires (Rom. 13:14). May this prove difficult? Yes! This is one of the reasons Jesus established the church, so that we could bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2) and receive His forgiveness through His Word and Sacraments.

Men and women who battle sexual temptations shouldn't be shunned in the church, but encouraged in their battle against sin and reminded of their identity in Christ. The church is to be a loving, forgiving, and caring community of redeemed sinners who helps each other daily die to the heart's sinful desires and points each other to God's mercy and grace in Christ. Affirming same-sex marriage, thrupling, or any other desire-exalting definition of marriage or extra-marital relationship is not truly loving. It ultimately sets people up for destruction because it exalts human desires over God's design for His creation and leads people to live in contradiction to God's design.[4] Love is guided by truth, as revealed in Scripture. The way forward isn't through the affirmation of human desires; it's through the death of sinful human desires and the affirmation of God's good design.

JOIN THE ZION FAMILY

NEW MEMBER CLASSES COMING IN JANUARY

Interested in joining the Zion family? Know someone who is? Pastor Conner is preparing for a new member opportunity in January / February.

Contact the church office or talk to Pastor Conner to find out more and to help him decide what day and time to offer this opportunity.

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

[4] Research has consistently borne this out. In a recent landmark study, Mark Regnerus detailed the effects of same-sex marriage on children. The results were chilling. In addition to lower academic achievement and greater rates of depression, children raised in same-sex households were more likely to report sexual confusion, more likely to have been forced to have sex, and far more likely to touched sexually by an adult or caregiver. See http://www.frc.org/issuebrief/new-study-on-homosexual-parents-tops-all-previous-research for a helpful summary.

Further, numerous studies have shown rampant infidelity among the homosexual community. Dr. Brown reports findings from various studies. Among other things, these studies found that people acting on homosexual attractions had twelve times as many lifetime sexual partners as heterosexuals and that heterosexual couples were 41 times more likely to be monogamous than homosexual couples.
Who can argue that these patterns are in line with God's will or healthy for people? Love calls Christians to speak truth and to call people away from sin.

The ISIS Crisis: Understanding and Responding

ISIS[5], the mere word elicits powerful emotions of fear and unsettling images of extreme brutality, but little clarity as to who this group is and what motivates their savagery. In September President Obama claimed,

> ISIL is not 'Islamic.' No religion condones the killing of innocents, and the vast majority of ISIL's victims have been Muslim... ISIL is a terrorist organization, pure and simple. And it has no vision other than the slaughter of all who stand in its way.[6]

With all due respect to our president, such is not the case. ISIS, as we'll see, is an Islamic group with a specific Islamic vision. The black flag emblazoned with Arabic script and Muhammad's seal that members of ISIS regularly wave is enough to identify ISIS as Islamic. The script along the top reads, "There is no God but Allah," while the white seal, used by Muhammad himself, reads "Muhammad, messenger of Allah"

Further, they explicitly claim to be an Islamic group in their propaganda magazine *Dabiq,*[7] which I recently read.[8] The first words of this magazine say nothing about terror but give glory to Allah: "All praise is due Allah, Lord of the worlds. May blessings and peace be upon His Messenger Muhammad, and his family and companions." A few paragraphs later it claims, "We have a promise from Allah that this religion [Islam] prevails…"

Whether or not the Muslims of ISIS represent global Islam is another matter. Many, if not most, would say they do not, but the fact of the matter is that they believe they are Islamic. As for their vision, they make it quite clear in *Dabiq*:

> O soldiers of the Islamic State, O youth of Muhammad… Today we are upon the doorstep for a new era, a turning point for the map of the region, rather the world. Today we witness the end of the lie called western civilization and the rise of the Islamic giant.

ISIS's goal isn't terrorism (although they employ tactics of terror); their goal is the Islamization of the world.

Reading further in *Dabiq*, one finds these words specifically addressed to America and her allies from "The Official Spokesman for the Islamic State":

> O America, O allies of America, and O crusaders, know that the matter is more dangerous than you have imagined and greater than you have envisioned… you fight a people who can never be defeated… We will conquer your Rome,[9] break your crosses, and enslave your women, by the permission of Allah, the Exalted… If we do not reach that time, then our children and grandchildren will reach it, and they will sell your sons as slaves at the slave market.

He then warns, "We will strike you in your homeland…" Then he instructs his followers,

> If you can kill a disbelieving American or European… or any other disbelievers waging war, including the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the Islamic State, then rely upon Allah, and kill him in any manner or way however it may be… Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military.

---

[5] Alternately known as ISIL (the Islamic State in the Levant) and IS (the Islamic State).

[6] www.cnn.com/2014/09/10/politics/transcript-obama-syria-isis-speech/

[7] Dabiq is a both a town in northern Syria and a significant location in Islamic eschatology that has to do with the coming of the end of the world.

[8] It's available for free online, but one should carefully consider whether he wants to expose himself not only to the blatant propaganda, but also to the gruesome images of beheaded victims of ISIS.

[9] ISIS's term for Europe and America (Western civilization)

ISIS may be a "terrorist organization," as President Obama claims, but to claim that it is in no way Islamic is either an intentional statement of deceit or an uninformed statement of folly. Neither possibility is particularly settling. ISIS may not represent global Islam, but it is a self-proclaimed Islamic group.

Further, as we mentioned above, ISIS, unlike President Obama claimed, is not motivated solely by visions of slaughtering enemies; ISIS is motivated by a specific understanding of Islamic eschatology. Eschatology concerns itself with end things, i.e. the end of the world. To understand how this motivates them, we need to spend a few minutes understanding a few basics about Islam and the expectations regarding the end of the world among the different denominations within Islam.

Most Americans realize that there are two major Islamic divisions: Sunni and Shi'a. Other Islamic sects include Alawis, Ahmadis, Druzes, Sufi mystics, Barelwis, and Ibadis to name a few. To spare confusion, it's important to know that these groups are further divided over issues of eschatology with some of them calling themselves twelvers, seveners, or fivers. For our purposes it's simply important to recognize that Islam is not a monolithic religion in which all Muslims are united in a common confession.

In regards to eschatology, Islam is uniquely earthbound. In other words, Muslims expectations are inseparably intertwined with events on earth. So, their attention isn't directed heavenward toward the victorious return of the Savior, as with Christianity; their attention is fixed on the normal realm of space/time and the events that will transpire on earth.

Further, most Muslims are looking for the coming of a Mahdi ("Rightly Guided One") who will arrive with Jesus (who Muslims have a high regard for, but believe wasn't crucified and didn't die) to defeat non-Muslims through an earthly battle that will result in a global caliphate under the Mahdi. Christianity will be eliminated from the earth. Some think Christians will be given the opportunity or forced to convert while some believe Christians will be slaughtered.

After some time the Mahdi and Jesus will die and then judgment will commence under Allah. Sunnis and Shia's differ over whether the Mahdi has come, disappeared, and will come again or whether he hasn't come at all yet (this is related to some Muslims' belief in the "12th Imam").

ISIS has been quite explicit about its eschatological aims. They believe they are preparing the way for this Mahdi who will usher in the end of the age, the final defeat of all non-Muslims, and the final judgment of Allah. As we said before, their aim is not terrorism for terrorism's sake. Their aim is to please Allah and to prepare the way for the Mahdi and the final Armageddon.

The featured article in ISIS's *Dabiq* made all this explicit with these words: "Every Muslim should get out of his house, find a crusader, and kill him." A "crusader" is any non-Muslim person who opposes ISIS. Further, the feature article exhorts Muslims: "'Rely on Allah and stab the crusader' should be the battle cry for all Islamic State patrons." All of this, the author says, is "preparation for the final malhamah [Armageddon]."

How then should we respond? It depends what we mean by "we." If we mean our government then we must recognize that our government has been tasked by God to protect the citizens it governs. So, at the very least our government should recognize ISIS's explicit threats against American citizens and take appropriate action to defend us from harm. Having said that, it's important that our government clearly explain that ISIS is not being targeted for religious reasons but simply because they pose a physical threat to Americans.

As for how our government should respond to the brutal terrorizing and killing ISIS is doing to those who haven't accepted their version of Islam, opinions will differ. At the very least our government needs to realize that arming rebels against ISIS is fraught with danger. ISIS itself mocks such efforts in *Dabiq*, pointing out that America is simply putting weapons into different American enemies.

When we speak about how the church should respond to the ISIS crisis, we discover clear directives about praying for our enemies, responding to the needs of our neighbor, while boldly confessing Christ and clearly enunciating the Christian hope.

While not all Muslims are enemies of America, all Muslims are enemies of the cross of Christ. In tears St. Paul wrote, "For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction…" (Phil. 3:18-19). This is a call for fervent prayer. Muslims need to know the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. Their god is nothing like Jesus. Allah makes demands and remains far removed from Muslims. They never know if they have won his favor or not. Our God becomes incarnate and shows His love to us through His cross and resurrection.

Meeting the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ on the other side of the globe is difficult. To provide a means through which we can funnel resources and mercy to those being displaced and brutalized by ISIS, our synod has established a special fund (*Fund to Aid Christians Under Persecution*) through which we can help the persecuted.[10] Voice of the Martyrs (see www.persecution.com) also provides a means through which we can funnel resources and help to people victimized by ISIS.

Ultimately, the answer to the ISIS crisis is Jesus. We must pray urgently and fervently for His Gospel to spread and seek avenues where we can facilitate its spreading. Only He can turn people's hearts from violence and unbelief to love and faith.

[10] Call 888-843-5267 or go here: blogs.lcms.org/2014/statement-on-christian-persecution-in-iraq

An Opportunity for Zion

The fall of the Iron Curtain (1989) opened a window of opportunity for a clear proclamation of the Gospel.

Under Communist domination, the history of the Reformation and of Martin Luther was rewritten and stripped of its true treasures. The impact of post-modernism; the prevailing trend toward secularization; and dramatic changes in government, economic systems and communications have modified what it means to be a Lutheran in Germany.

Today, however, Wittenberg is welcoming the heirs of Luther's legacy. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, walking with our German partner church, the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK), and the International Lutheran Society of Wittenberg (ILSW), envisions a modern, renovated facility serving as a home for global confessing Lutherans. If there is a time for education and a time for Lutheran teaching, that time is now as we approach the 500 year anniversary of the Reformation, and these two cardinal and coveted characteristics of confessing Lutheranism — teaching and education — harmonize perfectly with *The Wittenberg Project*.

And Zion has the opportunity to contribute! We can get involved by joining the *Reformation 500 Club*. Those who join simply give or pledge to raise $500 over the course of the coming year, and how we do that is up to us. Plus, the first 500 congregations and/or schools to join will have their gifts matched. Interested in learning more? Log on to www.thewittenbergproject.org. Interested in having Zion participate in this opportunity? Speak up at our annual voters' meeting on December 14th or visit with Pastor Conner or Warren Puck.

Defeating Fear and Becoming Manly Men

Last month we acknowledged the need to confess our failures as men and the greater need to confess them to our loving Father in heaven. We also highlighted the great need men have for godly examples – examples who have gone before us and examples who walk beside us. Dr. Crabb says that we should find these examples in fathers, who walk ahead of us, and brothers, who walk with us. This month we'll begin our discussion on the importance of godly fathers and father figures who walk the path of faith before us.

Dr. Crabb writes that a godly father "walks the path ahead of us, letting us know what's possible and calling us to follow." As he walks he communicates these three messages:

1. It can be done.
2. You're not alone.
3. I believe in you.

It is nearly impossible to overstate the importance of these messages. Men need to know that someone has walked the path of manhood before them, that they're not alone in their walk, and that someone believes they can succeed as a man.

Sadly, our culture suffers from a lack of godly fathers. Crabb laments:

> When a man never hears another man declare, by his life, that pressing on toward maturity is possible no matter what life brings, that he has always been and always will be cared about, and that someone respects his heart and knows that he can make it – a man who never hears these affirmations will experience, in the center of his being, a deep hole that throbs with desperate pain. Something is missing that should be there – and would be there if his father had fathered him well.

For men who have not benefited from a godly father, Crabb counsels,

> Face the reality of your relationship with your father. Face it honestly. Hurt over what is missing. Feel the anger provoked by the pain and neglect. Rejoice over whatever is good. Hear the message that your father's life has conveyed. Then cling to your heavenly Father. Watch his Son perfectly walk a narrow path, and know his life is in you, enabling you to grow in obedience and to never quit.

And then, Crabb encourages, look for godly father figures in your life. Perhaps an older man at church. Perhaps an uncle or friend. Perhaps you may find that father figure in the men of Scripture. Learn from Peter or Stephen or David or Abraham. See what they did well and be encouraged by it. You can be a godly man and you're not alone. Godly men have walked the path of faith before you.

Then, resolve to become a godly man who communicates these needed messages of encouragement to younger men on the path behind you. Becoming this man to men behind you won't remove the pain of an absent or ungodly father. In fact, as Crabb points out, "it may make the pain more acute." "But," he continues,

> The void will be surrounded by a sense of purpose. And this will bring joy: that unique brand of Christian joy that supports one in one's suffering, rather than ending it; a strange joy that feels more like a reason to go on than like the good feelings of a kid at Christmas.

Being a godly father or father figure is characterized by three distinctive marks. We'll list them this month and discuss them next month:

1. He walks a good path in sight of his son, to let him know, 'It can be done.'
2. He occasionally turns around and looks at his son to let him know, 'You're not alone.'
3. He resumes his walk toward God, trusting God to lead his son to follow, thus saying, 'I believe in you.'

May we not only identify and learn from men who walk this way, but may be become these men for the sake of those who walk the path behind us.

Ladies Guild

November Highlights

Pastor Conner began the meeting with prayer and then led a devotion on 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. He spoke on the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world. President Schilling then led the 13 ladies present in the League Pledge. Christian Life Chairman, Margaret Backhaus followed with a thoughtful reading on forgiveness. The mite box prayer was read and the mite box was passed.

The business meeting was opened by President Schilling in the name of the Triune God. The secretary's minutes were read and approved. The treasurer's reports followed. Audrey Roe, Human Care Chairman, reported 35 more quilts were tied in October and said she had been asked to save some to give to the Quakerdale youths at Christmas. A meal for them is also being considered. Sunshine Chairman, Bev Grundmeier, reported sending 11 cards to church members. Circle #4 is serving the November fellowship coffees. Circle #1 will have the December coffees and will host the next funeral luncheon.

Old business brought the reminder that we continue to collect stamps, Campbell labels, fronts of Christmas and assorted greeting cards, box tops for education, cell phones with batteries and some ink cartridges.

In New business it was brought to the guild's attention that our numbers are shrinking. Cheral Buhr moved that we have three circles rather than the four we now have. The motion was seconded and passed. The new president will arrange the circles for the next year. Bev Grundmeier reported that there are now twenty tables that will be decorated for Advent by candlelight. She was still looking for more desserts and mentioned that there were only 15 tickets left. Cynthia Genzen moved that we give the praise band $125.00 for providing music for the event. The motion was seconded and passed. Margaret Backhaus bought boxes and the gift items with Thrivent funds for the Christmas gifts for residents of the Clarinda home. She asked for help with wrapping the gifts and said a lady from another LWML group would deliver them. The nominating committee put forward the name of Cheral Buhr for president and Audrey Roe for vice-president. Sue Puck moved that nominations cease and a unanimous ballet be cast for the candidates. The motion was seconded and the ladies were elected.

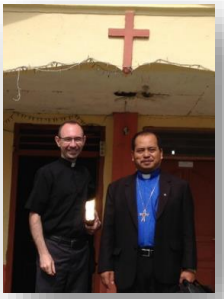
Plaza bingo will be held on Friday, November 28th, the day after Thanksgiving. The next guild meeting will be a noon potluck on December 10th. Hostesses will be Susan Schilling and Bev Grundmeier. The meeting was adjourned with the table prayer followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Puck, secretary

Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, and Cassie Ferry
Missionaries to Indonesia

Fall 2014

This month I had the chance to meet with an Indonesian publishing house in Jakarta. One of the GKLI pastors and I went to their headquarters and talked with the chief editors about getting the *Book of Concord* republished in Indonesian. It's been largely out of print for several years, and many of the pastors have never even seen it, let alone had the chance to read or study it in their own language. This project would be an incredible blessing to many here, and is just one of the great works that you're empowering here in Indonesia by your partnership and prayerful support.



October also gave me the chance to get back to Medan to visit with Bishop Aladin Sitio (*right*) of the Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI) to further our discussions about working together as fellow Lutherans. Much of our time together was spent talking logistics of the Theological Conference that will be held in November in two locations on Sumatra Island, which you'll hear more about in next month's newsletter.

Cheryl and the kids continue their homeschooling at the house, and are regularly joined by people from the neighborhood as they go through their lessons and playtime. Cheryl's been enjoying her daily walks in the *kampung*, and is starting to recognize certain other mothers as they stop and comment to each other about the various aspects of child-raising. Being relatively tall, with light skin and long blonde hair, Cheryl stands out everywhere she goes.

SELAMAT

Many thanks to you, our interested partners and friends, for your continued prayers and support which allow us to keep working in this place of perpetual summer and warm smiles. We take great pride and comfort in knowing we are your hands and feet in Indonesia, and that our Lord continues to richly bless the work that we're doing *together*.

Prayers, Praises, and Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving for all our partners who have made this work possible, and who continue faithfully giving for our support!
- Thanksgiving for continued safety despite occasional outages of electricity and water.
- For the people of Indonesia as they welcome their new president with high hopes for the future;
- For *ongoing* pledged support, that we might continue serving overseas according to our Lord's will;
- That our gracious Lord Jesus would grant His wisdom and grace, so many would be blessed by the work we're doing in Indonesia.

Our small church family… Ferrys on the Right! Can you find Caleb?

China Lutheran Seminary
Our Missionary in Taiwan
Dr. Stephen and Maggie Oliver

Our Asia Coworkers' Annual Workgroup meeting was held at China Lutheran Seminary in Taiwan for the first time these last few days. The Lord blessed us in many ways, helping us to work together as a team as we press forward in His work.

Also, my father-in-law found out from the doctor that he can receive Targeted Therapy for his lung cancer (that has entered his bones and lymph nodes). This is good news for us since this therapy is less harsh, but we are still very aware of the frailty and limited nature of our life on this earth.

Pray for our coworker team (esp. our leaders, Darin Storkson and Carl Hanson), and continue to pray for my father-in-law to know God's love for him and to have faith in Christ for full life and eternal salvation.

Oh Give Thanks unto the Lord for He is Good!

We celebrated Grandparents' Day on November 25th. The fellowship hall was filled with laughter of adults and children. What a blessing to be able to share the love of Jesus with all. Grandparents' Day was once again a huge success; making butter, potato or apple turkey centerpieces; and of course playing in their grandchild in the preschool room. I hope you were able to see the Weihnachtsfest Festival of Trees; our preschool children enjoyed making ornaments to hang on the preschool tree.

December brings getting ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. On December 17th, the preschoolers will sing during the Advent service. We have our state visit on December 18th and we also will be celebrating Jesus' Birthday – with gift exchanges, birthday cupcakes. What a combination! Preschool classes will resume on Wednesday, January 7, 2014.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas!
Deb Fink and Janice Nemitz

ZiON Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

!Amigos En Cristo!
News from IDW Hispanic Ministry
Missionary/Pastor Daniel Vogel

Iowa District West, LCMS
Year 10, Issue 12, December 2014

Visiting Area Churches: Now that I am only working in Denison I have been privileged to visit a number of our area churches to lead services and speak about our Hispanic ministry in Denison and Iowa District West. I have been to St. Paul, Ute; Zion, Arcadia; St. John's, Kiron; Trinity, Coon Rapids, and Zion, Manning. It is always an honor to visit our churches in the District. I learn so much from them and their rich Lutheran heritage. It is also special for me to worship in English and enjoy our beautiful Lutheran worship. What a blessing that we can share the same worship of our Lord also in the Spanish language. I am thankful that our congregations are eager to support mission work and we are so thankful for their mission heart for Hispanic ministry. Of course the highlight for Paula and me is always to return to our home congregation at Zion, Manning to worship and share our story! They are always so supportive. Please let me know if I can come to visit you and your church or church group on a Sunday or during the week. Call or Email me at the addresses below.

Special School Students: Another special school year is in full swing at Zion Lutheran School in Denison. This year we have 10 Hispanic children, most of whom attend our Hispanic church services. We have 7 Sudanese children from two different families, one of whom is a member of Zion attending in English. Zion has also begun to support a Sudanese ministry with Sunday worship. I also see that group as a mission field for the School. The Lord is certainly bringing the nations to Denison and we are thankful for the opportunities to share the Gospel with them, in the community, in the workplace (like Tyson beef plant) and in the church and school.
History changes as we are seeing. Zion, Denison is now 142 years old. It taught God's Word for many decades in the German language. By God's grace the Gospel is now preached and taught in English, in Spanish, and in the Dinka (Sudanese tribal dialect) language. We thank the Lord that these special children are hearing that same Gospel of Jesus' love for all.

My Tyson Chaplaincy at the Plant in Denison: The highlight of this past month was the annual Clergy Appreciation Visit to our plant. For the 7th year, Tyson has welcomed this visit by area pastors to the plant. Our morning began with my welcome and a presentation about our Chaplaincy program. Our plant manager, Gloria Rodriquez, spoke and introduced 9 management leaders who explained their work throughout the plant. That was followed by a "question and answer" session. Pastors always have lots of questions. We then gave the pastors time to visit with workers during their break period. This was followed by a tour of the production floor. Finally we served a delicious meal of Tyson steaks. We had 12 pastors in attendance, 5 local pastors and 5 from the greater area. Also in attendance was our Tyson chaplain from Storm Lake, LCMS Hispanic pastor, Eric Moeller. It was a good opportunity to inform and educate our local clergy about the work their members are doing at the plant and how we can share the faith at work.

PLEASE PRAY: + In thanksgiving for mission presentations at Zion churches in Arcadia and Manning. + For the ongoing process of affiliating with Iowa District West, LCMS. + For our mission leadership and church ownership as a new congregation. + For my work as a Chaplain at Tyson and for opportunities to share the Gospel in the workplace. + In thanksgiving for a safe and productive fall harvest.
+ ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who monthly support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and in our other three Hispanic missions.***

TO CONTACT ME:
Rev. Daniel Vogel
32678 Aspen Ave. Manning, Iowa, 51455
1-712-653-2354 or Cell: 712-309-1292 or
E-mail me at: Dan.Vogel@idwlcms.org

December Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

1. Robert Ewoldt
Debra Janssen
2. Renee Grimm
Kamryn Ketcham
Stephen Muhlbauer
Emma Schwieso
4. Darlene Asmus
Janet Gruhn
Tracie Kurth
Rozora Schroeder
5. Tiffani Beck
Jase Hull
Ross Kusel
Brian Lage
6. Melissa Lesle
JoAnn Petersen
Eryn Ramsey
8. Ellen Fielweber
Annette Hilsabeck
Brian Stoberl
9. Piper Doyel
Wade Ranniger
10. Athena Bess
Heather Kusel
Keaton Otto
Elizabeth Trost
11. Jaxen Vollstedt
12. Mike Bruch
13. Tricia Beck
Courtney Page
14. Rachel Hofbauer
Neeka Jacobsen
15. Cheral Buhr
Sam Hansen
Sheryl Zinke

16. Mabel Langel
17. Derrick Janssen
Taylor Roe
18. Zane Diersen
Jay Miller
Amanda Rosener
20. Kourtney Grimm
21. Leslee Gore
22. Kathy Vollstedt
23. Stephanie Rosonke
Joyce Schroeder
Gary Witt
24. Robert Christensen
Brittany Page
25. Ben Booth
Chris Greving
26. Brody Chapman
Larry Mahnke
Laurene Meeves
27. Eric Ramsey
28. Blake Diersen
Elissa Riesberg
Billy Weitl
29. Caden Muhlbauer
30. Cody Eischeid
Erica Lohrmann
31. Larry Ahrendsen
Amber Ehlers
Austin Frank
Loretta Vinke

3. Gene & Colene Lohrmann
4. Karl & Angela Albertsen
Dennis & Margaret Backhaus
Rodney & Charlene Hickman
5. Steve & Nancy Muhlbauer
12. Robert & Linnet Nissen
13. Greg & Amber Neumann
14. Bruce & Mary Grimm
21. Glen & Shirley Ahrendsen
23. Carl & Carol French
29. Kent & Karen Vollstedt

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

www.zionmanning.com

New & Improved

Check out our new and improved website!

- Watch sermons,
- Read the newsletter, check the church calendar
- See current and upcoming events
- Share news via Facebook, G+, and Twitter
- Contact us, Update biographic information online
- And more!

Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love.

Zion Lutheran Church has been serving the Manning Community for over 100 years.

Empowered by Word and Sacrament, Zion Lutheran Church celebrates Christ's redeeming love in worship and in fellowship and shares our saving faith in word and deed in our congregational fellowship, the immediate community, and into the world.

TWO PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE BYLAWS OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The following will be read to the congregation on December 7 and voted on December 14 (annual voters' mtg.)

The following changes to Zion's bylaws are proposed into order to conform the bylaws to actual practice.

1) 14.0 Appointment and Election of Officers and Board members

14.3 The following board members shall be appointed by the Church Council at the annual meeting of the Voters' Assembly at which their terms expire.

Members of the Board of Christian Education
Members of the Board of Stewardship
Member of the Preschool Board
Members of the Board of Evangelism
Members of the Board of Missions

Change to (changes in bold)

14.3 The following board members shall be **recommended by the board chairman to the Church Council for appointment to the board at the first church council meeting of the new year following the Voters' Assembly at which their terms expired.**

2) 4.0 Officers and Boards

4.1 Officers

4.1.6 A financial secretary, who shall be responsible for the financial receipt records of the congregation. The financial secretary shall receive, records in books kept for that purpose, and deposit in the congregation's designated depository all congregational monies including offerings, contributions, special collections, loans, subsidies, bequests, etc. except as otherwise provided for in these Bylaws. The financial secretary shall record, prepare and certify individual statements to each offering account every quarter of each member's contribution to date, and deliver the same to each member. Upon action by the Church Council, the financial secretary shall be bonded. The financial secretary shall also perform such other duties as are assigned to the financial secretary by the Church Council.

Change to (changes in bold)

4.1.6 A financial secretary, who……. The financial secretary shall record, prepare and certify individual statements to each offering account **semiannually and annually** of each member's contribution to date,…