Seriously. Have you considered tithing? Have you ever really thought about giving 10% of your income to your church (not because your church needs it, but because you need to give and because of the good you can accomplish through giving)? Do you know what percent you currently give? The typical Christian hovers around 2.5% (for comparison's sake it was near 3.3% during the Great Depression!). If that's you, what's keeping you from tithing?[1] Don't think you can afford it? Have you ever audited yourself? Have you have ever reviewed where your dollars go? Here's your chance!

Let's start small: coffee and soda. Do you know how much you spend per year on liquid refreshment? According to statistics, Americans spend over $850 per year on soft drinks and over $1000 on coffee drinks! Fast food consumes nearly $1200 per year! That's a lot of French fries – and calories!

What about your cable bill? Data indicates that the average American cable bill has topped $100 per month! $1200 per year on TV (and there's still nothing good on!). Auto payments are crippling at over $490 per month for the typical American. And this is to say nothing of the obscene number of dollars Americans throw away on lottery tickets and gambling. You may have other areas to audit (if you're brave enough to do it!), but you get the idea.

Now think about those dollars. What good have they produced? What helpful cause have they advanced? What *could* they accomplish? What if you resolved to try tithing this year? What if you actually sat down and figured 10% of your income (and figuring it before taxes!) and started giving that number consistently and faithfully. And what if it caught on at Zion and Trinity? What good could we do? What mercy could we extend into our neighborhood? What staff could we add? What programs could we offer? What resources could we make available?

Imagine if Zion and Trinity were able to call a full-time missionary to our communities. Imagine if we could expand the mercy available through our community's food pantry. Imagine if we could establish a music conservatory or add a family ministry professional or expand our teaching ministry. Imagine what good we could do in the name of Christ for our communities!

What's keeping us from this now? In many cases it comes down to coffee and soda, fast food and convenience purchases, cable and car bills. Without deep sacrifices, we could drop or drastically cut these expenses and transform our communities in the name of Christ! And imagine if we truly started practicing sacrificing giving!

And, if we needed an added reason, Jesus says that our hearts follow our treasure. Take a good, slow look at Matthew 6:19-21. Notice Jesus' words: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." If you want your heart to be invested in the Kingdom of God, you need to lead it; put your treasure there and your heart will follow – it really will! Tithing will get it all started!

Is tithing a law you have to follow? No. But it is the opportunity you have to join Jesus as He brings His Kingdom into our neighborhoods. And that's something that's certainly worth considering!

[1] We recognize that in rare instances extreme life circumstances prevent tithing, but these are fewer and farther between than many realize.

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (January 2017): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

"I will bless the Lord at all times" (Psalm 34:1)

The New Year's Eve worship service celebrated that every "time" of the church year is a time to bless the Lord. The Savior who came to earth at just the right time continues fill all time and guides us as we are stewards of God's time.

Time to Worship

The church quickly transitions from the Christmas season to the time of Epiphany. Joining Jesus at His baptism (January 7/8) the church experiences the epiphany of Jesus—His glory is revealed through His divine teachings and miracles. The time of Epiphany continues for eight weeks this year concluding with the Transfiguration revelation on Feb. 26. The time of Lent begins on March 1. Join us weekly at the Manilla (4 p.m. on Saturday) or Zion (9 a.m. on Sunday) services.

Time to Pray

A survey of the weekday Bible study participants revealed a desire to explore Biblical lessons and examples on prayer. "Teach Us To Pray" (based on Luke 11:1) the 9:30 a.m. Wednesday morning class will explore the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. The class will meet for six sessions beginning on Wednesday, January 11. Classes will conclude by 10:45 a.m. The class will meet in the Zion fellowship hall. Join us. Bring a friend or neighbor.

Time to Thank

Thanks to God for:

- Welcoming fellowships by those hosting Advent meals, organization potlucks and gatherings, Advent by Candlelight, and other special seasonal events.
- Gifted musicians, vocalists, and music directors who made Advent and Christmas children's services and worship services special giving glory to God.
- Generous stewards who gave sacrificial offerings to support the mission and ministry of the local congregation and the mission fields. Stewards also continue to faithfully support the Manning Food Pantry with items and with cash donations.
- Staff (custodian, secretary, preschool teachers) who serve faithfully and joyfully.

Time to Tithe

As the "Generations" campaign was concluded, the final campaign tithe (approximately $2,000) was designated toward community outreach through C-3 and regional ministry through Camp Okoboji. Camp Okoboji continues its Discover campaign constructing a ministry center on the Camp property. The weekly children's offerings will continue to support the Discover project. Many children, youth, and families of Zion have been blessed through the Camp programs. Discover Camp Okoboji in 2017.

"My times are in your hands; . . . Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love." Psalm 31:15-16

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

FAMILY BOWLING

Sunday, January 29th

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Manning Bowling Alley

First game, shoes, and a snack provided!

Sponsored by Zion's Board of Education

&

Sunday, February 26th

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Zion Lutheran Church

(Manning)

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

Sponsored by Zion's Board of Education

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

ON THAT NOTE

Treasuring our Musical Treasure

After Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions, our Church's greatest treasure is our hymnal. In addition to five Divine Services, settings for the Daily Offices, multiple additional services and rites for public worship and family devotions, over 100 prayers, all 150 psalms, The Small Catechism, and lectionaries for daily Bible reading, our hymnal has over 650 hymns, canticles, chorales, and songs that span 1700 years and multiple continents. Imagine the history you hold in your hand every time you open our hymnal! Imagine the stories, the lives, and the faith! Over the next several months we are going to take a tour of our hymnody to help us appreciate anew not only its profound poetry, but especially its confession of Christ and its ability to teach the truths of Scripture.

First up is an Epiphany hymn, "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" (*LSB* 394), written by Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885), nephew of the famous poet William Wordsworth. Wordsworth, a distinguished English scholar, served the church in a number of capacities, perhaps best remembered for his hymnody, publishing over 100 hymns in his lifetime. According to Wordsworth, it was "the first duty of a hymn-writer to teach sound doctrine, and thus to save souls" and he thought that the materials for hymns should be sought (1) in the Holy Scriptures, (2) in the writings of Christian Antiquity, and (3) in the Poetry of the Ancient Church. Hymns, as Wordsworth understood, weren't about mere aesthetics. Although many are musically beautiful, their primary purpose is to teach sound doctrine so as to ensure believers are edified in the faith and kept on the way of salvation. Let's turn, then, to the text of "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise":

Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar,
Branch of royal David's stem
In Thy birth at Bethlehem:
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Immediately the song directs our minds to Jesus. He deserves our thanks and praise. In the third line we see the Epiphany word "manifested." The word *epiphany* means "to make manifest or reveal" and the hymn will repeatedly turn our attention to the manifesting work of God as it will highlight several of the key Epiphany texts that we will read throughout the Epiphany season. So the third line continues by reminding us that the Bethlehem star manifested Christ to the "sages from afar."

The fifth line highlights both Isaiah's prophecy of the branch that would come out of Jesse's stump (a promise that new life would spring out of a seemingly dead and done people) and Jeremiah's prophecy of "the righteous branch" out of David's line. And it is saying that the fulfillment of these great Old Testament prophecies is manifested (made plain to us) in Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. What then is our response? Notice the colon (:) at the end of line seven. This is a marker to indicate our response: anthems addressed to Jesus who is God in human form made manifest before our eyes in the Christ child born in Bethlehem.

On That Note

Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
And at Cana wedding guest
In Thy Godhead manifest;
Manifest in pow'r divine,
Changing water into wine;
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Verse two turns to Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan River as it again uses the Epiphany word "manifest." This time God manifests Christ as the supreme Prophet, Priest, and King. On lines three through six the hymn turns our attention to Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana where He turned water into wine, thereby manifesting His divine power and demonstrating Himself to be God in the flesh (a member of the Triune "Godhead").

And as with verse one, we are again exhorted to lift our anthems to the enfleshed God made manifest at Jordan's stream and Cana's wedding.

Manifest in making whole
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;
Manifest in valiant fight,
Quelling all the devil's might;
Manifest in gracious will,
Ever bringing good from ill;
Anthems be to Thee
addressed,
God in man made manifest.

Verse three keeps the Epiphany theme in front of us as it presents Jesus' Kingdom work in healing "palsied limbs" (the paralyzed) and the "fainting soul" (the poor in Spirit). Further, as lines three through four indicate, Jesus showed Himself to be God in the flesh as He quelled the devil's might in His valiant fight against him (both in His wilderness temptations in which He resisted and silenced Satan and as Jesus plundered the strong man's (Satan's) house). Lines five through six remind us how Jesus manifested God's good and gracious will for man as He brought good out of ill, as He healed and made people whole.

And, as with the previous two verses, our response is addressing our anthems to the enfleshed God made manifest to us in Jesus.

Sun and moon shall darkened be,
Stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
All will see His glorious sign;
All will then the trumpet hear,
All will see the Judge appear;
Thou by all wilt be confessed,
God in man made manifest.

Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord,
Present in Thy holy Word—
Grace to imitate Thee now
And be pure, as pure art Thou;
That we might become like Thee
At Thy great epiphany
And may praise Thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.

On That Note

Verse four turns our attention to the coming epiphany of Christ when He returns to judge the earth. It does so by alluding to a bevy of texts including Isaiah's words in Isaiah 13 and 34 and Jesus' words in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 17 and 21. It succinctly makes its point: Jesus will return in glory for every eye to see and every ear to hear and will be confessed by all as the enfleshed God who has been manifested to all creation.

Verse five, as is the case with many final verses, is a prayer. The first four verses led us to confess the truth of Scripture and verse five uses that confession as the foundation for our prayer. As such, our hymn follows the pattern established in the Divine Service in which we first hear God's Word read and taught in the readings and sermon, then confess the truth concerning God and His actions on our behalf in the creed, and finally inform and shape our prayers to God in accord with what we have heard and confessed.

So we pray that God would grant us grace to see Jesus in His Word and grace to imitate His life so that we might, as Scripture promises (1 John 3:2), be like Christ at His coming (His "great epiphany") and eternally praise Him as the enfleshed God who has been manifested to us in Christ.

On that note, have a blessed Epiphany!

Finishing Well

From life's first cry to final breath
*Jesus commands my destiny**

A Christian Approach to Life's End

On November 1, 2014, Brittany Maynard, a 29-year-old Oregon woman with terminal brain cancer, launched physician directed suicide into the national spotlight when she, with medication prescribed by her doctor, committed suicide. Before she died, she posted these words on Facebook:

> Goodbye to all my dear friends and family that I love. Today is the day that I have chosen to pass away with dignity in the face of my terminal illness, this terrible brain cancer that has taken so much from me… but would have taken so much more.

On the other side of the country, in Connecticut, another woman was enduring the same cancer, but was making a different choice, and receiving far less media praise for it. Her name was Maggie Karner. She was the director of our church body's Life and Health Ministries, and she was choosing not to commit suicide, but to rest in the promises of God. She understood that her cancer would take her life, but she publicly confessed that she would not take her own life. Consider her raw but confident words:

> Death sucks. And while this leads many to attempt to calm their fears by grasping for personal control over the situation, as a Christian with a Savior who loves me dearly and who has redeemed me from a dying world, I have a higher calling. God wants me to be comfortable in my dependence on Him and others, to live in peace and comfort no matter what comes my way.

Both women faced terminal diagnoses and the potential for great suffering. In our evaluation of their choices, we can't downplay this painful reality and how heavily it weighed on them. However, as Christians we would do well to consider how to handle such difficult issues. How should we handle end of life questions?

Let's start with our foundational confession. Dr. John Pless (theology professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne) expresses it succinctly in his little booklet *Mercy at Life's End*: "Life is not self-generated or self-owned; it is a gift to be received and cherished until the Lord Himself recalls it."

As the modern hymn "In Christ Alone" has captured it: "From life's first cry to final breath Jesus commands my destiny." Our life is, in fact, not ours. By nature of our status as created and redeemed people, we are doubly owned. Terminal cancer is a devastating diagnosis, but it doesn't change this reality, so it doesn't give us the right to wrest control from our Creator and Redeemer.

Consider again something Mrs. Karner said:

> As for my cancer journey, circumstances out of my control are not the worst thing that can happen to me. The worst thing would be losing faith, refusing to trust in God's purpose in my life and trying to grab that control myself.

Doctor directed suicide isn't ultimately about "death with dignity" just like abortion isn't ultimately about women's health care; it (and abortion) is ultimately about control (one about control over life's beginning and the other about control over life's end). Mrs. Maynard indicated as much when she wrote "Today is the day that *I have chosen* to pass away…" This is why doctor directed suicide is becoming such a divisive issue. It's about control – who controls life's beginning, continuance, and end.

As confessing Christians, we understand that confessing Christ's sovereignty over our life may bring suffering with it, but we also know that 1) life isn't God (much less the quality of life!) and because life isn't God it shouldn't be worshiped and 2) our call as disciples is to finish well by confessing Christ's lordship until our very last breath.

Want to visit more on this? Come talk to me.

*Lyrics from "In Christ Alone" by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

Ladies Guild

Highlights
Ladies Guild of Zion
December 14, 2016

A potluck luncheon at noon began the gathering of 15 guild members and 13 guests. The preschool children came to the meeting and sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Pastor Conner led us through the lyrics of the hymn "Of the Father's Love Begotten" which was written in the 4th century and traces Christ from eternity through His incarnation. Margaret Backhaus read to us from Luke 1:39-45 which tells of the Virgin Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. The mite box prayer was offered and the mite box passed.

President Buhr opened the business meeting in the name of the Triune God. The reading of the November meeting's minutes were read and approved. Correspondence from the family of Merlin Borkowski and from Manilla's Trinity Priscilla Guild were read. Treasurer Mary Grimm gave her report. Human care chair, Audrey Roe said 12 quilts will be given to needy families. Sunshine chair, Becki Ehlers sent 5 cards this month. There were no circle reports.

Old business: Advent by candlelight brought in $740.00 for our end of season mission grants. There were 22 tables decorated for the event. The praise band and the Scripture that accompanied the music made the evening worshipful and timely.

New business: Hostesses for the January 11th 2017 meeting will be Cynthia Genzen and Sue Puck. The new guild books will be ready to distribute at that meeting. The executive officers will meet on the 16th of December to disperse the mission money. Audrey Roe will take the guild collection items to Carroll. The children's Christmas program will be at 6:30 on the 18th of December with a birthday party for Jesus to follow. Circle #1 will be in charge of Plaza bingo on December 23rd. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer.
Respectfully submitted,
Sue Puck, secretary

Preschool Praises December 2016

December is such a fun month and offers many opportunities to show our preschoolers how Jesus is the reason for Christmas and how so many symbols that they see during Christmas point to Him!

The first week we learned about hibernation and migration and played a fun game where the children rolled a die and put that number of toy bear counters into their "cave" made out of a plastic bowl. At the end of the game, the players would tally how many bears they have and see who had the most. They also worked on making their Christmas ornaments out of old puzzle pieces. They turned out great!

The second week we spoke about Winter and snow and the letter "S". We made Insta-snow for the sensory table; it was great fun to surprise the children with adding water to a small amount of powder and then watching how it turned into snow! They enjoyed "shoveling" it and making snowmen and snow castles! We also made "stained glass" nativity ornaments for the children to give to their parents for Christmas.

The third week we talked about St. Nicholas who was the real person that Santa was based off of, the Christmas tree and candy cane. We read books that explained how each of these are related to Christmas and Christ! I highly recommend the books The Legend of St. Nicholas, The Legend of the Christmas Tree, and The Legend of the Candy Cane. We talked about needs vs. wants, the letter "N", and made Christmas trees out of pine cones, pom poms and glitter glue. The kids did an excellent job singing at the Preschool Christmas Program and showed off how much we worked on our songs each day!

The fourth week we focused on the Nativity and the letter "J" for Jesus. We did several crafts and ended the week with Jesus' Birthday Party and enjoyed sugar cookies that they got to ice and decorate themselves and a small gift exchange. We sent each child home with a wonderful book, The First Christmas Night, and a Build-a-Snowman kit with play dough, googly eyes, pipe cleaners, buttons and a cork to create and decorate their own snowman!

We want to thank everyone for their generosity and support of the Preschool program this year and thank you for the opportunity to teach your children about Christ.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!,
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz

SERVING THE LORD IN
PANAMA
NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

December 2016
Vol. 1 Issue X

Christmas is a big deal in the Dominican Republic. We began seeing Christmas decorations in stores and lights on balconies in early October. Businesses, schools, and 'normal life' basically shut down from the week of Christmas through "dia de los reyes" (Day of the Kings). Pigs are roasted in the streets, people receive double salary during December, and the music blares loudly. One of the challenges and joys that greets the church this time of the year is leading her people through the season of Advent.

Advent is not just a preparation for Christmas Day. It is not solely getting ready to celebrate Jesus' birth, though that is certainly part of this season. Advent is also preparing for the glorious return of the resurrected Jesus in his full glory. Our lectionary readings are full of both a calling to repentance and the joyful anticipation. This double emphasis has provided a wonderful opportunity to teach about the Christian life. Certainly, there is great comfort and joy in having saving faith in Christ Jesus. Our future is 'secure' in Christ. Yet at the same time, repentance is still a necessary part of the Christian life.

Though we are completely saved by God's grace in Christ through faith, we still sin and fall short of the glory of God. Our love for God continues to be shallow and often our love for our neighbors is lacking altogether. The Christian life then is one of repentance, confession of sin, and celebration of God's grace in his Son Jesus. We have been asked frequently if it is difficult being away from family during the Christmas season. Our response is often mixed. Not being able to spend time with family and friends is surely difficult, but our life as the body of Christ continues as it used to, albeit in Spanish. During the Advent and Christmas season we repent for our failures as God's children and the many times we have messed up as spouses, parents, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. We gather before the Lord's altar with our Dominican brothers and sisters in the faith to confess our sins and receive Christ's forgiveness. Then we celebrate God's goodness in Christ and ever look to his promised return. To God be the glory.

Update from Amanda

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year! As our time here in the Dominican Republic is coming to an end, we look forward to moving to Panama on Jan 24th! Brian and a fellow missionary, Bill Lohmeyer (serving in the DR), went to Panama during the middle December to pick out an apartment for us. We are so very excited to begin our work serving the Lord's people in Panama and to finally have a place to call home. Spanish language classes have been excellent and we feel much more confident in our ability to speak and make our way around town. Brian has helped with the liturgy a few times in the congregations here and will be preaching this coming Sunday in Spanish. Ezra is doing wonderfully, thanks be to God! He is even learning a little Spanish alongside his English. He is able to say "hola" (hello), "amo" (I love), and "luna" (moon) in Spanish. He has pushed out 8 teeth since we moved here and has grown a little more than 5 inches taller! We suspect it is all the rice and beans he loves eating so much! As we reflect on all the changes this past year, one thing has remained the same; Jesus and his unfailing love. Thanks be to God!

– In Christ, Pastor Brian, Amanda, and Ezra

Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, Cassie, and Chloe Ferry

Missionaries to Indonesia

Selamat Hari Natal dan Ulang Tahun! (Indonesian for "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!")

What a wondrous time of the year to listen to music on the radio, in the malls, and on the streets throughout the world. Hark the Glad Sound: songs that proclaim the events of that Silent Night, Away in the Manger in the Little Town of Bethlehem! O Come, All Ye Faithful, to churches everywhere, for On Christmas Night All Christians Sing. Every day we live out our vocations where we're placed, so when people ask, "What Child is This?" we Sing of Christ. He is how we know God Loves Me Dearly, so Let Our Gladness Have No End!

The Ferry Family had one more appearance in the US at Zion Lutheran Church in Marengo, Illinois. This provided a magnificent chance for the kids to experience snow, which was the first time Carissa or Cassie remembered. There was even a Santa Claus at the restaurant where we stopped for lunch, so they really got a full American Christmas experience.

Then it was home to pack, and say our last goodbyes. While the parents did the packing, the kids took their opportunity to build a snowman with their grandfather, and to engage in snowball fights. We bundled up, and headed back to Asia where we quickly shed our bulky layers and started re-adjusting to tropical life again. I took a few quick days upon returning to visit our colleagues in Vietnam and the new Concordia campus in Hanoi. Then it was back home again to start catching up on the huge backlog of email and work.

SELAMAT

The Ferry Family is incredibly grateful for everyone who worked so hard, and sacrificed much, to give us a Home Service that completely exceeded our wildest dreams. Thank you so much for helping us make memories that will sustain us for the months to come, and which will impact our children for years. We have changed our schedule page into an album with a few pictures from our time in the US. Please visit it at http://ferry.asia/homeservice2016

We pray the Christmas holiday is filled with the joy of sins forgiven in Jesus Christ, knowing He is the gift we truly needed, and which grants us eternal joy, peace, and life.

To support our work financially, send a tax-deductible gift to: The LCMS, P.O. Box 790089, St. Louis, MO 63179

Or: Mission Central, 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to **The LCMS**, and mark them "Support of Charles Ferry." Gifts can also be given securely online through our online giving page at *www.lcms.org/ferry*.

!Amigos En Cristo!
News from ***La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:*** *Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church:* **Pastor Daniel Vogel**, Denison, Iowa

Iowa District West, LCMS
Year 13, Issue 1, January 2017

Our Annual Thanksgiving/Unity Service in Odebolt: As we begin another year of ministry among Hispanic immigrants in western Iowa, we thank the Lord for all the blessings of the past year. That is the purpose of our annual Thanksgiving service that we celebrate with our other Hispanic congregations.

This year we gathered in Odebolt at Trinity Lutheran with our Hispanic brethren from Storm Lake, Denison, and Sioux City. We celebrate the special blessing of our unity of Hispanic immigrants from many Spanish-speaking countries. We celebrate that together we are working to share the Gospel of Jesus in four communities in Iowa District West, the three towns mentioned above as well as Des Moines.

We celebrate the gifts and talents that God has brought to His church, like the pastors, the youth and all the lay people pictured above. We had a special group of musicians who led our music (from left): Pastor Henry Witte (baritone), myself (trumpet), Denisse Balandran (flute), Humberto Diaz (guitar), Matthew Marroquin (violin), Mike Segebart and Ruthie Witte (piano).

Wedding Joy: I was blessed to officiate for the civil wedding of Merlin and Azucena Gonzales last month in Denison. After the baptism of their baby, Liam, they made plans for their wedding, first in a civil ceremony and then in church. We give thanks for our young adults and the talents and gifts they bring to our ministry. Both Merlin and Azucena work in the restaurant business in Denison. They are the future on our western Iowa communities, the 2nd generation bilingual youth of Hispanic immigrants.

Advent Posads in Storm Lake and Denison: The Advent season in our Hispanic Lutheran churches is a special time. For our Christmas preparation, we gather in the homes of our members for a special devotional time to sing and to tell the true story of Christmas.

A "posada" means "inn" like a hotel and takes us back to the journey of Joseph and Mary as they came to Bethlehem in search of a place to rest. As we know, they could not find anyone willing to take them in on the night when Baby Jesus would be born. The Hispanic tradition of Posadas is a challenge to our families to accept Jesus into our homes and lives. We sing a special Posada song of Joseph and Mary to plea with the hosts to let us in for the night. Once in the home, I teach the children and adults the true message of Christmas with Jesus as Lord and Savior. And of course we have to eat, nothing better than Christmas tamales. !Feliz Navidad y un Prospero Año Nuevo!

Please Pray: + For the Grace Hispanic church in Storm Lake as they continue to interview possible Hispanic pastors, and as they host the renewed Hispanic Mission Network to help guide the ministry in the Circuit and District. + For Rosa studying for adult membership at Grace. + For the blessings of the Advent/Christmas season and the new year of mission work. + *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 missions.*

***Please Continue to Support* our new church**: For our mission friends financial support checks should now be sent to: Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church, 1004 1st Avenue South, Denison, Iowa, 51442

CONTACT ME:
Rev. Daniel Vogel
32678 Aspen Ave. Manning, Iowa, 51455
1-712-653-2354 or Cell: 712-309-1292
E-mail: daniel.vogel@ziondenison.org

Zion and Trinity Partnership Proposal

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

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

On Sunday, December 11, Zion's voters' assembly approved the following partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church in Manilla. Work is now underway to call a pastor from one of our seminaries. We celebrate this kingdom partnership and pray God's blessing on it.

Whereas, Zion Lutheran Church of Manning, IA, and Trinity Lutheran Church of Manilla, IA, celebrate and share the same Gospel of the Kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus and His disciples,

And, whereas, the Kingdom of God is bigger than any one congregation,

And, whereas, changing demographics (population implosion, changing attitudes about worship, expenses associated with funding a pastor, etc.) make it increasingly difficult for small congregations to afford a full-time pastor,

And, whereas, ministry models will need to reflect these changing demographics (IDW anticipates an increasing number of multi-point parishes with shared staff),

And, whereas, the community of Manilla benefits from Trinity's presence and ministry in the community and the preaching of the Kingdom is facilitated by Trinity's presence in Manilla,

And, whereas, Zion, being Kingdom minded, has the opportunity to support ministry and mission in Manilla,

And, whereas, Zion will benefit from a ministry partnership with Trinity (worship time options, additional teaching/visiting opportunities with an added pastor, additional preaching flexibility and opportunity, etc.),

And, whereas, Iowa District West President Rev. Dr. Steve Turner sees Zion and Trinity's proposed partnership as a model to emulate throughout the District,

And, whereas, Iowa District West President Rev. Dr. Steve Turner supports directing Zion's IDW Ministry Support to Trinity to accomplish this partnership (thereby not increasing Zion's budget),

Continues on next page…

Zion and Trinity
Partnership Proposal

Be it therefore resolved that Zion and Trinity enter into a Kingdom partnership that includes the following:

- Assembling a joint call committee to Call[1] a pastor to serve Trinity in Word and Sacrament ministry and to partner with Zion in mission and ministry initiatives[1],
- Directing Zion's IDW Ministry Support dollars to the support of this called pastor (who will be paid at District scale) (Support will not be given on a monthly basis, but on an as-needed basis so as to encourage ownership by Trinity. Further, support will not exceed $20,000 per year and is to be renegotiable every year),
- Working together toward increased partnership in the future for the sake of increased opportunities to celebrate and share the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Jonathan Conner (Trinity Board of Elders, Zion Board of Elders, Trinity Council, Zion Council)

On December 11th, our 7th and 8th grade confirmation students and families hosted our morning fellowship (pictured: Timothy Conner, Emma Reese, Haven Reese, Chloe Otto, Sierra Ferry). They plan to use the proceeds to fund meals for our home bound individuals and to support our local food bank. Well done 7th and 8th grade families!

Have a cause you'd like to support or want to facilitate our after-worship fellowship time? Sign up to host one!

WE ♥ OUR volunteers

Every Sunday morning members and guests are welcomed by cheerful and welcoming greeters and assisted by helpful and kind ushers. Thank you to our current greeters and ushers!

Would you like to join the ranks of these cheerful and kind assistants? Zion and our guests could be blessed by your participation. Contact the church office today to get involved! (712-655-2352).

WE ♥ OUR volunteers

Ever wonder how the newsletter you're holding gets folded, taped, labeled and mailed? Meet Zion's letter folders (Sam Musfeldt, Lynn Kruse, Linda Vinke, Cynthia Genzen, Margaret Kuchel, Shannon Walters, Luella Borkowski, Darlene Vollstedt, Bev Grundmeier, Diane Genzen, and others not pictured). Every month they lovingly volunteer their time (and expert folding skills) to ensure this newsletter lands in your hands. Thank you letter folders!

Every Sunday the Zion family enjoys fellowship after worship around bars and cookies. Our Ladies Guild has tirelessly provided these for years. Now you have the opportunity to help. See the sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Hall to volunteer!

Zion's Congregational Servants

Council:
Curt Struve, Chairman
Eric Ramsey, Vice Chairman
Jean Ferneding, Record. Sec.
Cindy Karstens, Fin. Sec.
Shannon Walters, Treasurer
Jeff Hargens, CFO

Board of Elders:
Tim Kienast, head elder
Don Lamb, Paul Christensen
Floyd Forman,
Stan Baack, Lynn Kruse

Board of Deacons:
David Bohlman, Bruce Grimm,
Ryan Crawford, Larry Mahnke
Richard Zinke

Ladies Guild:
Cheral Buhr, President

Board of Trustees:
Dan Behrens, Bob Genzen,
Kent Vollstedt,
Kevin Grimm,
Rodney Backhaus

Board of Missions:
Jean Hargens, Chair
Dave & Bev Grundmeier,
Frank Mohr, Lynn Kruse,
Gary Schroeder, Warren Puck,
Arlene Mohr

Board of Education:
Shelly Gruhn, Chair
Margaret Backhaus,
Joni Kienast, Dan Dawson,
Kathy Vollstedt

Preschool Board:
Dianne Riggert, Chair
Jean Ferneding,
Heather Kusel, Jen Morris
Janet Smith

Stewardship Board:
Rick Lohrmann, Chair

Altar Guild:
Monica Christensen, Director

Choir:
Dr. Tom Ulrickson, director

Children's Choir:
Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp

January Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

Birthdays

1 Greg Neumann
2. Jennifer Morris
Joel Musfeldt
Alex Ranniger
Ryan Riesberg
Rachel Winter
3. Robert Hansen
4. Alexis Dawson
Karen Kienast
Caitlin Lahr
5. Kenneth Knudson
Kyle Lohrmann
6. Dawn Ketchum
Betty Maasen
8. Amy Hansen
9. Bode England
10. Eli Rood
11. Amy Benton
12. Charles Fielweber
Daniel Grove
Jacki Nusbaum
John Opperman
14. Kamryn Lesle
David Page
15. Kari Deal
Kenneth Eischeid
Jaclyn Garrison
Colene Lohrmann
16. Chase Alexander
Mike Kuchel
Jenna Soll
Shona Weitl
17. Kevin Grimm
18. Paul Christensen
Sarah Gruhn
Sara Kobus
Brian Lamp
Noah Martin
Sonia Nulle
Blake Nusbaum
19. David Bohlmann
Joe Karsten
Cynthia Ranniger
Jessa Wiig
22. Crystal Dreher
Bryce Mohr
Gary Schroeder
Stephanie Winter
23. Donna Forman
25. Lucas Borkowski
Tabitha Kuchel
William Weitl
27. Marshall Hansen
Deb Knueven
28. Riley Adams
Kelly Ceminski
Karen Joens
Eugene Mahnke
Kemper Nelson
Lowell Schroeder
29. Mary Greving
Stacie Nelson
Robert Riggert
30. Michael Frank
31. Grant Behrens
Barbara Rood
Philip Vogel

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

Anniversaries

1 . Kyle & Jill Arp
Stanley & Lori Musfeldt
6. Mike & Judy Jacobsen
8. Rodney & Kristin Backhaus
9. Curits & Nancy Grimm
12. Steve & Erin Renze
14. Curt & Rexanne Struve
20. Charles & Marlyn Fielweber
22. Kenneth & Dorothy Knudson

Official Acts

Funerals:
Betty Stoelk, Died December 11, 2016; memorial service at plaza December 14, 2016; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Vernon Albinus Larsen, Died December 17, 2016; Buried December 22, 2016; Kessler Funeral Home; Pastor Robert Riggert

In Our Prayers

Walt Noelck, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Arlene Mohr, Jim Deevers, Duane Karsten, Joy Umland, Gabriel Albers (Pastor and Rebecca's nephew), Eric Lage, Justeen Schwieso, Dorothy Larsen, Athena Bess, Delores Kuhn, Susan Lamb, Bruce Grimm, Ronald Claussen (Laurene Meeves brother)