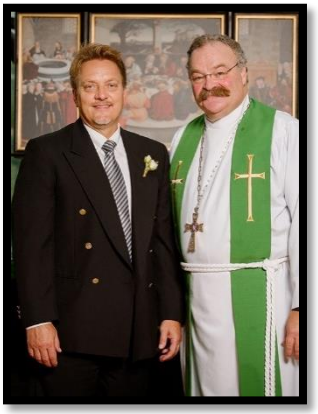

Created Male and Female: An Open Letter from Religious Leaders

In December of last year, Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, Executive Director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, signed an open letter affirming our church body's "commitment to marriage as the union of one man and one woman as the foundation of society." Harrison, while acknowledging "significant religious differences" among the signers, stressed our agreement in this matter: "We certainly agree on the issues of human beings as male and female."

Seltz added, "so much of our gender confusion today starts with our unwillingness to deal with things as they are. Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual… these are our culture's terms. Male and female – these are God's terms, even nature's terms." He added, "To start with our created identity as people of God – male and female – this is the beginning of being able to honor each other, to love each other and yes, even to be tolerant of one another."

The letter is included below:

December 15, 2017

Dear Friends:

As leaders of various communities of faith throughout the United States, many of us came together in the past to affirm our commitment to marriage as the union of one man and one woman and as the foundation of society. We reiterate that natural marriage continues to be invaluable to American society.

We come together to join our voices on a more fundamental precept of our shared existence, namely, that human beings are male or female and that the socio-cultural reality of gender cannot be separated from one's sex as male or female.

We acknowledge and affirm that all human beings are created by God and thereby have an inherent dignity. We also believe that God created each person male or female; therefore, sexual difference is not an accident or a flaw—it is a gift from God that helps draw us closer to each other and to God. What God has created is good. "God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27).

A person's discomfort with his or her sex, or the desire to be identified as the other sex, is a complicated reality that needs to be addressed with sensitivity and truth. Each person deserves to be heard and treated with respect; it is our responsibility to respond to their concerns with compassion, mercy and honesty. As religious leaders, we express our commitment to urge the members of our communities to also respond to those wrestling with this challenge with patience and love.

Children especially are harmed when they are told that they can "change" their sex or, further, given hormones that will affect their development and possibly render them infertile as adults. Parents deserve better guidance on these important decisions, and we urge our medical institutions to honor the basic medical principle of "first, do no harm." Gender ideology harms individuals and societies by sowing confusion and self-doubt. The state itself has a compelling interest, therefore, in maintaining policies that uphold the scientific fact of human biology and supporting the social institutions and norms that surround it.

The movement today to enforce the false idea—that a man can be or become a woman or vice versa—is deeply troubling. It compels people to either go against reason—that is, to agree with something that is not true—or face ridicule, marginalization, and other forms of retaliation.

We desire the health and happiness of all men, women, and children. Therefore, we call for policies that uphold the truth of a person's sexual identity as male or female, and the privacy and safety of all. We hope for renewed appreciation of the beauty of sexual difference in our culture and for authentic support of those who experience conflict with their God-given sexual identity.

Sincerely Yours:

Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, Archbishop and Primate
Anglican Church in North America

The Rev. John F. Bradosky, Bishop
North American Lutheran Church

Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth

Most Rev. James D. Conley, Bishop of Lincoln
Chairman USCCB Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage

The Rt. Rev. John A. M. Guernsey, Bishop, Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic
Anglican Church in North America

Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison, President
Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

Imam Faizal Khan, Founder and Leader
Islamic Society of the Washington Area

Most Rev. Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville
Chairman USCCB Committee for Religious Liberty

Melchisedek, Archbishop of Pittsburgh
Orthodox Church in America

The Rt. Rev. Eric V. Menees, Bishop, San Joaquin
Anglican Church in North America

Rev. Eugene F. Rivers, III, Founder and Director
Seymour Institute for Black Church and Policy Studies
Church of God in Christ

Rev. Dr. Gregory P. Seltz, PhD, Executive Director
The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty

The Rev. Paull Spring, Bishop Emeritus
The North American Lutheran Church

Rev. Tony Suarez, Executive Vice President
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Very Rev. Nathanael Symeonides, Ecumenical Officer
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The Rev. Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Stated Clerk, General Assembly
Presbyterian Church in America

Andrew Walker, Director of Policy Studies
Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

The Rev. Dr. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry and Ecumenism
The North American Lutheran Church

Paul Winter, Elder
Bruderhof

On my desk and off to the right of my computer are twelve or so books that have shaped me in meaningful ways. I picked one up again that was written by a relatively recently dead German pastor that looks at Jesus' words – *blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*. This pastor has a quote that struck me:

> When reproached, they [the meek] hold their peace; when treated with violence they endure it patiently….They will not go to law to defend their rights, or make a scene when they suffer injustice, not do they insist on their legal rights.

I suppose I find his words striking for a variety of reasons. One reason is that I have been trained like other Americans to appeal to the fact that I'm a citizen. I can say whatever I want because of the First Amendment. It's my *right* to do so. But if this writer is correct, that may not be the case.

I suppose the quote leaves me wondering, do I really have rights as a Christian?

Well, there's a story to help us. Do you remember Paul? Ex-Christian slayer? Yeah, that one. He actually used his rights as a Roman citizen a couple of times. The first time occurred when he was about to be flogged (Acts 22:22-29). Those unable to listen to the message Paul proclaimed charged him with disorderly conduct. Paul's accusers called the police (i.e., the Romans). The Romans were about to whip Paul when he said, "Oh, wait, can Roman citizens be punished this way these days?" The obvious answer was no. There were some punishments that were off limits to Romans. For instance, crucifixion was considered cruel and unusual for Romans. Paul said, "I am a Roman," and the police backed off! He used his rights.

There's another time, however, that Paul did something similar. Jumping ahead a couple of chapters, Paul faced new charges (Acts 25). He appealed to Caesar. So it would sort of be like someone slowly working up through all the various courts until finally their case was heard by the Supreme Court. Paul wanted a ruling directly from the emperor's mouth. So Paul set off to Rome to face his judgement. Again, he used his rights.

Now pausing for a moment – you have to ask, why is he using his rights? Because either this German pastor quote is wrong or Paul is wrong (and let's be honest, we know who is going to win the fight). Paul has been around for a lot longer. To cut to the chase, however, they're both correct; and, Paul and this pastor's point might be summarized like this: you have no rights *for yourself*, but you have rights *for everybody else*. But let's finish Paul's story.

Paul sailed to Rome and he met the Jews living there. Naturally, Paul did what Paul did best – proclaimed Jesus as Lord: "He [Paul] lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:30-31).

While Acts doesn't clue us in with particulars, it is accepted that Paul eventually met his (temporary) demise. It would seem that Paul's rights as a Roman citizen were useless. His appealing got him nowhere, which to a certain extant is true – his appealing to Caesar got *him* nowhere. But look at where it got the Jews living in Rome. Some disconnected to who and what Jesus was all about in Jerusalem due to distance heard the truth:

Jesus died, Jesus rose. Even greater is the impact that a single letter addressed to those in Rome has had on people ever since Paul wrote it, including yourself! Ultimately, Paul's rights had a tremendous payoff. Many heard/hear and believed/believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

But don't miss the point. Your rights are not about you or getting what you deserve. Your rights, along with the stuff you own, are there for the sake of the people God has surrounded you with. Paul wasn't trying to slip out of a beating, but rather he was preserving his life so that others might hear the truth – because let's be honest – Paul was radical enough to take the beating. He was deeply invested in other people, or as our Lord calls them – our neighbor.

So the question is as other people stick out their hands in order to receive what is due to them on the basis of their American rights and citizenship, what will distinguish Christian Americans from other Americans? Or is there a difference? If the German pastor and Paul are right, of course there is a difference! Your rights are just another resource to extend love, care, and support to the people around you. That's what will distinguish Christian Americans from Americans. – Pastor Johnson

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THE CHURCH APP by Subsplash

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Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (March 2018): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes in the Mission Fields of the Zion and Trinity Communities

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. . . He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Peter 2:21, 24).

I love the "maps" app on my phone. The voice from the phone gives me directions to reach my destination. Because of Jesus' sacrifice we are assured of our eternal destination. The directions are simple, "believe in Jesus' sacrifice." While we follow Jesus' steps to the cross, we live to freely and joyfully serve Him.

Lenten Signs

Scripture shares only one sign on the way to Calvary. "The King of the Jews" was the sign posted on the cross. Reading and observing our contemporary road signs, we travel with Jesus to the cross. Join us each Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. as we follow the signs: March 7—Yield; March 14—One Way; March 21—Dead End; March 29 (Maundy Thursday)—Food.

Zion Children Travel Through Genesis

The Spring Quarter (March through May) of the Sunday school curriculum introduces the children to Creation, the Fall and God's Promises to Noah, Abraham, and Jacob. Weekly attendance at Sunday school provides children with an understanding of God's plan from the beginning of time. Children will journey with Jesus on our Palm Sunday and Easter worship services.

Vocation Explorations

The March Fellowship Club meeting will be Monday, March 12 at 7 p.m. This month we celebrate the role of "volunteer" especially noting the impact of Orphan Grain Train ministries.

Journey with Jeremiah

The journey of Jeremiah was more than trials and laments. Jeremiah 30-33 is termed the "Little Book of Comfort" and the "weeping prophet" becomes the "prophet of hope." Weather adjustments bring Jeremiah's journeys into the early weeks of March. Thanks to all who have explored the wordiest book of the Old Testament.

Ministry Partners

Lutheran Family Service: Zion was blessed to have LFS staff, Rev. Mick Wolfram and Karen Gotto, with us on Feb. 25. LFS provides support through individual and family counseling, adoption services, professional church worker support, and other means of enriching lives and strengthening families. If any of the LFS services might be a blessing to you or your family, contact the pastors for additional contact information.

Camp Okoboji: Kirk Warnke will succeed Doug Kading as Executive Director of our Camp. Camp Okoboji is owned by the members of Iowa District West congregations. Get more information at the annual delegates meeting on Saturday, April 7. Explore a children's, youth, or family camp this summer. The Camp also provides housekeeping cabins for a family experience at Lake Okoboji.

Blessed to journey to the cross with you!
Pastor Bob

ON THAT NOTE

Treasuring our Musical Treasure

This month's hymn, "Upon the Cross Extended," was written by one of the greatest hymnists of all time, Paul Gerhardt. A man intimately familiar with sorrow, suffering, and hardship, Gerhardt came of age in Germany in the midst of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, a war that left eight million people dead and a country desolate and wounded. Gerhardt's wife died young and four of his five children didn't survive childhood. His prince, Friedrich Wilhelm, a staunch Calvinist, in an effort to squelch the Lutheran confession, forbade Lutheran pastors in Berlin from speaking of the differences between the Lutheran and Reformed confessions. Gerhardt refused and was removed from his office as pastor. He wrote, "This is only a small Berlin affliction; but I am also willing and ready to seal with my blood the evangelical truth, and, like my namesake, St. Paul, to offer my neck to the sword." In the Lutheran church at Lübden, Germany, a portrait of Gerhardt hangs with the Latin inscription *Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus*, which means "A divine sifted in Satan's sieve." Despite suffering through Satan's sieve, Gerhardt continued to confess Christ. Of the 123 hymns he wrote, 18 are included in our hymnal. This month's hymn invites to consider not Gerhardt's suffering, but Christ's, a suffering that has ultimately set us free from Satan and sin's tyrannous reign.

Upon the cross extended
See, world, your Lord suspended.
Your Savior yields His breath.
The Prince of Life from heaven
Himself has freely given
To shame and blows and bitter death.

Paul opens his hymn by exhorting us to view Christ extended on the cross. There our Lord is suspended. There our Savior breathes His last. In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther beautifully captured what it means to confess Jesus as our Lord: "The little word *Lord* means simply the same as redeemer. It means the One who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same." That's who's on the cross! And He's there willingly. He has submitted Himself to shameful, cruel punishment to be our Lord, and as such, to save us from eternal death and condemnation.

Come, see these things and ponder,
Your soul will fill with wonder
As blood streams from each pore.
Through grief beyond all knowing
From His great heart came flowing
Sighs welling from its deepest core.

Verse two invites us into deeper contemplation of Christ's cross as Paul paints the scene with words. Blood streams, grief pours, and sighs swell as our Lord endures the cruelty of the cross. This we are exhorted to see with our mind's eye, a sight that will surely fill our souls with wonder.

Who is it, Lord, that bruised You?
Who has so sore abused You
And caused You all Your woe?
We all must make confession
Of sin and dire transgression
While You no ways of evil know.

But who's to blame? Who has abused our Lord? Who has bruised Him? Who inflicted the wounds? Verse three answers, "We did!" We are guilty of sin. We have transgressed. We have broken God's Law. But Jesus, He was innocent. He was guiltless. But He suffers because of us! Again, our souls are filled with wonder as we contemplate Christ's cross.

I caused Your grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.
I caused the woes unnumbered
With which Your soul is cumbered,
Your sorrows raised by wicked hands.

Now verse four moves from the third person plural to the first person singular: *I* stand guilty! *I* caused Christ's sorrow and sighing. *I* caused His woes. I cannot find solace in the presence of the guilty crowd, for *I* am a sinner and *I* have necessitated Christ's death. Sin stains *my* hands. Evil corrupts *my* deeds. He dies because of *me*!

Your soul in griefs unbounded,
Your head with thorns surrounded,
You died to ransom me.
The cross for me enduring,
The crown for me securing,
You healed my wounds and set me free.

And yet He dies *<u>for</u> me*! He doesn't simply die *because* of me, but He dies *<u>for</u> me*! He dies to ransom me! He is wounded to heal *my* sin-infected wounds. He dies to free *me*. He endures the cross to secure *my* crown, to welcome *me* into His Kingdom as a co-regent, as one who will reign with Him. Not merely are we, the guilty, acquitted, but we are promised positions in the Kingdom! Surely it fills the soul with wonder.

Your cords of love, my Savior,
Bind me to You forever,
I am no longer mine.
To You I gladly tender
All that my life can render
And all I have to You resign.

Wild animals are kept in check with strong cords, but our Savior leads us, even binds us to Him with cords of sacrificial love. We, now, are not our own. The love of Christ has united us to Him. This truth alone has the power to remake us completely. The Apostle Paul celebrated this reality by reminding us that we have been bought with a price – the shed blood of Jesus – and that through the waters of Baptism we have been united / co-identified with Jesus. We, indeed, have no identity apart from Christ. So, as our verse acknowledges, we offer the entirety of our lives to Christ. Gladly we submit it to our Savior. If He has done all this for us, what would we withhold from Him?

Your cross I place before me;
Its saving pow'r restore me,
Sustain me in the test.
It will, when life is ending,
Be guiding and attending
My way to Your eternal rest.

Our hymn closes with Christ's cross centered in our view, a devotional practice many Christians have found deeply edifying. This cross, so powerfully painted in words by our hymn, is the saving power of God. Regular meditation on Christ's cross remains one of the greatest helps in times of trouble or testing. His cross is the way to the rest He promises. Until then, our lives, like Paul Gerhardt's, will know sorrow, suffering, and hardship. But, because of Christ's cross, it will not always be so. He lives to welcome us into His rest, a rest not marked by inactivity, but by freedom from sin and death, a joy in His loving presence.

See Preschool Praises on Page 10!

"I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).[1]

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: "But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It's not so much that we stop giving, but we don't put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is a sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God's Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service.

Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

[1] This article was provided by LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Preschool Praises for February 2017

February was short and sweet! Although weather got in the way a few times, we still got to have fun and learn.

The first week of February we focused on hibernation and Groundhog's Day. Hibernation is always an interesting idea to present to children, but they catch on quickly. We sequenced events in order, worked on counting, and painted hearts with marbles. The children got to make their own groundhog on a stick that could come up out of a cup and we pretended that it saw its shadow and would go back down quickly. We talked about the first miracle that Jesus did when he turned water into wine at the wedding feast.

The second week was all about dental health and how to take care of our teeth. We learned what foods make our teeth happy or sad and painted teeth using toothbrushes. Library Linda visited the morning class and the Crawford County Naturalist visited the afternoon class. The children always enjoy these visits and we are very blessed to have them come. We also talked about when Jesus healed the paralyzed man and how he first forgave his sins then healed his body. I explained how Jesus is still forgiving us of our sins today!

The third week was all hearts and love as we enjoyed Valentine's Day. We decorated Valentine's boxes and worked on color recognition. Scissor skills and tracing were also practiced. It is amazing to see how much they have improved since the beginning of the year! Our sensory bin had pipe cleaners and cut up pieces of straws which they used to make bracelets and necklaces by stringing the straws onto the pipe cleaners. We teachers and many mothers have a new set of jewelry! We also had a great time with a little Valentine's party and treats. Thank you to Judy Bald and Thrivent Financial for supporting our class party. Jesus healed a blind man by spitting in the dirt and making mud to put on the blind man's eyes, which many of the children agreed would be pretty gross, but then Jesus told him to wash his face and when he did, he could see! Only God could have done this miracle and we know that Jesus is God!

The fourth week started with the children singing in church and doing a wonderful job! It was so much fun practicing “This Little Light of Mine” and “Jesus Love Is a Bubblin' Over.” Their little faces just light up! We focused on Presidents and the letter A. The children learned about George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and got to clean off pennies with vinegar and salt. They also did rubbings of quarters with crayons on paper to see the images appear. We worked on letter and number recognition by playing different games and asked each child what they would do if they were president. Some of the answers included "color" and "help people" and "build houses." As you can imagine, the concept of what a president does is pretty hard for 3 and 4-year-olds, but it is still cute to see what they say!

We had our registration night on the 21st and we still have some spots left for the 3-and 4-year-old classes for the 2018-2019 school year, so if you have a child or if you know of anyone with a child of this age, please send them our way! We would love to see our classes filled and meet all the new little faces in the fall!

Again, thank you for all of your support of our preschool program and the donations that we receive! Every penny helps us in teaching children about Jesus!

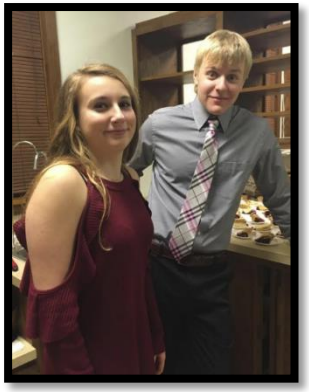
Yours in Christ, Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz

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

Last month, Trizion youth group held a Valentines Banquet at Trinity Lutheran Church in Manilla. We had over forty people in attendance and served salad, lasagna, dinner rolls, and pie for dessert. Games such as "find a person" bingo, name that love song, the couples game, and Pictionary were played. The youth decorated the fellowship hall for the event and worked really hard to make sure everything ran smoothly.

We will continue on with our series of Seven Letters to Seven Churches this month. To give you an idea of what we have been learning...we are continuing to look at the seven churches of Revelation and as we look at these passages, I'm trying to also teach the kids how to read and study the Bible. What to look at when you are reading the Bible, such as context, historical and within the passage itself, who the author is, where they are writing from, why they are writing, etc. So far we have looked at the church of Ephesus and Smyrna. So, we looked at the history of Ephesus back in Acts 19. We looked at the start of the church in Ephesus, what the world was like there. We discussed the many idols that were being worshipped and why the church would have had a difficult time. Then we went back to Revelation and we looked at the passage. We saw how Jesus is writing the letter to these people through the author John. We saw how Jesus commends the church for standing strong, and because we had the background, we knew that the church would have been surrounded by false gods and instead stood strong in their faith. Yet, the church of Ephesus had lost their true love, God. They had become lazy and no longer were trying to be an active part of their faith. So, we were able to discuss how we, in our own lives today do that.

The kids really seem to love coming to youth. We have been playing various games, and that is always a fun time! If you would like to check out some pictures, or stay up to date, trinitylutheranmanilla.com has a Trizion youth group page with pictures and information, or you can always email me at tlo7227@gmail.com.



SERVING THE LORD IN

PANAMA

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

February 2018
Vol. 3 Issue II

Lenten blessings to you all from our family in Panamá. Recently, we traveled to Colón to check out the Caribbean side of the Panama Canal. I took the photo above from a small road over the locks giving you a glimpse into the locks systems as the doors were opening. This lock door marks the beginning of a remarkable journey a ship takes through the Isthmus of Panamá and into the Pacific Ocean. It is incredible to think that these locks were constructed over 100 years ago and ships still use the Canal to traverse the contours of Panamá.

As the Church prepares for the amazing work of Jesus both in his death on the cross and glorious resurrection, the Church now embarks on a remarkable journey by means of the season of Lent. But the beginning of the church's Lenten journey feels a lot less remarkable than the opening of the great doors of the Pamana Canal locks. Instead, Christians gather in their churches on Ash Wednesday to have ashes smeared upon their foreheads and to hear the words from the dust you were made and to the dust you shall return. Lent begins with a solemn reminder of our mortality and sinfulness. That as sinful creatures we deserve nothing but the wrath of God. However, the ashes are put on our foreheads in the shape of a cross reminding us of the hope that we have in Christ. That Jesus took our place on the cross to endure the complete wrath of God for our sin. By faith in Christ Jesus, in a marvelous exchange, we know and experience the kindness and love of God rather than his wrath.

But first, we walk with Jesus and traverse the contours of his final days on the way to Jerusalem and to the cross to pay the debt of our sin and bring us reconciliation with God. Perhaps this entrance into Lent is as marvelous as the Canal doors. A small ash cross to remind us that we are both sinners and saints and that we are heirs of a glorious promise (1 Cor. 5:21). To God be the glory!

Savior, when in dust to Thee Low we bow the adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
O, by all Thy pains and woe Suffered once for us below,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our penitential cry! ('Savior, When in Dust to Thee' LSB 419)

Every 22 months missionary families come off of their field of service to visit friends, families, and mission partners for a couple of months. It is hard to believe that we are already at the planning stages of our home service. Currently, we are scheduled to be in the United States in August, September, and part of October of this year. This is an opportunity for us to reconnect with the Office of International Mission and update our supporters on all of the work the Lord is doing through our efforts in Panamá.

We are excited to spend this time with you. Two years into our service and we continue to be in awe and thankful for all the support the Lord has worked through your generosity. We pray continued blessings upon your families and congregations this Lenten season and we hope to hear from you very soon.

Pastor Brian, Amanda, and Ezra

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

Missionaries to Indonesia

SELAMAT

Read more online at:
http://ferrys.asia

With great joy and gratitude, the Ferry Family proudly announces the birth of Kiddo #6! Charlotte Grace was born on Saturday, 17 February 2018 in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. She arrived feet-first, and weighed 7 lbs. She's big by Indonesian standards, but makes her the smallest Ferry kid born to us. Cheryl is well, and was released from hospital the very next day (!).

Charlotte got to come home on Monday, and we look forward to her upcoming re-birth in the waters of Holy Baptism on Sunday, 25 February.

Caleb is learning to love the fact that he's still the only boy, and now has FIVE little sisters to protect and serve. Thank you for your prayers... please let them continue!

Celebrate with us, dear friends and co-workers... Today we were witnesses as the Lord Jesus claimed Charlotte Grace in the waters of Holy Baptism. It was a small, simple ceremony, but still the Lord Jesus came to her in the water, included in God's command and combined with God's Word.

The other kids loved to be able to see, and to remember their own baptism. Chloe was stunned as she watched this baptism, and the other kids told her about her own.

Thank you for celebrating with us, and for your fervent prayers. The Lord has answered us mightily today as He protected her to this day and has kept His promises as He always does.

Peace be with all of you, our fellow baptized and forgiven saints of God.

Yours humbly and joyfully in Jesus,
The Ferry Family: Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, Cassandra, Chloe, and Charlotte

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*.

China Lutheran Seminary
Our Missionary in Taiwan
Dr. Stephen Oliver

中華信義神學院
China Lutheran Seminary

The Olivers: Isaac, Maggie, Ginny, Stephen, Gary,

On January 30, The China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) co-workers met in the new Mission Center Office in Taipei as part of the CELC Annual Meeting. The emphasis for the meeting was on evangelism and missions in Taiwan and abroad. Pray for our partner church body as they move forward in the work of spreading the Gospel!

The whole group toured the new children's center in Taipei, which may prove to be an important outreach to families.

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

March 4	Door Offering for Pastor Ferry (Zion) Support Zion's missionary in Indonesia on March 4th!
March 11	Family Game Day (at Zion): 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. w/ pizza at 5:00 Bring your favorite game and enjoy a fun afternoon with the Zion and Trinity families.
March 25	Palm Sunday 9:00 a.m. at Zion and Trinity Children will process at Zion with palms
March 28	Maundy Thursday 7:00 p.m. at Zion Celebrate Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper and see the altar stripped in remembrance of Christ's arrest and trial before Pilate.
March 29	Good Friday 7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service at Zion Hear the last words of Jesus and experience the impact of His final breath in this service of darkness.
April 1	Easter Sunday 6:45 a.m. Trinity Easter Sunrise Worship at Nishnabotna Cemetery 7:45 a.m. Trinity Easter Breakfast 9:00 a.m. Trinity Easter Worship 7:00 a.m. Zion Easter Sunrise Service with breakfast to follow Children invited to participate in opening procession by carrying flags and lilies
April 23	Church Safety and Security Workshop at Zion Provided by Brotherhood Mutual and Iowa District West 9:00 – 4:15
April 25	Confirmation Witness Night 6:00 p.m.
April 29	Confirmation Sunday

March Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. LaVern Bald
2. Jennifer Behrens
   Kaleal Hass
   Curtis Lingle (T)
   LeAnne Lingle (T)
   Marge Schnoor (T)
3. Lori Genzen
   LeeAnn Musfeldt (T)
4. Katelyn Crawford
   Marion Ream
   Rebecca Vollstedt (T)
6. Camden Alexander
   Josiah Conner
   Matthew Gore
   Paige Hinners
7. Larry Lesle
   Errol Wegner
   Zachary Lorenzen (T)
8. Lenus Borkowski
   Beverly Bruhn
   Bonnie Lorenzen (T)
10. Stan Baack
    Randahl Peters
11. Cynthia Grau
    Curtis Grimm
    Jeff Hargens
12. Floyd Forman
13. Shannon Walters
14. Justice Cornelius
15. Dean Grau
    Tyler Saunders
16. Julie Lamp
    Chad Morrow
    Kelly Nissen
17. Nancy Grimm
    Dave Grundmeier
    Katherine Vogel
18. Lyle Bald
19. Julianna Stribe
    Anna Belle Wegner
20. Barbara Grove
    Cynthia Karsten
    Virgene Kroeger
    Abby Lapel
    Chloe Otto
    Ella Stammer
21. Dustin Petersen
    Russell Ranniger
23. Robert Nissen
    Linda Vinke
24. Jonathon Asmus
    Travis Borkowski
    Nathanael Conner
    Claire Gore
    Alix Puck
25. Carla Backhaus
    Danielle Hargens
26. Marjorie Jurgensen (T)
27. Noah Gore
    Dwight Gruhn
    Ashley Lage
    Aaron Rutz
    David Tibben
28. Michael Alexander
    Rebecca Conner
    Rachel Stoberl
29. Beth Booth
    Judy Borkowski
    Brenda Ehlers
    Loren Ferry (T)
29. Robert Lueth (T)
30. Lacey Hinners
31. Joelle Puck

Anniversaries

4. Thomas & Susie Ulrickson
8. William & Shona Weitl
29. Chad & Kelli Morrow
    Ken & Joelle Puck
30. Scott & Terri Rosener
31. Lorrell & Judy Borkowski

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

Official Acts

Baptisms:

Gracelyn Kay Pinney; daughter of Brandon Pinney and Brittney Page; February 24, 2018; Pastor Robert Riggert

Funerals:

Viola Mae (nee: Asmus) Ostebee; Died January 30, 2018; Funeral February 3, 2018 (Trinity Lutheran Church); Pastor Robert Riggert

Scott Harrison Robinson; Died January 31, 2018; Funeral February 10, 2018; Pastor Jonathan Conner and Pastor Robert Riggert

Inez Eileen (nee: Stoelk) Mahnke; Died February 5, 2018; Fuernal February 12, 2018; Pastor Jonathan Conner and Pastor Robert Riggert

David Genzen; Died February 10, 2018; Funeral February 14, 2018; Pastor Robert Riggert and Pastor Andrew Johnson

Kenneth Selmer Knudson; Died February 24, 2018; Funeral February 28, 2018; Pastor Jonathan Conner and Pastor Robert Riggert

In Our Prayers

Walt Noelck, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Gabriel Albers (Pastor and Rebecca's nephew), Athena Bess, Diane Henkleman, Ron Claussen (Laurene Meeves' brother), Rick Spack, Ray Christensen, Arlo Dammann, Don Lamb