Poetry is good for the soul. It gives voice to deep down places. It enables the mechanistic eye, constrained by sterile cause and effect, to see in new hues and additional dimensions. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), author of the poem below, processed the world in poetry – and much the richer we are because of it! Sip and savor his verses like a steaming mug of newly brewed coffee.

God's Grandeur

By Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Beneath the interminable trod of man's boot-shod feet, Hopkins sees a divine current – electric-like – an oozing freshness, as from crushed olives, running through creation – yet most men seem dead to it. How can man remain blind and unmoved before it? How can he not see God's glory "flame out, like shining from shook foil"? "Why do men… not reck his rod" (reckon/acknowledge the rod of God's reign)? The psalmist saw the divine flaming: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). And yet man treads dead to it.

The world wearies under the tramp and trod of generation after generation, forced to wear "man's smudge" and share "man's smell." And man, whose shod feet can no longer feel the soil, continues marching mindlessly upon the fatigued soil. Yet "for all this, nature is never spent." As Hopkins masterfully phrases it, "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things…" God has imbued nature with His ever-new, ever-fresh life that those with eyes to see perceive with new and fresh surprise and joy. So though the night blankets the world in death-like darkness, the morning dawns with the promise of new life – because God's Spirit, like a hen brooding over its chicks, hovers in life-sustaining and, ah!, life-giving love.

Good for the soul, indeed.

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (February 2019): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

"Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ . . . to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen (Romans 16:25-27).

February is short but super: Super Bowl (Feb. 3); super presidents (birthdays of Washington and Lincoln); super reformer (Martin Luther died February 18); and super romance (Valentines' Day). There are many definitions and expressions of "super." The Apostle Paul shares the God of super grace and glory in the book of Romans. We are blessed to give Him super praise in this continuing season of Epiphany.

Super SERVANTS

The Fellowship Club continues its monthly focus on vocation. Judy Jacobsen will be the special guest at the Monday, February 11 meeting (7 p.m.). Judy will share her vocation as a teacher at the IKM-Manning school system. Judy works with technology and online learning (among many other tasks). Education today is vastly different from a generation (or even a decade) ago. Come and learn with Judy. Guests are always welcome.

Thanks for the generous donations to Orphan Grain Train. On Thursday, January 17, the Club transported 2 pickup and 2 van loads of clothing and blankets. The next collection will be the end of March. Last year over 5,000 hours were volunteered at the Ida Grove warehouse. The Ida Grove site is one of 26 centers around the United States. A most recent shipment from the local warehouse went to the country of Georgia (former area of the Soviet Union) where many in the impoverished areas received the clothing and medical equipment.

Super LIGHT

We received THE LIGHT of the Word. We are Jesus' LIGHTS in our church, home, and community. Twenty Zion members gathered on January Mondays for a special Epiphany Bible study.

Pastors Johnson and I are hoping to help organize a Men's Ministry group. The community group would gather around God's Word; explore the challenges of our roles as Christian men; enjoy fellowship; and serve the community. If you have any suggestions or questions about this ministry visit with one of the Pastors.

Super JOURNEY

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday worship on March 6. Plan now on joining us on the journey with Moses through the wilderness; with Jesus to the cross; and with fellow believers in the walk of faith. More details on services times will be shared in the March newsletter.

Super MILLENIALS

Pastor Johnson and I recently attended a presentation by LCMS Youth Ministry Director, Rev. Mark Kiessling, on ministry to the millennial generation (approximate ages 23-38) 34% of this generation claim no religious affiliation. Our church body's statistics indicated that we retain 1-in-3 of this generation after their confirmation. Proactive responses of the church include: LISTEN to their doubts and questions; establish caring RELATIONSHIPS; build up and support the FAMILY. May God bless our ministry to each of His chosen generations.

Super blessed!
Pastor Riggert

Questioning the Unquestioned

"The most dangerous ideas in a society are not the ones being argued, but the ones that are assumed." These words, attributed to C. S. Lewis, bear serious consideration. At the moment, our society is arguing fiercely over weighty matters: government shutdowns, border walls, trade practices, and governing philosophies, to name but a few. And surely these are emotionally charged issues. But, as Lewis pointed out, these are not the most dangerous ideas; true danger lies in the ideas being assumed. And there is perhaps no greater assumption undergirding American culture, and sadly, much of Christian culture, than this: *we are sexual beings*.

We are sexual beings isn't merely asserting that sex is a part of the human experience; it's asserting that sex is everything, that sex is at the core of our being as humans, that expressing our sexual desires is at the heart of our identity. Linda Bartlett, author of *The Failure of Sex Education in the Church*, explains how *"We are sexual beings"* is really asserting: "Sexuality is our entire selves, influences us in every way, and encompasses everything."

This assumption undergirds politics, academia, journalism, much of educational philosophy and curricula, psychology, psychiatry, and so disturbingly much more. Consider but the tip of the iceberg: various legislatures around the country are now mandating LBGTQ (lesbian, bi, gay, trans, questioning) history be taught in schools. Elementary education, in many parts of the country, includes transgender-and-same-sex-behavior-endorsing books such as *I Am Jazz, Jacob's New Dress, Mommy, Momma, and Me,* and *A Tale of Two Daddys*. Sex education curricula in America, much of which is produced by SIECUS,[1] is now being pushed to utilize "The Gender Unicorn" or "The Genderbread Person" to erase biological sex as a meaningful concept.[2]

Scores of colleges have entire departments dedicated to sexual orientation and gender identity studies, with courses such as "Digital Queers: Public Space, Art, and Performance in the Digital Age," "Queer Politics and Performance," "Queer Theories and Histories." Numerous groups have compiled "pride lists" of LGBTQ friendly colleges and "shame lists" for colleges that hold back from a full scale endorsement. Athlete Ally, after providing LGBTQ-friendly policy suggestions for

[1] Mary Calderon (the first director of Planned Parenthood) with funds from Hugh Hefner (the founder of Playboy magazine), helped form SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States). It is the most significant driving force behind sex education in America (and even partners with the United Nations, setting global sex education standards). Its website endorses abortion as health care; homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality as healthy sexual lifestyles; and "sexually explicit" materials (i.e. pornography) as "valuable educational or personal aids." http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageId=494&parentID=472

[2] "The Gender Unicorn" is a cartoon unicorn created by trans-activists that breaks identity down into the following categories: gender identity, gender expression, sex assigned at birth, physically attracted to, and emotionally attracted to. Notice the language of sex "assigned" at birth. Biology is meaningless; one's inner desires are supreme. And "The Genderbread Person" offers similar categories.

college athletic departments, now publishes praise/shame lists of schools based on their LGBTQ friendliness (Corporate Equality Index does the same for American businesses).

An increasing number of colleges are allowing a third gender designation on their college registration, and many states are now including a third gender on government IDs. Many colleges now include a preferrred pronoun (they, them, their, ve, ver, vis, xe, xem, xyr) component to freshman orientation. October marked the first "International Pronouns Day." Organizers assert, "Referring to people by the pronouns they determine for themselves is basic to human dignity…" Dozens of businesses and over 100 colleges endorsed the day.

Isn't it time we question the assumption?

In January, Stanford University, amid much fanfare, unveiled its new all-gender locker room. Numerous elementary teachers across the country are coming forward as "non-binary" and insisting that their students address them not as Mr. or Ms., but as Mx.

Many segments of the church are embracing the *we are sexual beings* assumption. As has been documented before in this newsletter, the ELCA, for instance, has developed entire liturgies to bless same-sex unions and gender transitions. And do we even need to mention advertising and magazine covers? What, really, are they selling? And what is being used to sell? And what unstated belief are they promulgating?

These preceding paragraphs are but the tip of the iceberg. And beneath it all is the nearly unchallenged assumption: *we are sexual beings*. But is it true? Would it help if we studied the root of the assumption? If you dug just a little ways beneath the surface, you'd uncover the name Alfred Kinsey (1894-1965). Most people probably know him best for his two hugely influential books *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. In these works, Kinsey purported to provide scientific evidence to support the assertion *We are sexual beings*.

But reality tells a different story. Kinsey was passionately atheistic, even anti-theistic (strongly antagonistic toward God). He endorsed Darwinian evolution and all if its implications for sexual morality (i.e. any and every sexual expression is acceptable). He frequented nudist camps, even practiced nudism with his wife and children. He appeared nude in front of students, even watched them bathing. He and his wife welcomed multiple sexual partners and he endorsed and practiced unmentionable, sickening sex acts.

Mr. Kinsey founded the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University, in which his inner circle of researchers practiced spouse swapping, even filming many of their engagements supposedly for research purposes. The alleged scientific evidence behind his books was obtained through immoral and unethical methods. Among his specifically targeted interviewees were imprisoned sex offenders and prostitutes, especially those of the most perverse variety. His "research" on children is beyond description and can scarcely be described as anything but criminal and depraved.

Based on his "research," he concluded, "there is no scientific reason for considering particular types of sexual activity as intrinsically, in their biologic origins, normal or abnormal." This man's "research" lies beneath the assumption *we are sexual beings*. It is the supposed scientific underpinnings that were used to support the assertion. And, as presented earlier, his findings were, and in many cases continue to be, largely unquestioned.

Isn't it time we question the assumption?

Yes, sex is a part of the human experience, even having the blessing of God within the marriage of husband and wife (for the purposes of one-flesh union and procreation), but it is not of the essence of being human. If it were, we would be forced to say that Jesus was somehow less than human for not engaging in the sexual act. Further, we would insinuate that celibate singles are somehow subhuman in their celibacy.

WE ARE WIRED TO DESIRE GOD.

Instead of accepting the assumption *we are sexual beings*, we would do better to confess the historical truth that *we are religious beings*. We are wired to desire God, to know Him, to fellowship with Him. Scripture declares that God has set eternity in our hearts, so that our hearts instinctively yearn for fellowship with Him. Knowing God precedes all else. True fulfillment is found in knowing Him and in being known by Him. Our identity is not found in any sexual behavior or preference, but in our created and redeemed status as children of God. The need to appreciate this truth cannot be overstated.

With this established, we can move forward into God's design and will for His creation, a design and will imprinted on our bodies and in our hearts (conscience) and clearly revealed in His Word. We are male or female. There is no spectrum here. Yes, there are biological abnormalities that have resulted from the fall. Yes, there are numerous ways to express oneself as male or female, but there is no third gender option.

As male and females, our sexual organs have clearly been designed to join with their complement. It is true that we may discover our desires at odds with our bodies' design, and we should not make light of this, for this is a great source of inner angst for those with such desires. Nor should we simply affirm the desires. Instead, we should see our misaligned desires as evidence of our fallen condition. If truth be told, we all have desires opposed to the Creator's design and will. EVERY LAST ONE OF US.

IF TRUTH BE TOLD, WE ALL HAVE DESIRES OPPOSED TO THE CREATOR'S DESIGN AND WILL. EVERY LAST ONE OF US.

The lie *we are sexual beings* connects sexual expression to identity, and thereby, encourages us, even requires us, to affirm and pursue these inner desires to be fully human. The truth, *we are religious beings,* however, encourages us to pursue the Creator's design, to see it as good (both intrinsically a good thing and something good for us), and as best as we are able, to align our lives with the design, believing God's design is best for human flourishing.

Yes, we will fail. Yes, we will give in to our sinful desires. But we don't despair. We don't give up. And we certainly don't affirm the desires as good. We run to God for forgiveness - and God showers us with His abundant and cleansing grace! That's why the Church exists – to offer again and again the purifying grace of God in Christ. Further, the Church exists to affirm the good of the Creator. We recognize that it is at odds with the culture and with many of the twisted desires screaming for satisfaction from within every one of us, but we confidently confess and lovingly insist that what God has called good is truly good and is the goal for which we should be aiming. **So, together let us question what has been unquestioned (*we are sexual beings*) and confess what is true (*we are religious beings*).** – Pastor Conner

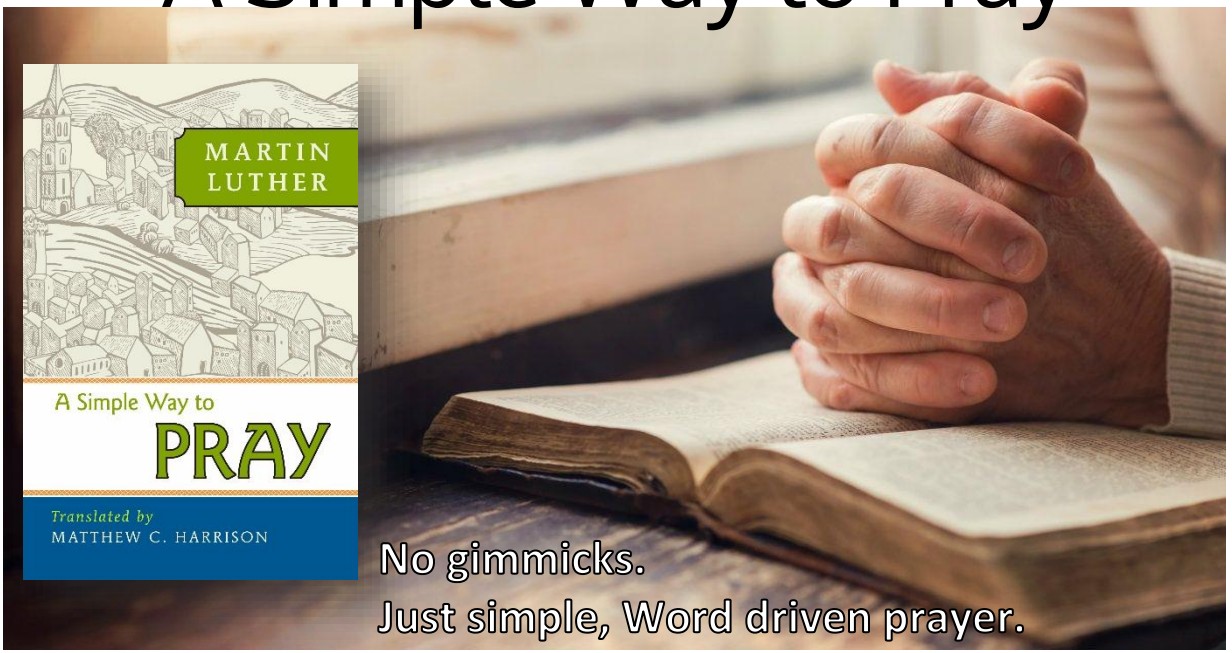
ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

Relief for Human Need Worldwide

10 Fellowship club members delivered 2 pick-up and 2 van loads of donated clothing to Orphan Grain Train warehouse in Ida Grove on Thursday, January 17. The delivery also included 50 quilts assembled by the Zion quilters.

The group spent 2 hours sorting the Zion delivery (and more) into appropriate "boxes"—men's, women's, children's, winter, summer, coats, socks, underwear, and more categories. Shipments go to destinations around the world!

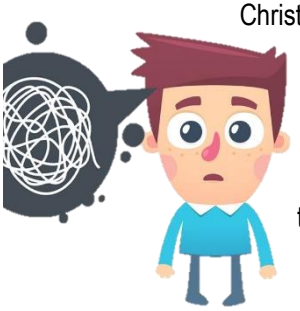
A Simple Way to Pray



Family Bible Class

Beginning Sunday, February 10

I'm falling apart…and that's OK



Christmas Eve arrived. Ever since October, a small team including myself worked diligently to make sure that the worship at Trinity was high quality but at the same time dripping with the truth that Christmas is more than a feeling. It's the Son of God's earth-shattering arrival.

The day of, new scented candles flickered in the front to activate people's sense of smell. New lighted angels and a star were nailed to the left to stimulate sight. Bulletins were hung by the chimney with care or something like that. Quite frankly, there are very few things I can say I was more prepared for in my whole entire life than Christmas Eve 2018.

The people began to arrive. The floor of Trinity's sanctuary creaked, because it had been a long time since it had held so many people. An introductory video ushered people into the Christmas story. As it finished I emerged from the side entrance to give instructions and welcome.
In the back of my mind I was thinking something like, "This is it. What we've been preparing for – and it looks amazing!" I introduced the first song; the organ chimed in. I walked behind the altar, and *it* swallowed me up.

My knees dissolved into rubber. My heart sprinted. Sweat dribbled down my forehead. The walls of the sanctuary closed in so that it felt like I was in an Amazon box that was made for one or two books only. I wanted to crawl out of the sanctuary. Would anyone notice? My words felt like 1,000 pounds; I wanted to keep quiet. Christmas Eve had arrived, and I found that Trinity was the last place in the world I wanted to be.

What happened?

Looking back at that night, I showed the classic symptoms of a panic attack. It's the sensation that you're going to pass out even though that's impossible since your heart is racing rather than slowing down. What triggered it? That's a mystery, but if you find out please let me know. I mean I was prepared. This wasn't my first rodeo when it came to conducting worship. It made no sense to panic.

But if that weren't bad enough things got worse after Christmas Eve. The day after and returning from vacation in Missouri, the idea of leading worship petrified me. A new monster emerged. Anxiety. I had become gun shy. I was afraid I'd pass out; I was afraid of the fear of a second panic attack. It felt like everyone in the sanctuary was out to get me (which is ridiculous of course).

Drowning in anxiety, I did not lead worship the first Saturday after I had come back from a trip to Missouri. Of course new feelings emerged that night. Fear – will I be able to remain a pastor? Will I need to find a new vocation? Where will we move to? And while a mountain of questions filled up my imagination, I found myself chained to my bed. I had no energy to leave. I was lost in the swirling of my racing mind.

Why am I telling you all of this?

Dark spaces of life invite the Light to shine the brightest. I wanted to share my experience with you for a couple of reasons:

In a broken world bodies don't work perfectly. For whatever reason my brain triggered the adrenal medulla to release epinephrine and norepinephrine into my bloodstream. I went into fight or flight mode, but it never really kicked off. And a fear of a fear increased adrenaline at inopportune times. My body was not syncing up with reality. I had led worship hundreds of times

before, and there was no need to fear harm or danger. If I could just will myself to stop feeling that way, I would have in a heartbeat. Point being, the time and space we find ourselves is dominated by bodies breaking down physically and mentally or some combination of the two. What this experience has given me is a greater amount of humility towards people suffering with mental disorders. It's real; it's not a moral defect; and we should assume it if we take the Bible seriously.

Andrew Johnson is not God (thank goodness). This experience has forced me to wrestle with God and how I relate to Him. Now let me be clear, I can't be sure how or where God was acting *specifically* through this experience. So did He make me have that panic attack at that exact moment behind the altar? Well, I don't know. Jesus is the kaleidoscope through which I see God. Outside of Jesus, who knows what God is doing *specifically* from day to day?

What an experience like this has provided me with though is an opportunity to repent and bow at the foot of Jesus' cross to receive His mercy and forgiveness.

I have a tendency of taking matters into my own hands. I can see it looking back as I prepared for Christmas Eve. By my actions I was saying, "In order for everything to be right, I need to figure it out." I have to be in control. I need to know where things are right down to the last detail.

But there's a problem with that. Our favorite German pastor, Martin Luther, said that anything you go to feel comfort or safety is your god. Looking back (and still today), I have a sinful habit of worshiping in the temple of Control. I want to be god. In a weird way getting Christmas Eve right was my way of salvation. If I got it just right then I mattered. I could save myself through the respect and appreciation of others who experienced the worship. But we all know that salvation beyond Jesus isn't really salvation because eventually it will fail.

So this experience has led me to the place where I need to be…the same place Paul was led to. "Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this [thorn in his side], that it should leave me. But God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Panic, anxiety, whatever has been a gateway to re-experience the power and undeserved attention of the only God who is truly in control. - Pastor Johnson

P.S. Thank you to everyone who has come alongside me to help me. There are too many names, so please just know that you are all deeply appreciated! – Pastor Johnson

2018 Choice Dollars Expire March 31st. You have now received the final 2018 choice dollars which will expire March 31st.

Please call Thrivent Financial at 800-847-4836 and ask for Choice Dollars, OR, log into your Thrivent.com site & designate Choice Dollars. You may also call Janet Smith (712-210-4776) or your own rep for questions. There are thousands of dollars waiting to be claimed that can assist our churches & preschools in doing great things to the glory of God and the benefit of our neighbor!!

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While we were sleeping, smartphones changed the world – and many of us have been caught off guard. Parents are no exception. But so fast has been their takeover that few of us have taken the time to ask, as mentioned last month, whether our children are mature enough to manage smartphones, whether smartphones are affecting the way we conceptualize truth, whether they provide an unregulated pathway for a disrespectful youth culture to undermine parenting and parental authority, whether the instantly available porngraphic content is resistable by tweens and teens, and so much, unimaginably much, more.

The following article is the second half of the article included in last month's newsletter on this subject. If you haven't read the first half, I encourage you to look it up (you can read at zionmanning.com or at worldmag.com). It is intended as a conversation starter, not a conversation ender. Read the arguments presented. Weigh them. Consider them. Are they valid? Do they offer wisdom? I'd love to hear your thoughts. This is a conversation we need to have. Thanks for reading! – Pastor Conner

IT IS INTENDED AS A CONVERSATION STARTER, NOT A CONVERSATION ENDER.

Dare to be different: Ten reasons why parents should offer the gift of a smartphone-free childhood

by S.J. Dahlstrom

6. The entire premise of social media is a lie.

Especially for children, the intoxicating effect of being "liked" is more than they can handle in formative years. Even if this were not true, what would be the real benefit?

The symbiotic gain of even one true friendship is a buoyancy that easily outweighs a thousand clicks on a lip-pouting selfie from Disney World. I want my kids to *do* things, not simply classify themselves by what others *like*.

Social media thrives on a narcissistic vanity that has been condemned by every culture throughout human history. Selfie culture has led to a 24/7 comparison game with others. And the tables are tilted toward only the "best" possible images. This has been proven in numerous studies to lead to depression, suicide, and a range of other social dysfunctions.

Social media thrives on a narcissistic vanity that has been condemned by every culture throughout human history.

I want my kids to value a conversation with the old lady across the street more than a thousand likes of their recent concert attendance or preference of Star Wars over Harry Potter.

7. Anonymity is a killer of human beings.

The anonymous nature of screen interaction promotes secrecy and kills real community. If this is painfully true for adults, then how much more so is it for children?

Connections and relationships birthed and nurtured online can never be trusted entirely,

especially for children still learning the complexities of relationships with their own family members. I want to know their friends and their acquaintances. These are the people they will become. It matters who they are talking to, who they are being shaped by.

8. Technology must be defined as something that *makes my life better*.

Every step toward new methods and mediums must be weighed with this in mind. Technology did not arrive with the iPhone. The printing press, penicillin, and the Hubble telescope were all steps forward that all people embrace. Does Snapchat, Twitter, and non-stop sexualized advertising make my life better? Does the ability to binge watch vulgar and violent TV shows 24/7 in privacy make my life better? Does spending an entire Saturday playing Fortnite with strangers make my life better?

Screens are a recent experiment in human culture. They have existed for a very short time, approximately 100 years. Every year since their creation their availability and usage has increased exponentially. Like asbestos and lead paint, any technology with such a growth curve must be viewed with caution and thoughtfulness.

To quote from *Jurassic Park*, "Your scientists were in such a hurry to figure out if they could, they never stopped to ask if they should."

9. My child has no income and therefore cannot pay for an expensive electronic device and the significant monthly fees attached to its use.

Why is no one talking about this? Nothing without labor …

The argument against smartphones, financially, has a wicked twist to it. This is not some nefarious cancer or villain attacking from without. People are paying through the nose for it. What was a luxury item a few short years ago, parents have been coached to believe is an entitlement for every child.

"Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread?" the Hebrew prophet Isaiah asked.

10. You only get to be a kid once.

One way or another, my child will need to use a smartphone when they are older. I have a smartphone and feel it is necessary for business. President Abraham Lincoln ran the Civil War with the 19th century version of text messaging. Every lasting civilization has word processed in some way. Actual, necessary communication is not a new invention.

When my children are older, they will have the choice to mindlessly read fake news updates, scroll food photos, or zap zombies by the thousands. They will have the choice to view the entirely false representation of sexuality through millions of porn videos, write vicious remarks under assumed avatars, and run up their credit cards on things they do not need like the "new" iPhone every year. Those are coming battles they will have to face alone.

But they will have safely packed away the greatest gift a parent can give their child in the 21st century: a screen-free childhood.

Be the only one.

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PANAMÁ NEWS

January 2019

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

Blessed Epiphany season and a Happy New Year! Today marks the beginning of our third year in Panamá. In many ways, it would be easy to say, "Wow, we haven't really accomplished much in the last few years.", but that would be according to man's standards. We continue to teach Bible studies, preach, and share the Gospel knowing that the Word does not return empty.

In the coming weeks Pastor Lopez and I anticipate taking some youth out to the mission site in Sabanitas to clean it a bit and begin doing some leg work or 'tilling the soil' so-to-speak in anticipation of the continuation of the work there. We hope to do this once a month until a new church planter is called and established.

We also hope to have construction begin in the coming weeks on the church property in Balboa. This is a FORO project a few years in the making. The hope is that once this piece of the property has a new roof and is renovated that it can be used to house guests and mission teams bringing a source of regular income to the local and national church so that they can continue the mission of proclaiming Jesus. The property is located in what is formally known as the "Canal Zone" so it has special rules it must abide by in accordance with the agreement established between the government and all churches in the zone. The building itself is 71 years old this year dating back to almost the beginning of the work of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Panamá.

Beyond providing continuing care to the congregations we will also begin planning for more church planting work in an area called La Chorrera. At one time there was work done here, but due to various circumstances, it was suspended. We have a number of contacts, especially through the church in Sorá, for this growing community. Please continue to hold the Lutheran church of Panamá in your prayers this year and in the coming years as the work and harvest are plentiful but the workers few. To God be the glory for His faithfulness and abiding presence in the ministry and mission of the church!

In family news, Ezra is going to be a big brother! It is will great joy and thanksgiving that we share that his baby sister is due at the end of May. For those who have been praying for us, you know what we have experienced the last two years. We are so thrilled and grateful for the healthy baby girl that the Lord has granted to us and we continue praying for the safety of both Amanda and baby in eager anticipation of the baby's new birth of water and of the Word in Holy Baptism.

Please Pray:

- Amanda and a healthy pregnancy.
- Brian's travels to a symposium.
- Ezra starting school.
- The development of our strategic plan for the mission in Sabanitas and the work in the northern part of Panamá.
- The Balboa roof project.

Preschool Praises for January 2019

January is a fun month of learning about all things to do with winter and cold! The first week after Christmas break was only one day and we spent the day having fun with Mo Willems! I love his books and the kids enjoy the goofy stories as well. We also did some graphing of Mo Willems book characters and talked about the Magi visiting Jesus during Jesus Time.

The second week of January was all about snow, the letter S and the number 9. We painted snow with puff paint (half glue, half shaving cream) and the kids loved how it felt after it dried overnight. We cut out snowflakes from coffee filters and used them to decorate our bulletin board in the fellowship hall. It was so fun to watch their faces light up as they unfolded their snowflakes after cutting them! They used their cutting skills once again to cut out pictures of clothing and glue them into the correct category of either winter or summer clothing. The children had fun with synthetic snow in the sensory tub. Jesus Time was focusing on when Jesus was 12 years old and he stayed behind in the temple in Jerusalem without Mary or Joseph realizing it until the next day, and then it took them 3 days to find him! I can imagine how I would feel finding my child just chatting with some teachers after I had spent all that time searching for him - and he isn't just any child, he is the Son of God! And Jesus' answer to Mary when she asked why he had done this to them? "Didn't you know that I would be in my Father's house?" Mary, in her shock, was confused. Pastor spoke to the children about the Magi and how angels warned them so that they wouldn't tell the evil King Herod of Jesus and that angels again saved Jesus by warning Joseph to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt.

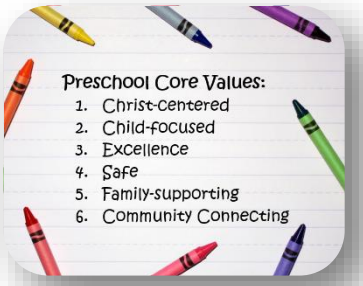
The third week of January was about Snowmen, the number 10, the letter I and rhyming. We played games to discern which picture was different from a group of pictures as well as associating the written number with objects. Rhyming is a hard concept to understand since young children want to group things together that make sense - cat and dog, or cat and meow. Reading rhyming books and talking about the sounds of words helps and playing a game with pictures that they have to match the rhyming objects together was another way we started learning rhyming. Jesus Time was about John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism. I joked with the children that I would put locusts and honey on our snack calendar for the next month as that was what John the Baptist ate. We talked about how the Holy Spirit came down as a dove and rested on Jesus' head and that the heavens opened up and God the Father said "this is my son with whom I am well pleased!" Wouldn't that have been amazing to witness! Pastor spoke to the children about Jesus turning the water into wine at the wedding he had attended with his mother and how this was his first miracle.

The fourth week was about penguins, the letter Z and rhyming. The sensory tub had plastic penguin toys and a block of ice that they could melt with cups of warm water to make a slide for the penguins. We did an experiment to find out why baby penguins don't swim until they get their adult feathers. We used cotton balls to represent the down feathers of a baby penguin and colored an adult penguin picture with crayons to represent the adult feathers. When both were prayed with water, the children could see that the baby feathers absorbed the water and the adult feathers repelled it. So baby penguins would get wet and cold if they swam before their waterproof feathers came in! Jesus Time was about Jesus going into the wilderness after his baptism and not eating for 40 days and 40 nights before the devil came and tempted him. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus resisted temptation and triumphed! Pastor spoke about when Jesus healed Peter's Mother-in-law just by touching her, then all of the sick people in town were brought to him and he healed them, too! What a powerful God we have!

The last week of January hasn't quite started yet, but my plan is to teach about being healthy and germs! With it being winter and illnesses are on the rise all over, it seems fitting to cover this subject. We will talk about hand washing by doing an experiment with lotion mixed with glitter (germs) and having one child cover their hands in the lotion mixture, then we will pass around some toys and after all the children have touched the toys we will look and see who has "germs" on their hands! Then we have to sing "Happy Birthday" twice while we wash our hands to make sure to get all the germs off! We will review rhyming more as well and number recognition and do the letter N. We will be talking about Jesus calling his disciples and how he didn't choose super rich or important people to follow him and that he loves us no matter how small we are!

We will be singing in church this next month on the 17th and have been practicing our songs. They almost have them down already and are so cute! We will be having our Fall Registration for 3 and 4 year olds on February 20th from 4-6 pm and would ask that you help spread the news! If you know of anyone who has a child that is turning 3 before September 15th of this year, please send them our way! If they have questions they are welcome to call the church or email us at zionmanningpreschool@gmail.com. Thank you for all of your support!

Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Nemitz



YOUTH GROUP VALENTINES TRIVIA NIGHT

Sunday - February 17
@ 7pm - Trinity, Manilla

RSVP tickets call 712-654-3031

$20/person
Catered Meal

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

We are gearing up for Trinity's revived annual Valentine's dinner. There will be trivia, but if that doesn't excite you then know that you can support a good cause and there's food :) In January on Sunday nights, we focused on the Tower of Babel, Abraham, and Joseph, and how they all fit into the timeline of Jesus. It was also extra special because we a had a visitor from Orlando, Florida. One of the young ladies who was in our internship youth group visited us a second time in Iowa. We're hoping Carolyn visits us again next year!

COMMISSIONING & INSTALLATION

March 9 @ 4pm
Trinity, Manilla

Be with us as Tiffany officially enters into her role as Deaconess

On Sunday, January 27, over 70 Zion/Trinity family and friends created smiles and memories in our annual bowling party. Special thanks to Shelly Gruhn for organizing and L & M Bowl for hosting!

Amigos en Cristo

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

February 2019

Happy New Year: Epiphany Celebration: For Hispanic families traditionally the Festival of Epiphany is the highlight of the Christmas season. Gifts were not given on Christmas Eve but on January 6th in remembrance of the gifts give to Baby Jesus by the Magi. Each year we continue the Epiphany celebration with a special service followed by a special fellowship. Below the ladies prepared special gifts for the families. The highlight was the "Rosca de Reyes", "Kings cake" (below). It is a circular cake to remind us of the King's crown. The fruit are symbols of the royal riches. Inside are plastic babies and the person who finds Baby Jesus in his/her piece is 'selected' to bring tamales for the festival of the Presentation of the Lord on February 3rd, 40 days after Jesus' birth. Come and join us!

Mission Sunday at Amigos: On December 16 Gary Thies, Director of Mission Central visited the Zion, Denison worship services. We invited him to also visit our Amigos en Cristo worship service which also meets at Zion. We gave him a number of checks totally $1,200.00 from our members and our congregation for mission work among Hispanic missionaries in Latin and South America. We especially want to help the missionaries in Puerto Rico and also in Peru where our former pastor Rev. Bo & Barbara Brink are working. May God continue to bless Mission Central in their mission support!

MISSIONS WITH THE LWML: Last month I shared a picture of the "gorros", stocking caps that the ladies of Zion, Manning made and shared with our folks in Denison and Storm Lake. This month Maru and Marta (center two in red) and I went to thank the Ladies Guild at Zion. We enjoyed the good news of their mission work through the LWML. Thank you ladies for your mission hearts!

Thanks for your support in 2018! Our ministry is a joint outreach through our two Hispanic churches, in Denison and also in Storm Lake. We continue to be blessed by support from many of our District congregations and individuals. We are so grateful for this mission support. Please pray with us that God will open doors for a bilingual pastor to be called to serve our two ministry centers. If you have any questions on how you can support our Hispanic ministry with Thrivent Choice dollars please contact your local Thrivent Financial representative or call Thrivent at 800-847-4836. We thank all who have shared their love with us in the past year! God bless you all and if you able visit our services every Sunday at 10:30AM at Grace in Storm Lake and 12:30PM at Zion, Denison!

Eliminating the Stigma of Mental Health

Zion Cares

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 20% of Americans age 55 years or older experience some type of mental health concern in a year, however, only 40% of those will reach out for help.

Most of us understand that a blood pressure of 210/110, or a blood glucose level of 400 would warrant an immediate phone call to the doctor. However, many suffer with debilitating anxiety causing heart palpitations, ruminating thoughts that lead to insomnia and isolation. Others live with the devastating effects of mood disorders causing uncontrollable crying spell, loss of appetite and even suicidal thoughts, but hesitate to talk about it because of the stigma that is still attached to mental health disorders. Although the rate of depressive symptoms tends to increase with age, depression is not a normal part of growing older with 80% of cases being treatable. The most devastating statistics show us that older white men have the highest suicide rate of any age group; "Men aged 85 years or older have a suicide rate of 45.23 per 100,000, compared to an overall rate of 11.01 per 100,000 for all ages."

Overall health begins with mental health; please reach out if you are having symptoms. Let us help you get the help you need, whether that means connecting you to a medical professional for medication assistance or a counselor for cognitive therapy. Zion cares for you and is eager to connect you to help.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. The state of Mental Health and Aging in America Issue Brief 1: What Do the Data Tell Us? Atlanta, GA; National Association of Chronic Disease Directors; 2008. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/aging and www.chronicdisease.org.

On January 6th, over 20 Zion pre-k through 1st graders brought joy to local Plaza residents through their exuberant singing of Christmas songs. Well done children!

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

Ladies Guild of Zion
January 9, 2019

President Audrey Roe introduced Pastor Vogel who in turn introduced two Spanish speaking ladies who had accompanied him from Amigos en Christo in Denison. They came especially to thank the ladies who had made and donated stocking caps to them.

President Roe then recognized former president Cheral Buhr for her service of four years. A bouquet of 4 roses was given to Cheral to mark never missing a meeting during her tenure.

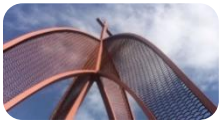
Pastor Conner marked the beginning of the Epiphany season by having us turn to Luke 3:18-21 where the baptism of Jesus is recorded. He noted the three persons of the Trinity, the Father's voice saying He was well pleased with His son, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove on Jesus. Jesus substitutional role for sinful man began at his baptism and was followed immediately by begin tempted by Satan for 40 days in the wilderness. The nation of Israel was called God's son but didn't obey, but Jesus His greater son obeyed even to death on the cross for all mankind. After prayer Christian Life Chairman Margaret Backhaus read a devotion about the gentile magi that followed the star to find Jesus in Bethlehem, bringing him gifts and worshipping him, the Savior for all nations.

President Roe called the business meeting to order. After reading the League Pledge the mite box prayer was said as the mite box was passed. The roll call was answered by telling what neighbor influenced our lives when we were children. President Roe encouraged us to get to know our present neighbors and share the love of Jesus with them. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Correspondence included thank you notes from Norma Bjorkgren, Lutheran Family Service, Timothy Conner, C-3, Pastor Riggert, the Conner Family, Zion pre-school, IOWAY, Lutherans for Life, and Shannon Walters. Treasurer Mary Grimm reported on the $3,300.00 in mission projects that had been dispersed at year's end. She gave the current balance in the treasury as did kitchen treasurer Darlene Vollstedt. Janet Gruhn gave the Human Care report on the dispersal of quilts and stocking caps. The sewing circle is looking for someone in the congregation that would be willing to sew quilt blocks together. Please contact Audrey Roe.

Old business: The sinks for the kitchen are still on hold. A contractor needs to be found before anything more can be done.
New business: Pastor Johnson from Trinity in Manilla stopped by to say thank you for his Christmas gift and to invite us to a Valentine celebration. It was moved by Sandra Vahl that $100.00 be sent to the zone treasurer for the activity fund and $25.00 to the zone for transportation costs. The motion was seconded and carried.

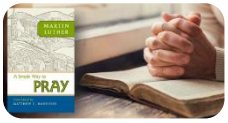
Plaza bingo will be hosted on January 25th by chairman Audrey Roe and helpers Laurene Meeves, Monica Christensen and Mary Grimm. Hostesses for the next guild meeting on February 13th will be Janet Gruhn and Susan Schilling. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer and the table prayer. Lunch was served by Sandra Vahl and Sue Puck.

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY



January 27-March 3
New Member Opportunity at Zion
3:45 – 5:00 p.m.

January 28 – March 4
Powerful Tools for Caregivers (1:00-3:00 p.m.) at Zion
Caregiving is constant. Zion is here to help. These six afternoon sessions are designed to help you identify and reduce stress, improve confidence, balance your life, better communicate your feelings to others, increase your ability to make tough decisions, and to understand local resources.



February 10
A Simple Way to Pray
Join the Family Bible Class for a study of Martin Luther's simple, but effective instruction on prayer, prayer driven and directed by the Word of God.

February 11
Fellowship Club @ 7:00 p.m.
IKM-Manning teacher and Zion member, Judy Jacobsen, will be our special guest. Explore education in 2019 with Judy—technology, on-line classes, drones, and more. Friends and guests are welcome!

February 14
Worship with the Trinity family on the second Thursday of the month at 11:00 a.m.

February 17
7:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Trivia and a catered meal
Support the Trizion Youth Group with a fun evening of tasty food and trivia!
$20 per person / call Trinity at 654-3031 for tickets.

February Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Gerald Beck
   Paige Mohr
   Scott Lahr (T)
2. Carl French
   Brooklyn Riesberg
   Kendra Walters
3. Ray Christensen
4. Todd Gruhn
   Andrew Puck
   Adella Farley (T)
   Bill Joens (T)
5. Jean Hargens
   Cassandra Neumann
   Daniel Stribe
   Scott Lingle (T)
6. Michaela Chapman
7. Kennedy Adams
   Sasha Backhaus
   Marlyn Fielweber
8. Dena Diersen
   Russ Spies
   Rexanne Struve
10. Joe Ewoldt
    Devontay Hocken
    Olivia Paska
    Doug Ridgley
    Keldi Olson (T)
11. Dane Blom (T)
12. Tammi Powers
    Donna Schmarzo
    Sarah Birks (T)
13. Jason Opperman
14. Ken Puck
15. Kristin Backhaus
    Frank Boeck (T)
16. Ryan Borkowski
    Scott Saunders (T)

17. Cory Beyer
    Beth Daniels
    Carol French
    Adam Gruhn
    Jeanne Gruhn
    Jenna Rosener
18. Zach Dreier
    Carolyn Kerkhoff
    Luke Potthoff
19. Shaunda Martin
    Curtis Weems
    Roger Wegner
20. Janice Monson
    Jayde Rosener
    Lynette Gaskill (T)
    Mary Rasmussen (T)
21. Jean Ferneding
    Araya Hass
    Mike Powers
    Sierra Ferry (T)
    Jessica Nelson (T)
23. Tom Wegner
    Mitchell Lahr (T)
24. Scott Opperman
    Barb Page
    Eric Christensen (T)
25. Kodilynn Rosener
26. Deanna Frank
    Keith Boyens (T)
27. Rylie-Shea Muhlbauer
    Scott Stribe
    Jeremy Wulf
28. Adam Albertsen
    Gary Dammann
    Katie Sextro
29. Karen Vollstedt

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

Anniversaries

2. Errol & Anna Belle Wegner
3. Dick & Judy Irwin (T)
4. Joe & Becky Karsten
5. Paul & Monica Christensen
9. Lowell & Betty Schroeder
12. Lenus & Kristie Borkowski
13. Bill & Deb Ranniger
14. Dave & Bev Grundmeier
    Chad & Lynette Gaskill (T)
15. Bob & Gloria Ewoldt

Official Acts

January 12 - Baptized Linkoln & Octavia Hodne - children of Derek & Brenna Hodne, Pastor Andrew Johnson

In Our Prayers

Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Susan Lamb, JoAnn Karsten (Georgia Lohrmann's sister), Natalie Mason (Bruce and Mary Grimm's daughter), Judy Reinke, Gage Carlson (great grandson of Russ and Virginia Mohr), Carol Kahl, Allen Stribe, Valda Lamp, Angelia Buhr (Dewayne & Cheral Buhr's Daughter-in-law), Connie Ahrendsen