THE SET ME FREE PROJECT

The Set Me Free Project provides knowledge on the importance of social media safety and human dignity. We equip youth, parents, and communities with the information to keep them safe and help them understand their value.

Deep Dive *Review*

On Monday, May 13, Zion was privileged to welcome Stephanie Olson of The Set Me Free Project for an engaging and eye-opening presentation on social media safety. Let's begin with some attention-getting facts:

- Children in Iowa are trafficked (bought and sold for sex acts).

  How does this happen? Social media. Predators target children, dedicating months to each victim, grooming them steadily and methodically.

- The average age of trafficking victims for girls is 12-14, for boys it's 10-12.

- The rise in social media use has resulted in a precipitous rise in youth anxiety and depression as their perception of reality is skewed, leading them to believe everyone else has a better life.

- A high percentage of kids have over 1,000 Instagram followers.

  Kids with more than 200 followers have an increased risk of being targeted by traffickers. Further, no one truly *knows* 1,000 people. In fact, kids' definitions of "knowing" someone has changed, with many of them believing an online connection is equal to knowing (and trusting) a person.

- A high percentage of kids have a secret Instagram account called a "sinsta" (secret Instagram) or "finsta" (fake Instagram). The predominant conversation threads on these accounts center on alcohol, drugs, sex, and suicide.

What can you do?

- **Media checks**. At least once a month, announce a media check. Immediately gather ALL the devices of ALL of your children simultaneously. If you don't gather them all at once, your kids will delete what they don't want you to see. Device by device, go through every app and investigate the content. This is not invading your children's privacy; it is protecting your children. Need help with this? The Set Me Free Project can help!

- **Download helpful apps**. Mrs. Olson mentioned two: Life 360 and Noon Light. The former allows parents to track their children's whereabouts; the latter is an emergency response app that allows users silently to notify police in an emergency.

- **Have the tech talk**. Talk to your children about the online world. Help them appreciate what is good and what is dangerous. Establish family rules for media usage and accountability. And ground their identity in Christ to insulate them from the lies of the world.

- **Learn**. Your kids matter too much to do nothing. And, you can be sure, the world is not inactive. Your kids are being targeted. Want to begin the conversation? Let's talk! – Pastor Conner

What are who attended parents saying?

The set me free project provided some great practical tools to help parents and teens be successful in navigating social media. In particular, I appreciated some of the feedback on Instagram use and how I can be smarter online myself. I would love to have them back again to do even more education on specific APPs.

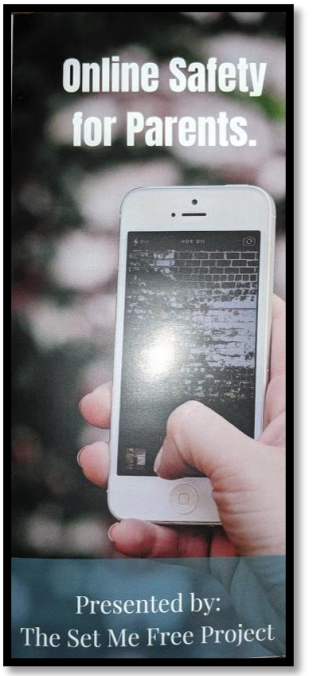
Technology can be scary, especially when I think about my children using it and knowing how to use it better than I can. Stephanie, with the Set Me Free Project, was able to open my eyes to many important topics that as a parent I need to be aware of. It also made me realize that sometimes what I share online could be dangerous for my children - something I never would have thought of, simply posting a first day of school picture. Overall, Stephanie Olson is a very knowledgeable and charismatic speaker and I would definitely recommend this class to all!

As a parent, I know I need to balance respecting my maturing kids' privacy while still doing my job of helping them navigate the world and be safe. How does that play out in the online world? One thing Stephanie said was so simple and yet so helpful: I can simply say, "This is a family phone (or other device). You get to use it, but I get to check on its content at any time." With the expectations up front and clear to all, kids are motivated to make better choices, and I don't have to worry about "tech checks" being somehow unfair or not respectful of my kids.

Resources available in Zion's Resource Center:

Discover the myths and facts about human trafficking with this quick glance resource and begin speaking out to stop trafficking.
←

Your child is online. What do you need to check for? What do you need to teach them? What do you need to learn? Get the conversation started with this resource.
→



For more information, check out: www.setmefreeproject.net or Zion's resource center.

THE SET ME FREE PROJECT

Each age is defined by its prevailing cultural questions. Painting in broad strokes, in the first centuries after Christ people wrestled with the question of God: *Who is God?* The Church responded with the historic creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian) to concisely and emphatically emphasize the two natures of Jesus and the tri-unity of God. The Middle Ages was in upheaval over the question of salvation: *How is man reconciled to God?* The Lutheran confessors answered with the Lutheran Confessions in which they unequivocally insisted that man was reconciled to God because of Christ's work alone. Christ alone made satisfaction for sin; our works had no place in salvation.

Our age is in turmoil over this question: *Who is man?* It's an identity question. Where is our identity anchored? On what is it built? Many in our culture have anchored identity in sexuality. We have been conditioned to think in terms of heterosexual and homosexual and to use a new alphabet to identify people: LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer or questioning).

Thoughtful sociological studies demonstrate just how Americanized/Europeanized these categories are. Without going into any detail, these categories are not and have not been employed by other cultures throughout history. Yes, people have always engaged in a range of sexual behavior and have experienced a diversity of sexual desires, but attaching identity to sexual desires is a very culturally bound practice, one that is fraught with problems. Jenell Williams Paris insightfully observes in her thought-provoking book *The End of Sexual Identity*, "God created sexuality. People created sexual identity" (75). For the next several paragraphs we will explore why "sexual identity" is riddled with problems and why and where God establishes our identity.

Let's start in the very beginning!

We begin… in the beginning, with creation. This may seem obvious, but it's the very place people consistently fail to begin. Our culture's wedding of identity to sexuality has only become possible as we have divorced it from creation, denying Scripture's account of origins or forgetting its significance in the identity question.

The first chapters of Scripture narrate man's beginning, teaching us that we are contingent beings. We owe our existence to Almighty God. And, as the first pages of Scripture narrate and the full panoply of creation demonstrates, God is a purposeful God. Creation pulsates with divine purpose. Trees bud and flower, cells divide, hearts pump, and birds call, not randomly, but with clear divine-directed purpose. Creation pursues its divinely given ends.

Previous generations called it *teleology*, recognizing the inherent purpose in creation, a purpose toward which creation seemed innately drawn. To make the abstract more concrete, previous generations, seeing God as a purposeful Creator, saw the biological sexes as morally significant creations of God that informed identity. To be more direct still: biology (our created body) informs our identity.

We can see this spelled out in the pages of Scripture as God, upon the completion of each purpose-directed day of creation, saw that, "It was

good." Let's look at man's creation on day six. Scripture narrates:

> Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.
>
> So God created man in his own image,
> in the image of God he created him;
> male and female he created them.
>
> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."… And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen. 1:26-28, 31).

Look where God grounds identity: in our created nature as male or female. Desires are not mentioned. That doesn't mean desires are unimportant; it does, however, help us answer the question of our age – *Who is man?* Man has been created male and female as divine image bearers. This, Scripture says, is good, even very good. Scripture also reveals that marriage aimed toward procreation is good and that man's loving dominion over creation is good.

If these are good, then anything that denies them would be not good. So, if defining man as male and female image bearers of God is good, denying creation's place in identity, denying the body's place in identity, rejecting the concepts of male and female, is not good. If marriage aimed toward procreation is good, denying the good of procreation and the essential role of fathers and mothers is not good. If loving dominion over creation is good, abusing, neglecting, and exploiting creation is not good.

What is good is discerned not by any reference to man's desires, but by reference to God's creation.

What is good is discerned not by any reference to man's desires, but by reference to God's creation. In fact, if we keep reading in Scripture for two more chapters, we discover that our desires have been bent, warped by the sin we have inherited from Adam. These bent desires are a terrible foundation for identity. They are fickle. They wax and wane, enflame and cool. Our identity is simply too important to build on our desires.

Further, when we build our identity on sexual desires, we end up pitting one set of desires against others. More specifically, we end up pitting heterosexual desires against homosexual, bi-sexual, trans-sexual, and every other desire that isn't heterosexual. And this leaves us with two classes of people: heterosexuals, who are adorned with the label "good," and homosexuals and anyone who doesn't have heterosexual desires, who are shamed with the label "not good." But, as Mrs. Paris points out in *The End of Sexual Identity*, "No one has a head start [on sexual holiness]" (9).

It's no wonder the church sometimes gets labeled judgmental or unwelcoming. In too many cases we've bought into the lie of sexual identity (rooting identity someplace other than where Scripture roots it) and used it to condemn people for having the wrong desires, desires they didn't choose.

Because we've started in the wrong place, we focus on the wrong thing. As Mrs. Paris explains,

> The major problem for Christians with… sexual identity… is that it is a social construct that provides a faulty pattern for understanding what it means to be human, linking desire to identity in a way that violates biblical themes (43)

Instead of focusing on our creational identity as male or female, we've become fixated on a person's desires. So we end up directing our efforts at changing people's desires to align with the "good" desires, which we identity as heterosexual desires. The problem is that heterosexual desires aren't good by default. Heterosexual desires are often bent so as to be fixated on sinful pursuits including pornography, secret sexual or intimate fantasies for a non-spouse, living together without marriage, and many, many more. Focusing on desires is the wrong focus.

When we begin with creation, however, we are able to identify what God calls good and where He grounds our identity. Our created identity as male or female is good. We may find that our desires do not align with our created identity. We may discover heterosexual sinful desires, homosexual sinful desires, and any number of sinful, sexual desires. This should not surprise us or alarm us. The fall has impacted us all. None of us has a leg up on sexual purity.

None of us has a leg up on sexual purity.

So, instead of focusing on acquiring the "right" desires, and instead of labeling a person on the basis of his or her desires, we turn to our Creator for our identity as well as for our help and hope. When we do, we discover the astonishingly good news of our redemption in Christ. We are redeemed creatures! Yes, we may have desires that beset us, desires that we didn't choose, but we are bigger than these. We are NOT defined by these. We are defined by God's creating and redeeming work. We are redeemed males and females.

Does this mean that our unwanted desires will go away? Not necessarily. As morally bent creatures, we may battle unwanted and unchosen desires our entire lives. This is what it means to be fallen creatures. But as redeemed creatures, we rejoice to discover that we are not defined by our desires, we are not segmented into morally different sexual groups, we are not pigeonholed by a sexual label. Christ's blood was shed for us all. Further, it means we ALL share a common goal: living in line with what God has called good and seeking sexual purity and holiness ***together***. None begins in a higher place. None is inherently advantaged. We are equally created, equally fallen, and equally redeemed.

We ALL share a common goal: living in line with what God has called good and seeking sexual purity and holiness *together*.

As the church we must find our voice. The sexual identities being pushed by our culture are separating and segregating us. Embracing our creational identity as redeemed creatures of God bearing His image as male and female will unite us. That is the message we must learn to confess. – Pastor Conner

Ministry Apps

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

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13-14).

Immediately before His Passion Jesus gathers with His disciples in the Upper Room. John shares His conversation with chapters 14-17. The conversation includes Jesus' promise to send the Spirit. The disciples' prayer and ours is "Come, Spirit, come."

Come, Spirit, come in Jesus' name

Jesus teaches the disciples and us "he will glorify me." The Spirit works to bring the truth of Jesus to us. The Spirit descends on Pentecost so that the truth of Jesus might spread through the Spirit-directed and Spirit-empowered disciples. The Spirit not only brings the truth to us but through us. We faithfully gather in worship in every season and faithfully gather our children about His Word so that the truth of Jesus might free us (John 8:32). Make worship and family devotions a summer priority.

Come, Spirit, come to our children

Children will gather (June 3-7) to experience a "Miraculous Mission" as part of this year's VBS program. Advance registration is **extremely helpful** for an efficient and safe beginning. **Volunteers** are needed for the week (or for a day). Cookie donations are welcomed throughout the week. The VBS children will again support the cross cultural work of Molly Ulrickson in India. Other donations toward Molly and her outreach are welcomed throughout the VBS week.

Thanks for a wonderful team of Sunday school teachers and administrators who shared the truth of Jesus throughout the school year. While Sunday school classes are not held during the summer months, parents are urged to worship weekly with their children. Be watching the August newsletter for information on fall Christian education programs for children and adults.

Come, Spirit, come in our Vocations

The Zion Fellowship Club has been blessed to hear of the various Christian vocations of Zion members and others from the community. Wherever we go and whatever we do, we are the Spirit's vessels of sharing the truth of Jesus. The Fellowship Club has also supported the work of the Orphan Grain Train ministry. A record amount of clothing and quilt donations were taken to the Ida Grove warehouse on April 24. The next clothing collection will be the week of September 29.

Fellowship club members and friends are invited to the Riggert home on Monday evening, June 17, at 6 p.m., for the annual potluck. Meat and beverages will be provided. Bring a salad, dessert, or hot dish and relax from your various vocations.

Come, Spirit, come in transitions

I will be joining you for worship on June 16, 23, and July 7, for worship as Pastor Conner vacations with family. Other Saturday evenings and Sundays I will be at St. Paul, Carroll as their vacancy pastor. If you are camping near Carroll or shopping in Carroll, you are welcome to join us there (Saturday at 5 p.m.; Sunday at 9 a.m.). I will continue to assist at Zion on Mondays and with member visits as needed. With Pastor Licht's transition to Davenport, Iowa, Pastor Ben Dose of Zion, Arcadia has been appointed the Carroll Circuit visitor.

Blessed through the Spirit! - Pastor Riggert

Trevor grunted beneath his breath, “Maker of heaven and earth.” The next part always stumped him. “And of all things…and of all things…and of all things.” Trevor sighed. He would never get it, or so he thought. His pastor’s requirement of memorizing the Nicene Creed seemed impossible. Trevor’s mother booted him out the door stating that maybe a walk would free up his memory. But Trevor was a little suspicious that his mother was looking for a way to get him outside. Either way – it worked. Trevor strolled through the acreage’s wooded backyard in order to conquer the creed.

Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. Crunch. The leaves from last fall took refuge between trees in order to avoid the spring mower.

Trevor established reason after reason as to why it was unfair for the pastor to expect memory work. Standing in the middle of a courtroom decked out in a suit and tie, Trevor imagined himself pointing at one piece of evidence after another as to why the defendant – pastor – was unfair. Since Trevor had never been in a courtroom before, the only judge he was aware of was the judge his grandpa watched when Trevor went to his house after school – Judge Judy. In his imagination, she shook her head with great approval at Trevor’s impressive arguments. He even avoided falling into the trap of hearsay just for her.

Snap. Trevor stepped on a stick hidden under the blanket of leaves.

Finally, Trevor was ready to offer his most compelling reason as to why the pastor needed to stop assigning the Creed as memory work. “You see, your Honor, this stuff has nothing to do with real life.” She nodded for him to continue. “I get up and get dressed. I go to school and hang out with my friends. I go to my grandparents’ after school. I go back home. Do my homework. Play games. Go to bed. And then I start all over again. What I’m saying in the Creed has nothing to do with my life.” He gleamed. The judge was so overwhelmed that she clapped. Trevor bowed both in his imagination and in the woods. He closed his eyes and bent over.

Thud. “Ow!” A log tripped Trevor. Its shape was indistinguishable from the rest of the ground, but its mass was enough that it threw Trevor tumbling. He gritted his teeth, “Stupid log!” Without thinking he kicked the log in order to exact revenge.

“Ow!” he cried again. The log barely moved. Trevor clamped his foot as red pounded in his foot. Unthinkingly, he was about to kick the log a second time when an *S* slithered out from beneath the log past him.

As fear quickly replaced anger, Trevor regained his senses. He couldn’t explain it, but the snake drew him into wanting to see the snake’s home. Pulling the log towards him this time in order to avoid any new scares, Trevor exclaimed, “Woah!” Two salamanders cuddled next to each other. The moisture from the dirt and the underbelly of the log provided an oasis for their rubbery skin.

A line of ants marched in single file towards a hole. Each carried specks of something. Trevor couldn’t make out what the ants were hauling, but they seemed determined.

Panning from one end of the log to the other, Trevor almost missed the millipede. The bug curled as it walked like its snake neighbor.

White fungi also ate away at the wood. Trevor had the good sense not to touch it, but he was amazed at how the slime formed miniature buildings

beneath the log. The white reminded him of some of the buildings he and his class had been learning about in civics. The Capitol in Washington D.C. The Library of Congress and the White House. All of these buildings had little bearing on Trevor's day-to-day life, but he had to admit that the pictures impressed him. The fungi decimated the log, but even though the fungi dominated the log's underbelly he couldn't help but imagine that the salamanders, the snake, the ants, the millipede, and everything else hiding beneath the log saw towering masterpieces as they lived in the dark.

In any case, Trevor rolled the log back into place. A voice echoed from the distance: "Trevor, dinner." Cupping his hands to his mouth, he shouted, "Be right there, Mom."

As Trevor moved toward the house, he was a little more careful about where he stepped on the leaves this time. "Duh!" Trevor spoke to himself. "And of all things visible and invisible." *To be continued…* - Pastor Johnson

Youth Group is on hiatus until the end of June. This summer we will focus on being financially healthy by reading the book *5 Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make in College*. This book and DVD combo will be available to everyone involved free of charge. While the book isn't strictly speaking a Bible study, being financially healthy helps fight against placing our identity in money, experiencing greed, or a whole bunch of other stuff the Christian faith has said is not good for us now that we've been redeemed by Jesus.

Even if your kid or grandkid is not planning on going to college, the principles for financial responsibility still hold up for post-high school living.

We will meet at the Parsonage in Manilla @ 4pm Sunday evenings starting June 30 (no meeting July 14 due to NYG). We will make dinner together, learn, and enjoy summer.

Preschool Praises for May 2019

This year has gone by so quickly and I certainly will miss seeing these children 3 days a week, but I look forward to seeing them as they grow in our community! The first week of May was about bugs and telling which are insects. We enjoyed chronologically graphing out The Very Hungry Caterpillar and playing with plastic bugs. We made thank you cards for Library Linda and the Crawford County Conservation crew. We worked on the number 9 and presents for moms. During Jesus Time we talked about how Thomas wasn't there when Jesus first appeared to the apostles and how he refused to believe them. When Jesus returned and Thomas was there he said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe!" I pointed out to the children then he was talking about us! Pastor spoke to the children about the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus and how Jesus had joined them, but had made it so they did not recognize him until he broke bread with them at supper!

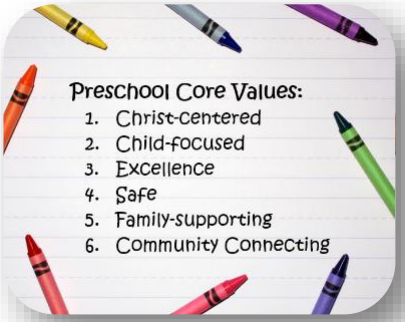
The second week was all about Mom and we wrote what we know about Mom; her name, age, what makes her smile, what she is the best at and what we would buy her for a gift. The answers were all adorable! We also took pictures of each child blowing kisses and made it so that it looked like they were blowing out hearts and sent it home as a magnet for all the children's mothers for Mother's Day. We worked on the number 10 and drawing self-portraits so that they could see from the beginning of the year vs. the end of the year how their drawing has changed. During Jesus Time we talked about the bodily ascension of Jesus into heaven and how someday we will be able to join Him bodily on the New Earth. What a wonderful hope we have!

Preschool Praises for May 2019

Pastor spoke to the children about how Jesus said that he was the door to salvation which means that we enter eternal life through Jesus, and He said that He was The Good Shepherd that lays down His life for the sheep. We are the sheep and Jesus cares for us by giving us forgiveness, grace, mercy, and eternal life by dying on the cross and taking the justice that we deserve for our sins.

The last week of preschool we had our walking field trip to the Plaza and park. We sang songs for the residents at the plaza and had fun shaking hands and greeting everyone. After that, we walked to the park and played, played, played! I bet everyone slept well that night! We made little books to take home with special papers throughout the year as a little keepsake. I hope that the children can look back on those little books and remember their time with us! For Jesus Time we talked about Saul being converted to Paul and how Jesus works through many people to spread His Word! Pastor spoke to the children about the bodily ascension of Jesus into Heaven and how this is a hope to us as we look forward to being bodily raised from the dead and living with God eternally. We had our closing ceremony on the 16th and enjoyed sharing some of our songs with the preschool families. One of the activities that we shared was how we pretend to be a rain storm using wooden sticks and drumming them on the ground to sound like rain, then clacking them together and saying, "Boom" for thunder! Thank you to the Preschool Board for all their support this year as well as their help with the program and cupcakes provided afterwards! Thank you to Janice for all her support this year and we are looking forward to having her back full time next year! Thank you to Marlene for her faithful volunteerism and always being willing to help! Thank you also to Cindy Karsten and her volunteering to help transport children this year - we wouldn't have had as many students as we did without her! Thank you to Pastor for his weekly lessons and support and thank you to everyone in the church for your support and prayers! Another year is done and we look forward to the next!

Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Nemitz



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

Preschool Closing Program 2019

A year of smiles and sharing Jesus!

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made!

On Sunday, May 5th, Zion welcomed mental health specialist Carol Segebart to initiate an important conversation on mental health. Over 20 participated. Here is a brief summary:

Mental health, just like physical health, relational health, and spiritual health, is a key component in our overall wellbeing. When one of these four areas is weakened, the rest are affected. Mental illness, just like a perplexing medical condition, can be complicated and call for great patience and support. After sharing several local mental health resources (list available in the church office), Carol helped us understand the value of therapy coupled with appropriate medication.

She highlighted one form of therapy that has proved especially helpful for mental illness: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (often referred to as "talk therapy"). In brief, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy focuses on the narrative looping through a person's mind, bringing it to the individual's attention and helping him to evaluate its truthfulness. For example, someone who has experienced verbal abuse may have been told over and over that he is worthless or a hopeless failure. If this untruth takes up residence in the individual's mind, it can loop over and over leading to all sorts of difficulties in life. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps a person bring those thoughts out into the open so that he can speak truth into them. Despite what someone might have said about our worth, we know that we have inestimable worth before God because His Son wouldn't have died for us if He believed us worthless. How greatly God must love us! Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps individuals stop listening to themselves and start speaking truth to themselves.

Sometimes medication is needed. When it is coupled with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, an individual is able to make progress in mental health. To help you understand, imagine medication as a pair of glasses and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as reading lessons. In order to read, an individual might need both. The glasses (medication) alone won't do it. So, when paired with reading lessons (therapy), a person may make great strides forward. But, as stated above, mental health is complicated. Progress is often gained in fits and starts. Our workshop on May 5th really just opened a conversation, one that you are invited to join. No one should suffer alone. No one should hide in fear. Zion and Trinity exist for the broken. Let's continue the conversation together! – Pastor Conner

Ladies Guild of Zion
May 8, 2018

Pastor Conner opened with a prayer, then turned our attention to John 20:19 ff which tells of Jesus' appearance in the room where the disciples were hiding for fear of the Jews who had crucified their Lord. Jesus breathed on them and said "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

For Christian Life, Susie Schilling read an article about the flooding in Iowa and Nebraska, the devastating effect it had on the farming communities, and how a community of people saw their needs and gathered and delivered supplies to them. President Roe called the meeting to order and we recited the League Pledge. Roll call was answered by 10 members with an act of kindness they had witnessed from a neighbor. The secretary read the minutes from the previous meeting. They were approved as read. There was no treasurer's report. Kitchen treasurer, Darlene Vollstedt, said that account has a current balance of $4256.41. The mite box was passed as the mite box prayer was offered.

Sandra Vahl had asked if the way the fellowship coffees were handled was acceptable. Cynthia Genzen moved that they remain the same. The motion was seconded and carried. The circles may choose to have a variety of refreshments or just serve cookies during the summer months. Audrey Roe said she had delivered 86 lbs. of soap to Sac City and that the quilters had completed 140 quilts this year. She showed the group the two quilts that were to be donated to Camp Okoboji's quilt auction on June 15th.

Old business: The LWML leadership workshop on May 11th will be held from 1:00-4:30 at Zion. Volunteers were asked to bring refreshments for a coffee break that day. A report on the spring rally at Carroll was given by President Roe. She also reported sending a thank you note to Priscilla Circle in Manilla.

New business: Guild has been asked to serve lunch for a Lutheran ladies group from Council Bluffs at the Hausbarn on May 16th. Audrey Roe, Mary Grimm and Sue Puck will serve the luncheon that day. Members were asked to donate salads and make sandwiches. A sign-up sheet was passed. Sandra Vahl will host the graduate breakfast on May 19th. Darlene Vollstedt is chairman for Plaza bingo on May 24th. Her committee is Gloria Ewoldt, Cindy Leslie, and Charlene Hickman. Hostesses for the next meeting on June 12th will be Margaret Backhaus and Becki Ehlers. The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer and the table prayer. Lunch was served by Darlene Vollstedt and Nancy Opperman.

Sue Puck, secretary

Ark Encounter & Creation Museum Information Meetings

Option 1 - Trinity, Manilla
May 25 @ 5:15pm
(Saturday following worship)

Option 2 - Zion, Manning
June 6 @ 7pm
(Thursday evening)

Cover trip costs, dates, and when deposits are due. Please contact Pastor Johnson if you're unable to attend either meeting, but want to go on the trip. (johnsonan1445@gmail.com or 660-216-8680)

Trinity will be offering Financial Peace University

When: Starting Sundays @ 10am, June 2nd

Where: Trinity, Manilla

How long: 9 weeks

How much: Trinity is subsidizing the cost for first 10 people/couples who sign up - $50 (ordinarily $130)

How do I sign up: Call Trinity or sign up in Trinity's EntryWay

Do I need to be a Trinity member to get the $50 rate? No, that rate is available to first 10 people/couples who sign up. Doesn't matter if you're a member of Trinity, Zion, or not a member at all.

Friend of Camp
Camp Okoboji
Pastor Riggert

Congratulations

On April 27th, Pastor Bob Riggert was awarded Camp Okoboji's esteemed "Friend of Camp" award. This award is bestowed annually on an individual who has demonstrated support for the camp in many of the following ways: financial, staff member, Board of Directors, volunteering, prayer, attendance, sharing Camp Okoboji in the District, Endowment/Legacy, Foundation involvement, etc. Pastor Riggert's (and Diane's) contributions to Camp and on behalf of Camp have made a significant impact on the growth and success of Camp. Congratulations Pastor Riggert! We appreciate your service on behalf of us all!

Managing your monthly budget can be difficult and frustrating. One of the most important aspects of controlling your budget is to determine where your money is going. LCEF's Budget calculator helps you do just that! By entering your income and monthly expenditures, you can see how much you have left to save and where your money is being spent. In addition, you can click the 'View Report' to see your entries results in detail, which can help identify areas for improvement. Log onto www.lcef.org, click on "resources" and then select "Home Budget Analysis." It's easy to us and thorough in what it includes.

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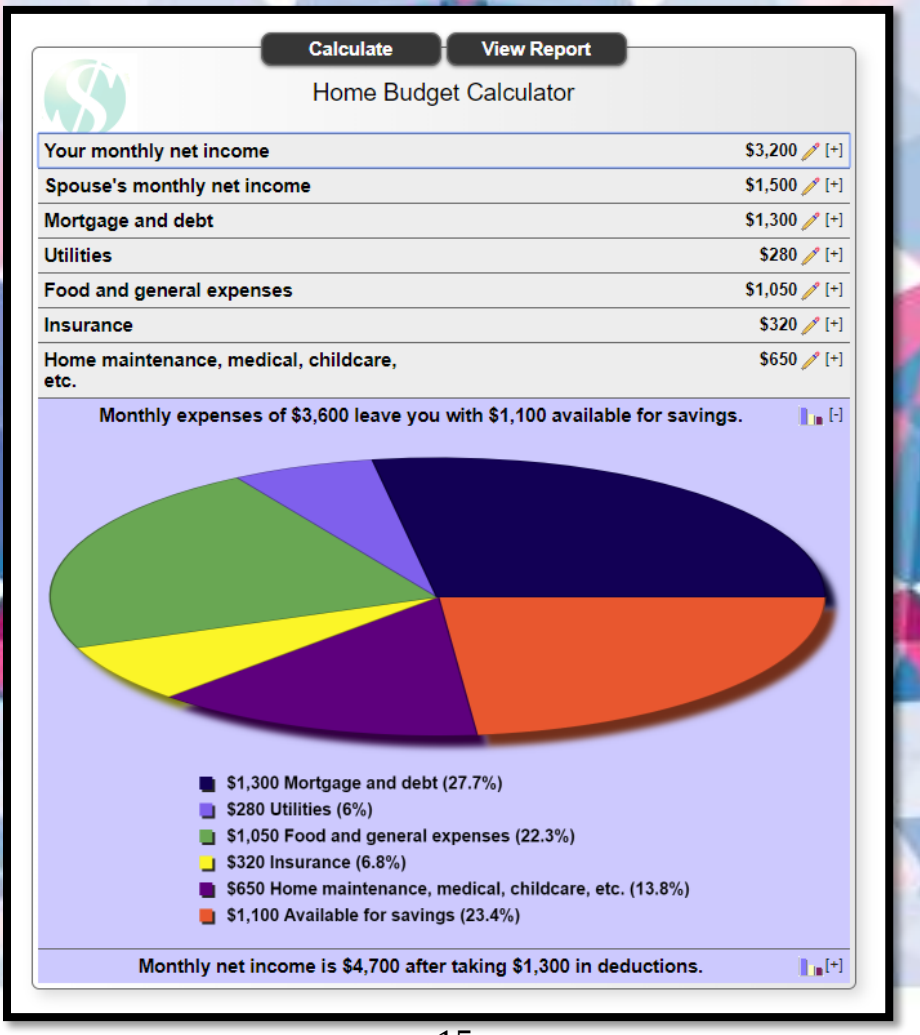
› where investments build ministry



Amigos en Cristo

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

June 2019

The picture below is at Zion, Denison, of the members of Amigos en Cristo. Following our service we went to the gym for our annual Easter egg hunt for the children followed by a special Easter dinner together downstairs in the fellowship hall. Notice the happy children with their Easter baskets. The ladies made a great fellowship meal of typical Mexican/Hispanic foods, drinks and desserts. It was a special time to be together and to celebrate with our families and friends the Good News of the Risen Lord.

Two confirmations for Elbert: Elbert Perez (right, top row right next to Pastor Kienath) was confirmed last month, both in English and Spanish. As with all of our students at Amigos en Cristo Lutheran they study for Confirmation with the youth from Zion. Elbert, the first baby baptized in our Hispanic ministry, was therefore confirmed with 8 other students. But Elbert also took part in our Hispanic service, and while not technically re-Confirmed, he was blessed and reaffirmed in his Confirmation. He also read in Spanish his statement of faith that he had given earlier on the night of the Zion public witness of those confirmed. Elbert attended Zion School and he and his family have been a faithful blessing to the Amigos and Zion ministries. What a blessing to see our youth grow and be able to share their faith in both languages and cultures!

Thank you! Our ministry is a joint outreach through our two Hispanic churches, in Denison and also in Storm Lake. We are so grateful for the congregations and individuals who sacrificially support our ministry either with special donations or by Thrivent Choice dollars. If you have any questions on how you can support our Hispanic ministry, especially 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 months. God bless you all and if you are able visit our services, any Sunday at 10:30AM at Grace in Storm Lake and 12:30PM at Zion, Denison! If I can come and give a presentation at your church or group, also give me a call. God bless your month!

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SERVING THE LORD

ALL OVER ASIA

NEWS FROM THE FERRY FAMILY

Easter 2019

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! What a joy to proclaim this loudly, even here in places where Easter is simply unknown. Just this morning, grabbing my coffee before our Easter Divine Service at the local congregation, we wished the workers "Happy Easter" and "Blessed Easter." They looked back, confused, and said, "Oh, is that today?" Truly, there is so much work yet to be done. But just when you least expect it, there can come encouragement. We were recently engaged in visits with several other Lutheran bodies here in Taiwan, continuing our opportunities to build connections with them, although there are still no formal relationships between our church bodies.

One church based in Taipei is the Lutheran Church of the Republic of Taiwan (LCROC), headed by their Bishop (President) Rev. Ray Chen. Bishop Chen had discovered we were going to have a delegation of LCMS visitors on the island, and was eager to have a time to chat. Before taking our leave, President Harrison asked for a tour of the LCROC facility, which included a church and a study/conference room. In that room was a most joyful sight for our eyes: four men, diligently studying the Scriptures, using Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians as their guide! This book had been translated into Chinese just recently, and the men were keen to share their insights with us and their love for what Luther writes. They were so excited because they had a shared passion for Lutheran Theology, and we instantly enjoyed an incredible connection as Lutheran brothers.

Many thanks to you for your continued faithfulness, so we can serve here as your hands and feet, and as the voice which brings our Lord's Word into these far-flung places. The joy on these men's faces is due in large part to you, and to the work we are doing in our partnership. Because of your support, we are able to give them encouragement, education, and incredible resources. God grant you all His joy this Easter Season, and throughout the year. Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Cheryl and the kids continue to focus on their Chinese. This has not only been helpful in learning words, tones, and phrases, but also in learning aspects of the culture. It's been fun to benefit from this instruction as we head out into the community together and interact with our Chinese-speaking neighbors. We'll be riding on a bus or walking down the street and the kids begin singing a song in Chinese. Invariably, people start to not only stare, but to smile. Our neighbors love the fact that we are not only learning their language, but learning their songs and appreciating our community. Once we've established that respect for what we see and hear around us, then people are much more willing to listen to us: to the songs that we sing and the words we share about why we would leave the US and establish our home over here. What a joy! Christ is risen indeed, Alleluia!

PANAMÁ NEWS

April 2019

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

Resting in Jesus ¡Cristo ha resucitado! ¡Ha resucitado en verdad, aleluya! We hope this newsletter finds you well and still celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

Holy Week is a wonderful time in the church and in the life of a pastor, but is quite exhausting as well. What I had not previously considered is how tiring Holy Week can be for the family too, especially children.

This past Holy Week I preached Palm Sunday on Saturday night in Los Andes and Sunday in Sorá and then preached Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday in Los Andres doing some with my family in tow. I remember Ezra asking throughout the week, "Dad, are we going to church today too?" "Why are we going to church at night? It is supposed to be during the morning!" "How come the church is dark?" He was a trooper this year. The photograph above was taken at the end of the Good Friday service. Somewhere between the reflections on the 4th and 7th words of Jesus from the cross, he laid his head down on the Bible and took a nap.

I find this to be a wonderful image of the Christian life. Christ died and rose again so that we are forgiven, reconciled to God, and united to Him forever. I think that we generally spend far too little time resting in that Good News and joy. We are busy people always bustling to the next thing. What I learned from my son this past Holy Week is that there is no better place to rest than in the hands of Jesus. Remember, the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus is not just another "thing" on the calendar. It is the event that shapes and informs our being as God's children. May you find rest in Jesus our resurrected Lord this Easter season!

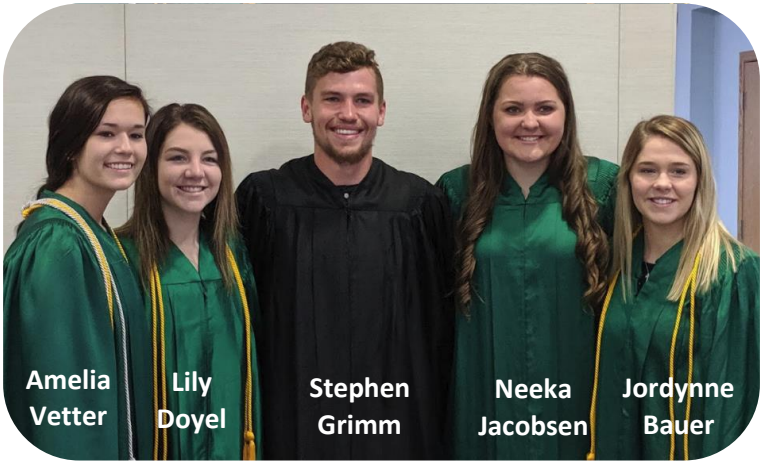
We are in the last month of Amanda's pregnancy and are eagerly looking forward to our daughter's birth. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as her due date approaches both that everything goes smoothly and that our anxieties are calmed as we remain uncertain on what this experience will be like in a different country. Ezra continues to love the outdoors and animal life. He has been very active in helping plant flowers and bushes around the yard as well as cleaning up around our messy mango tree. He has also been watching anxiously as a Clay-Colored Thrush, a Crimson-Backed Tanager and a RustyMargined Flycatcher have all made nests in our front trees to lay their eggs. He is our little bird watcher. Blessings in Christ. -Brian, Amanda, & Ezra

Please Pray:

- Amanda and baby girl for healthy delivery.
- The newly elected leadership of the Lutheran Church of Panamá.
- The Rickman family as they work towards residency in Panamá.

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

FINANCIAL Peace UNIVERSITY	June 2	Financial Peace University @ Trinity 10:00 a.m. – runs for nine weeks
MIRACULOUS MISSION JESUS SAVES THE WORLD	June 3-7	VBS 8:45-11:30 a.m. at Zion Register: www.vbsmate.com/zionmanning
FELLOWSHIP CLUB ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH	July 17	Fellowship Club 6:00 p.m. at Pastor Riggert and Diane's house
	June 27	Historic Trinity worship Everyone invited 7:00 p.m.



Congratulations!

Zion Graduates of 2019

Thank you Zion children!

From September 2019 – May 2019, Zion children gave $1289.04 to support the Sharp family in Uruguay. Well done!

Please note: Picture Directory: (1) additional copies of Zion's picture Directory are available to purchase for ten dollars. (2) The picture for Dan and Lois Peters was inadvertently omitted from the directory. Lifetouch has voluntarily furnished Zion with a complimentary copy of their picture which can be pasted into your directory on the last picture page. Copies are available on the information counter at the church.

June Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. McKensie Bess
   Monica Christensen
   Jonathan Conner
2. Janice Ress
   Autumn Winter
   Sylvia Saunders (T)
3. Dara Jorgensen (T)
4. Kelli Grimm
   Alexander Lingle (T)
5. Warren Puck
6. Angela Albertsen
   Brandon Ranniger
   Nyle Gruhn (T)
7. Jarod Gruhn
   Wyatt Bandow (T)
   Easton Woebke (T)
8. Jacob Ewoldt
   Jett Sellner
   Adalyn Stribe
   David Vetter (T)
9. Kristine Bunker
   Jon Saunders
   Debra Blom (T)
10. Amy Bradley
    Luke Doyel
    Deanna Hagedorn
    Neil Hass
    Judy Jacobsen
    Steve Page
11. Ron Bunker
    Luke Ramsey
    Nolan Ramsey
    Jerry Brus (T)
12. Janet Plumb
    Andrew Ferry (T)
13. Nick Backhaus
    Travis Neumann
14. Jessica Winter
    Richard Irwin (T)
    Jessica Lingle (T)
15. Ann Ranniger
16. Michael Gore
    Ashley Hinners
    Greg Peters
17. Lily Doyel
    Lucille Ranniger
    Dale Reinke
    Paul Boell (T)
18. Dan Kerkhoff
19. Wilma Bogatzke
    Daniel Vogel
20. Aubrey Alexander
    Lorrell Borkowski
21. Rodney Kurth
    Mason Vonnahme
22. Duncan Hilsabeck
    Kim Wegener
    John Blom (T)
23. Brooklynn Booth
    Bowen Bruck
    Mary Grimm
    Matthew Vogel
24. Holly Borkowski
    Lana Georgius (T)
    Dale Holmes (T)
    Kristine Lingle (T)
25. Jared Rosener
    Tanner Hansen (T)
26. Shirley Ahrendsen
    Russell Bruhn
28. Jordynne Bauer
    Yvonne Klindt (T)
29. Hannah Willison
    Lynn Schroeder (T)

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

Anniversaries

1. Gordon & Donna Schmarzo
2. Jacob & Mallory Dreier
   Duane & Janice Monson
5. Roger & Heather Rasmussen (T)
6. Ken & Gerry Stripling
7. Floyd & Donna Forman
8. Bill & Sheila Simonsen (T)
10. Stan & Nancy Baack
    Ron & Kristine Bunker
    Ryan & Heidi Crawford
    Brian & Deb Birks (T)
11. Lyle & Arlene Bald
12. Stan & Joleen Spies (T)
14. James & Ferdonna Zimmerman (T)
15. Lynn & Sonia Nulle
    Dan & Lois Peters
16. Loren & Jeannette Ferry (T)
24. Jeff & Amy Bradley
    Curt & Debra Janssen
26. Mike & Robin Heaton
27. Jerry & Carla Backhaus
29. Craig & Luann Langel
    Lary & Adella Farley (T)
30. Albert & Sandra Vahl

Official Acts

Baptism:
5/4 - Aletha Christensen (daughter of Ron & LeeAnn Christensen), Pastor Johnson
Funeral:
5/13 - Andrew Holdsworth, Pastor Johnson
5/28 - Virginia Mundt, Pastor Johnson
5/29 – Dewey Schilling, Pastor Conner
Transfer in:
Ginger Thorn transfer in from Peace Lutheran, Glidden

In Our Prayers

Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Susan Lamb, Natalie Mason (Bruce and Mary Grimm's daughter), Gage Carlson (great grandson of Russ and Virginia Mohr), Carol Kahl, Maridee Bohlmann (David & Joene Bohlmann's daughter-in-law), Charlene Hickman, Joy Umland, Russ Mohr, Bob Behrens (Dan's father), Monica Christensen, Vila Ranniger