The Journey Begins

On Sunday, December 1, the journey to the cross begins as the church transitions out of the non-festival season of the church year, in which we focus on Jesus' ministry and teaching, into the festival season, in which we trace His life from His birth foretold in Advent, to His incarnation on Christmas, to His baptism and revealing in Epiphany, to His temptations, suffering, and death on the cross in Lent and Holy Week, to His triumphant resurrection on Easter, and on to His subsequent bodily ascension and sending of the Spirit on Pentecost.

This journey is masterfully captured in the lyrics of one of the Children's Christmas songs.[1] Take a moment and appreciate one verse and the refrain:

> The road that Jesus traveled
> To save us from our sin
> Started at the manger
> In lowly Bethlehem.
> It led Him on to Calvary
> But that was no dead end,
> 'Cause Jesus rose up from the grave
> And now He lives again!
>
> From Christmas to the cross,
> With every step He walked,
> Jesus' love has always paved the way.
> A Savior born to die,
> Then raised again to life;
> Jesus is the one way to Christmas.

These may be lyrics to a Children's song, but the words are worthy of mature reflection and meditation. Consider but a few phrases. "The road that Jesus traveled / To save us from our sin / Started at the manger / In lowly Bethlehem." Christmas is about sin, our sin, specifically being saved from it. The angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph, Mary's betrothed, "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21) and the angels announced to the shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). A Savior born to save us from our sins!

"From Christmas to the cross," as the refrain begins, captures the essence of the Gospel. Christmas is about the cross. It marks the beginning of the gospel journey. "A Savior born to die." Our Savior was born to die. It's true that all who are born die, but this One, this Savior, was born specifically for death. What a thought! But this wasn't a divine morbid fixation on death; this was a divine mission to bring life. Sin kills. Sin is death. Christmas is the grand revealing of God's mission to rescue a people doomed to die. On Sunday, December 1st, the journey to the cross begins. Don't miss a moment! – Pastor Conner

[1] You should come! The program is Sunday, December 15th. Student musicians begin at 6:00 followed by the pre-k – 2nd grade at 6:30 and the 2nd – 8th after that. Special thanks to Susie Ulrickson for choosing an excellent program and for inspiring children to perform it and to Jill Arp and her assistants for patiently and lovingly leading the younger children's program!

GOD of Justice, GOD of Grace

"And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves…. And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger."
2 Kings 17:16-17

Nothing says "Merry Christmas" like those verses! So why bring them up? As we approach Christmas and the Bible this year you might be recovering from what feels like whiplash. On the one hand, you seemingly have a thundering, wrathful GOD in the Old Testament (OT) calling for the destruction of a whole group of people as the Israelites left slavery in Egypt and occupied Canaan. In modern language, we might say GOD orders *genocide*.

On the other hand, the second half of the Bible - what we call the New Testament (NT) - showcases Jesus of Nazareth. A refreshing expression of GOD after the GOD of the Old Testament seemingly leaves a bitter aftertaste in the back of your mouth. Jesus arrives as a sweet baby. Sleep in heavenly peace and all that.

So here's the question: how do we reconcile these two seemingly different GODs? Do we dismiss the Old Testament one in favor of Jesus? You might, but I'd encourage you not to do that; in fact, I'd beg you not to do that and challenge you to reconsider your understanding of the connection between the OT and NT entirely...if you're brave enough that is. Because if you're brave enough, you'll see one and the same GOD in both the OT and NT working for the sake of humanity.

Rwanda sits in the center of the African continent. It's tiny; you might call it the Connecticut of Africa, but in the mid-90s this little country shook the world. One group of people - the Hutu - launched an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Tutsi, Twa, and even some Hutu. Machetes and guns tore through thousands of helpless victims. It's estimated that 500,000-1,000,000 people were killed during the genocide. Tens of thousands of children were orphaned, and well over 100,000 women were raped - left not only with the scars that come with sexual assault but also the disease HIV. In a nutshell, it was terrible.

The United Nations had only 2,500 soldiers deployed in Rwanda at the time of the assault. But as the violence escalated, Belgium removed its forces. Eventually, the force was dwindled down to about 300 soldiers. Without the proper resources, the UN commander was incapable of stopping the violence (but he was able to house refugees in his base - he was far from being a failure).

In the aftermath of the violence, the United States, Belgium, and France were criticized for not helping prevent genocide. The United States had felt the burn of providing humanitarian relief in Somalia and had become gun shy. Nevertheless, the world reacted in horror that little to nothing was done to stop the Tutsi, Twa, and Hutu genocide.
Now that I've effectively bummed you out this Christmas, why do I bring up this episode in world history? The world screamed for justice for the innocent slaughtered mercilessly. This feeling only intensified in the wake of films that depicted the violence like *Hotel Rwanda*. People read and

watched these events, and their guts said this isn't right. Innocent people shouldn't have been on the receiving end of a machete or rifle. Someone should have intervened.

And that's what the Bible exhibits. Helpless, innocent people on the receiving end of radical violence very often for no fault of their own. And the underlying question of the Bible is: will anyone do anything about it?

Which takes us back to our verse at the very beginning. The Israelites have more than settled into the land GOD had apportioned for them after they left slavery in Egypt, but there's a problem. The Israelites - GOD's people - abandoned GOD's social order and adopted a new one which included burning their young children as sacrifices.

Now for a second, imagine you're scrolling on your phone when all of a sudden a news report pops up: "Breaking news! Israelites toss their children into fires to appease their new gods." What would your gut say? Would you be cool with that?

Here's the thing - GOD wasn't cool with it. The GOD of the Bible actually cares about justice (because He established what was just and unjust in the beginning). And the reason why He called His people to eliminate the people living in the land was to prevent His people from adopting the same practices of the Canaanites, who sacrificed their children in fires. The challenge is to see GOD's call for the destruction of the Canaanites less like a land baron utilizing eminent domain to get what He wanted, and more like a UN peacekeeping force preventing mass-genocide. GOD unleashed justice through His people.

The problem our verse shows, however, is that GOD's peacekeeping force - the Israelites - became corrupt. Either GOD will demonstrate justice against *all* evil, including the evil His own people generate, or He'll ignore the injustices. Point being, in the OT GOD cares about justice and protecting innocent children from being thrown into sacrificial fires, but He continues this trend into the NT as well.

In the NT you see GOD unleashing a whole new peacekeeping force in the person of Jesus. The old Israel failed, but Jesus the new Israel entered into the world in Bethlehem and went to work. In the end, GOD dealt out a punishment for crimes against humanity on Jesus. He fully dealt with the injustices of the world, but now He offers a new way of living in peace in connection to GOD along with others. Justice but also grace. But on top of that, we confess weekly that Jesus will return and judge the living and the dead; the GOD of the Bible does not ignore injustices.

There is no difference between the GOD of the OT and the NT. He consistently hates injustices committed against the helpless, and He responds by standing up for the helpless in Jesus.

Merry Christmas - Pastor Johnson

In Wisdom's Pursuit: The Enigmatic Universe of Ecclesiastes

"Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity… I have seen everything that is done under the son, and behold all is vanity and a striving after wind" (Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14). Welcome to the world of Ecclesiastes. It is initially a very disorienting world, one that seems dark and depressing with phrases like "I said of laughter, 'It is mad,' and of pleasure, 'What use is it?'" (2:2) and

> For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity (3:19).

and

> I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all (9:11).

It's difficult reading as one pillar of purpose and meaning after another is pushed over by a persistent Preacher. Pleasure, he says, it's vanity. Wisdom? It's vanity, too. Work? Family? Wealth? Vanity, vanity, vanity.

What's going on? In a word, wisdom.

The author of Ecclesiastes, through his guest Preacher, is teaching us wisdom, offering us Scripture's compliment to the moral universe of Proverbs. Last month we heard the book of Proverbs exhort us to gain wisdom through the fear of the Lord, a wisdom that would result in the good life. So, fear the Lord, live in line with His moral universe, and you'll enjoy success and peace. Scorn the Lord by living a selfish and prideful life and you'll wind up in shame and ruin.

Ecclesiastes responds, "Not so fast. It doesn't always work that way. Yes, fear the Lord. Yes, align yourself with His moral universe by hearing His Word and following His statues. This is good and will tend to bring good things, but life is far too complex and chance-ridden to give you any guarantees." Thus the Preacher's refrain, "All is vanity."

The word is *hevel* in Hebrew. It means *vapor* or *breath*. Life is hevel, vapor/breath. It is fleeting and temporary, even enigmatic and unpredictable. It's like seeing your breath on a cold day and trying to grab it; there's nothing in your hand. Things in life are like that. They can't be held. Pleasure, wisdom, work, wealth, even family, they're all *hevel*, nothing but breath or vapor. They simply won't last. Time will erase them. Death will take them. Or tragedy will befall them.

The Preacher calls it all striving after wind. Wind can't be caught; it can't be held. So, the things we set up to last won't; the things on which we think we can rely will fail. Time, chance, and death will take them all. ALL. Your job may be yours for decades, but eventually somebody else will sit in your desk or harvest your field or drive your route. Your house may be yours for years, but eventually somebody else will eat supper in your kitchen and watch TV in your family room. Your wealth may comfort you for a time, but eventually the name on the account will change. Your name may be known by your community for a time, but eventually you will be reduced to the dash between the dates on your headstone. There is simply no place under the sun you can turn to for permanence. It's all *hevel*, breath, vapor.

Why is the Preacher doing this? Is he driving us all to be nihilists despairing of all meaning or hope?

Is he trying to leave us utterly depressed? No. He's driving after sober wisdom. He's trying to help you see the folly of closing your hands around anything under the sun. Close your hands around your job and you'll be left with nothing. Close them around your wealth and you'll see it all vanish or pass to another. Close them around your health and it will evaporate with age or disease. Any attempt to grasp anything under the sun will fail. It will either be ripped from your grip or your grip will slip. The things under the sun, like the wind, cannot be kept.

Wisdom teaches us to make a sober and honest assessment of life under the sun. In fact, wisdom teaches us to accept it, not as nihilists or perpetually depressed slugs, but as thankful creatures of God. Wisdom calls us to live life with open hands, to receive our daily bread from God (even the daily difficulties) with thanksgiving, knowing that we will enjoy or endure them for a time, and a fleeting one at that.

So the Preacher says repeatedly,

> There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God… (2:24)
>
> There is nothing better for [the children of man] than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man (3:12-13).

In other words, delight in your life with open hands. Linger over your coffee. Savor your wine. Delight in a child's laughter. Treasure your husband or wife's quirks. Appreciate your work. Enjoy your hobby. Stand in awe of beauty. Laugh heartily. These are God's (temporary) gifts to you. They will be yours only for a time and then they will be gone.

And fear the Lord. This fear, as we learned from Proverbs, entails a proper recognition of our place in the universe. We are not God. We do not get to define good and evil, right and wrong. We do not get to define reality and the universe. As creatures, and fallen ones at that, we must have these defined for us. So, Proverbs invites us to humble ourselves before God so as to learn His definitions, accept them, and apply them to our lives.

And while Ecclesiastes echoes this instruction, it reminds us that the enigmatic nature of life (*hevel*) leaves us no guarantees. Life must be lived with open hands. So Ecclesiastes draws to a close as the Preacher concludes and the author offers the final word:

> The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil (12:13-14).

Fear God. Keep His commandments. This is our calling. And know that God is just. He will sort everything out when He comes (thus the words about judgment). He will blow away the *hevel* (vapor/breath) and establish His kingdom forever, a kingdom that was announced in Christ – "the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Permanence has arrived; eternity has come. It is not found in anything *under* the sun; it is found *in* the Son, Jesus Christ.

Despite the *hevel*, we, through fearing the Lord and keeping His commandments, can live well in this enigmatic world, not with hands closed around the things under the sun (a futile fool's errand!), but with open, thankful hands receiving the temporary gifts of God and with faith firmly fixed on the permanent promises of life in the Son, Jesus Christ. – Pastor Conner

Percentage Giving

Giving. A subject nobody likes to talk about… except Jesus (no wonder He got crucified!). "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt. 6:21). In other words, "Your heart follows your treasure; it must be led." And, "No one can serve two masters… You cannot serve God and money" (Mt. 6:24). "In other words, one must be yielded to the other. Giving yields money to God." And, "As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful" (Mt. 13:22). In other words, "Money is deceitful. If it isn't given, it will choke."

Giving in support of Christ's mission, then, guides our hearts toward true and lasting treasure, establishes and reveals our true allegiance, and keeps the Word from being choked and proving unfruitful. No wonder Jesus talked about it so much!

As the new year begins, it's a good time to talk about your giving, the spiritual discipline and benefit of giving and the actual amount you plan to give. The truth is our vocations (our callings in life) make claims on us. Are you a father or mother, husband or wife, neighbor, student, citizen, or church member? These vocations make claims on you, on your time, on your resources, on your prayers. They call you beyond yourself to give of yourself – and this is good! Giving does the same thing; it pulls our inside out, from inside ourselves out into the lives of others and into the mission of Christ.

God pulled Israel beyond itself when He called them to give in support of the tabernacle. Scripture says, "The Lord said to Moses, 'Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution… And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst'" (Ex. 25:1, 8). Take careful notice of God's Word: *that I may dwell in their midst*. Through the tabernacle, through the priesthood, through the festivals, through these God-given means, God would dwell among His redeemed people. Their giving supported the means through which God made Himself present among His people.

God dwells among us still today. We celebrate the enfleshed tabernacling of God among us in Christ's incarnation: *and the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us* (John 1:14). This Word comes to us through the preaching office in which the Word and Sacraments of God are brought into our midst. As such, we give not to a budget, but to the support and furtherance of this mission and ministry.

How much should we give? While the precedent of the tithe (10% of income) is presented in Scripture (and endorsed by Jesus!), there is no Biblical law. If the tithe is beyond your reach, you will find wisdom in the practice of percentage giving. You can pick your percent: 2%, 4%, 8% (or you may consider something higher if God has blessed you with greater resources). If your income increases, so will your gift; if it decreases, so will your gift, but your percentage can stay the same.

There is wisdom in percentage giving. Try it for 2020. Try it and watch your heart follow your treasure and see the mission and ministry of the Church grow! – Pastor Conner

Want to talk more or learn about automatic electronic giving or giving online or through Zion's app, stop in and visit or log on to www.zionmanning.com or download the Zion app.

Preschool Praises for November 2019

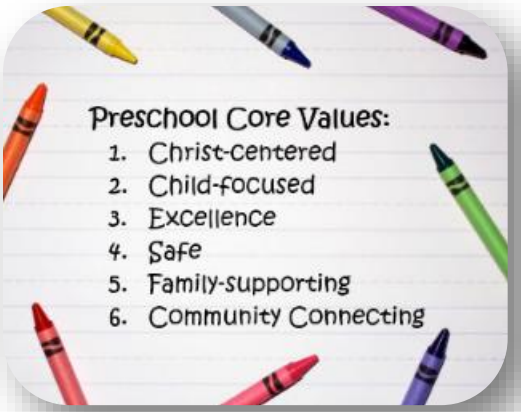
November was a wonderful month even though it felt like we skipped right into winter! The first week in November we studied hibernation, the letter H and the number 4. The children enjoyed using hole punchers to make different shapes. I'm sure parents enjoyed opening envelopes of "confetti" at home! Library Linda stopped in and read books about Thanksgiving to the morning class. The children enjoyed watching a short video about hibernation and enjoying a popcorn snack and later made hats about what kind of food they would eat if they were a bear preparing for hibernation. We talked about Noah and his arc and how God flooded the world. I reassured the children that this was a true story and that God then promised never to flood the world again and gave us a symbol of his promise in the rainbow. Pastor spoke to the children about the tower of Babel and how God confused the people's language. He also explained how we are all part of the human race and can be traced back to Noah and his family. We are all family!

The second week was about veterans, food, the letter Q and the number 5. Thank you to Mr. Muhlbauer, Mr. Gore and Mr. Blackford for stopping in and talking to the children about being a veteran. We painted with Q-tips for the letter Q and chose 5 foods that we want to eat for Thanksgiving. We also talked about where food comes from (not just the store!). In Jesus Time and chapel I and Pastor spoke to the children about Abraham and Sarah and how God made a promise to them that they would have children. When God makes a promise, he always keeps it! Even though Abraham and Sarah were 100 years old, they had a son!

The third week was about turkeys, Thanksgiving and who and what we are thankful for. We went around the circle and asked what each child was thankful for and pointed it back to God. We learned to discern what is different in a group, what a triangle is and T is for turkey. The children also traced the number 6. Pastor and I spoke to the children about Moses bringing the Israelites across the Red Sea on dry ground as God parted the waters and protected them from Pharaoh's army. Once they were on the other side the army charged into the same path but were swept away when God let the waters come crashing down. God delivered the Israelites from slavery just as he delivered us from our slavery to sin!

The last week we only had one day because of Thanksgiving break. We enjoyed Grandparent's Day where the children get to bring their grandparents to school and enjoy games, coloring and snacks. Thank you to Thrivent Financial for the action team that supported not only the snacks for Grandparent's Day, but also for The Story Bibles that were given to each student to take home. We are blessed to have this resource! Thank you for all of your support of our preschool!

Thankful,
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz



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

Zion youth speak! Reflections on the youth gathering (from Oct. 19-20).

Getting to know other people

The speakers and the sermon

Worshipping God with lots of people

Describe one thing or experience from the Jr. Youth Gathering that was meaningful to you.

Listening to God's Word with others

The devotions at the end of the day

Things you can do for your church

Summarize what you learned from the speakers.

That the Israelites had to put the blood of the lamb on the rim of the door

About the Passover, what they ate at Communion, and how Jesus sat with them at the last supper

That Communion is very important

That Communion is a holy experience when Jesus forgives our sins and how we shouldn't commune with people who don't believe the same as us

The Passover, Last Supper, Communion, and how God loves us

Is there anything you'd like to say to Zion for supporting you?

Thank you so much for helping us pay for the youth gathering! It was fun in a lot of ways, like bouncy houses, learning more about God and Jesus, how they saved us, and just the hotel and hanging out with friends in God's community. Thanks!

Thank you!

Thank you for paying and allowing us to go and for your willingness to drive us there!

Thank you, it was an amazing experience!

Thank you very much, Zion! I had a lot of fun and learned so much!

Zion and Trinity's Family Equipping Event

Snap maps, online gaming, personal profiles, location-specific photos… how safe are your kids online? How easy is it to identify and find them? Do they know who they can trust? Do they understand what a friend is? And do you know who's communicating with them online?

With the help of The Set Me Free Project (setmefreeproject.net) we addressed these questions, and many more in our Family Equipping Event on Sunday, November 24. Want to learn more, check out their website or take one of the brochures from the Resource Center.

Midweek Advent Series: Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love

Family Friendly
Weekly featured video
Take home devotions

See page 19 for times at Zion and Trinity!

Home for the Holidays

For most people holidays bring joy and comfort with the anticipation of seeing family and friends. For some, however, it is the most dreaded time of the year. For those, like many of our seniors, who live alone, have no family in the area, or are limited to their homes, this can make the holidays especially difficult. The difficulty increases for those facing the first holiday without a spouse or loved one and for those with a health condition that makes it difficult to get out during the winter months.

As we compare older adulthood to previous chapters in our lives, many changes that occur in our lifetime are changes we often initiate ourselves. As we get into later adulthood, it is much more likely that some of the changes we experience in our lives are more a result of involuntary circumstances we are subjected to, rather than something we signed up for. Change, especially change beyond our control, is hard for everyone.

Loss is particularly difficult this time of year. For many it's the loss of loved ones, but loss isn't limited to loved ones; it can include the loss of traditions and routines, which can make people feel more isolated and alone. They may feel bombarded by idealistic messages about the way life and family should be this time of year and this can deepen the difficulty of the holidays. We can't and shouldn't assume everyone experiences the holidays in the same way. For those grieving changes from holidays in years past, it may be helpful to designate a day or event to give thanks to God for the gift of years past even as they look for new causes for thanksgiving and praise.

Everybody, regardless of age, could benefit from advanced planning for the holidays. What routines will be disrupted? What routines do you want to preserve? Adults and children alike tend to feel better when they experience regular routines, and when these routines are disrupted by changes to things as simple as the foods we eat, the times we go to bed, the added social obligation, it can be overwhelming. So knowing your needs and preferences in advance can help.

If you know of someone that has become more isolated and is experiencing sadness or grief that has affected their normal routine, consider how you might be a blessing to them. Perhaps you could call or send a card. Perhaps you could organize a surprise card shower. Perhaps you could visit in person. Perhaps you could listen to their memories of holidays gone by. Perhaps you could do a devotion with them and pray with them. If the need is especially acute, perhaps you could encourage medical support or personal support through the hospital's Senior Solutions program. Or perhaps you could help arrange for a pastoral visit. Holidays can be hard. If you need support, it's available. If you can provide it, the opportunities abound.

Janet Brus, RN
Psychiatric Medical Care
Manning Regional Healthcare Center
Program Director

Ladies Guild of Zion
November 13, 2019

Pastor Conner opened the meeting with prayer, then turned our attention to the hymn entitled "The Day is Surely Drawing Near" found in end times section of our hymnal. The first verses speak of the judgment of a righteous God. The latter verses reassure us of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

President Roe called the business meeting to order in the name of the Triune God. The League Pledge was recited. Roll call was answered by 11 members with something for which we are thankful. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. The mite box was passed and the mite box prayer recited. Treasurer, Mary Grimm, gave her report and Kitchen Treasurer, Darlene Vollstedt also reported her balance.

Circle reports: Circle #1 served the Mitch Robinson funeral. They will serve the December fellowship coffees. Circle #2 will have the next funeral.

Old business: The Camp Okoboji quilt auction will be May 23, 2020. The due date for quilts to be brought to camp is May 1. Only quilts that include batting will be accepted. Barb Brockelsby is chairman of Hospitality and Reception for the LWML Convention. She needs volunteers to provide name tags for Zone Presidents and Executive Committees, to design an identifying garment for host workers, to make centerpieces for the dining hall tables, as well as ushers, and gifts for the speakers. The convention is June 18-20. Hosts are to arrive on the 17th.

New business: The fellowship hall will be decorated November 29th or 30th. Mary Grimm and Sue Puck will be working. The nominating committee put into nomination the names of Sue Puck for secretary and Mary Grimm for treasurer. It was moved by Cynthia Genzen that nominations cease and a unanimous ballet be cast. The motion was seconded by Joene Bohlmann and passed on voice vote. President Roe invited the members to indicate what days would best for them to serve the next year as the new programs will be made up in December.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer and the Table Prayer. Hostesses for the day were Laurene Meeves and Cindy Leslie. The next meeting is on December 11 with a noon potluck and meeting to follow. Hostesses will be Susan Schilling, Cheral Buhr and Joene Bohlmann.
Respectfully submitted,
Sue Puck, secretary

Winterizing Yourself:
Socializing & Study

Endure & Grow this winter
Join us for weekly socializing and study:
"The Biggest Problem Facing the World"

Tuesdays throughout January & February
2-3pm
Coffee & bars provided
Anyone & everyone invited

Meeting:
Jan 7
Jan 14
Jan 28
Feb 4
Feb 11
Feb 18

Trinity located on
3rd Ave - by the Manilla Watertower

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

Here are some opportunities to wear your 'We Care Wolves' shirts in December. Your presence makes a big difference to our kids because it shows that Zion and Trinity cares!

We Care Wolves!

Grades 4-6 Vocal Concert
Monday - December 2 @ 7pm (Manning auditorium)
JV Girls Basketball
Tuesday - December 3 @ 4:30pm (Manning gym)
Varsity Girls Basketball
Tuesday - December 3 @ 6pm (Manning gym)
Varsity Boys Basketball
Tuesday - December 3 @ 7pm (Manning gym)
HS Band & Vocal Concert
Monday - December 9 @ 7pm (Manning auditorium)
Junior High Boys Basketball
Thursday - December 12 @ 4:15pm (Manilla gym)
Grades 5-8 Band Concert
Tuesday - December 17 @ 7pm (Manning auditorium)

Zion Congregational Survey

Several months ago the leadership of Zion engaged is a dialog regarding our life together at Zion Lutheran. One of the topics that came from the meeting was to conduct a congregational survey to identify and evaluate the strengths and challenges of our congregation. With the help of the survey, Zion's leadership can better plan, strategize and focus on the areas that are working well and can be celebrated and expanded, as well as bring light to the areas where improvement can be made. You will receive this survey via mail in January (you will also be given an option to fill it out online). We invite every member of Zion to participate in the survey and would appreciate your honest reflection and rededication. – Survey Team (Chairman, Bruce Grimm)

Christmas for Camp Okoboji!

Needs/Wants List for Camp

- Gas powered golf cart (2)
- Road worthy pickup
- Box blade for skid loader
- Hand held mixers
- Blenders
- Toaster

Kirk R Warnke
Executive Director
Camp Okoboji
1531 Edgewood Drive
Milford, Iowa 51351
(712) 337-3325
(515) 408-5790 Cell
kirk.campokoboji@gmail.com

Lutheran Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

"I am happier, mentally stronger, and at peace with things I can't control. It saved my life after tragedy."

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We received your charitable gift of $255.75 in our office on November 15, 2019. Know that your donation will be a blessing to someone you will never meet, but is thankful to you.

The statement above was shared by someone who received help from a Lutheran Family Service counselor. We would not be able to be here for him – or for the many others we serve each day – without the faithful support of people like you who care and want to help. Because of your gift, this man was able to receive the help he needed based on what he was able to pay, since he could not afford the full cost.

Thank you for making a difference for him and many others – God bless you!

Sincerely,

Rev. Max Philips
Executive Director

We give thanks to God for you!

Carroll:
712-276-9000
www.lutheranfamilyservice.org

Zion,
You gave these dollars during fellowship on Sunday, October 6. Thank you for your ongoing generous support for mission and mercy work in Iowa and abroad!
Pastor Conner

Monthly Afternoon Communion Service at Zion

Is 9:00 a.m. on Sundays too early for you? Does your body cooperate better in the afternoon?

Zion now offers a Thursday afternoon Communion service every month especially for you, but any and all are invited. Our next service is scheduled for **Thursday, December 19 at 1:30 p.m.** We'll gather in the nave and then welcome worshipers to remain afterwards for a time of fellowship.

COOKIE WALK

Put on by the Trinity Weavers

- 9-11 am - December 7
- @ Trinity Church
- Get a box of cookies

Praise for Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University

From September through November, Zion offered Financial Peace University to our members and the community. Approximately 10 attended. Below are their reflections on the experience. *Special thanks to Jeff and Jean Hargens for facilitating the class!*

How has Financial Peace University changed the way you think about personal finance?

In every way – our relationship, our money, and planning.

It has really helped to focus more on a budget and to keep our silly spending in check.

It's not my money. It's God's money. He's the owner; we are the managers.

Very much so. Opening up communication about how we're spending our money has been transformative. This has been the longest we've ever stuck to a budget.

How has Financial Peace University changed your life?

It has given us a lot of hope for the future. We actually get to make plans and really think about accomplishing them.

It has kept us focused on why it's important to pay off debt and to give.

I'm excited to get started and to get debt free!

Yes! It makes our relationship on money a lot easier.

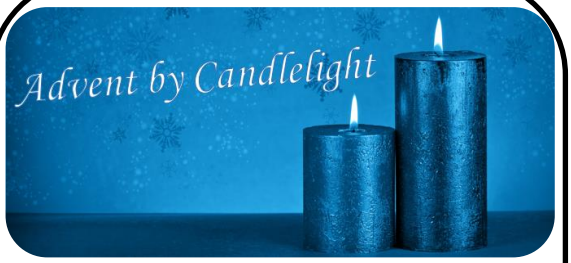
Would you recommend Financial Peace University to a friend?

Yes. It does a great job walking you through each step.

Absolutely – I did! Because I could see they were struggling.

I completely would. I think it would be hard for any couple to give this a shot and not be energized.

Yes. To help others is a blessing.



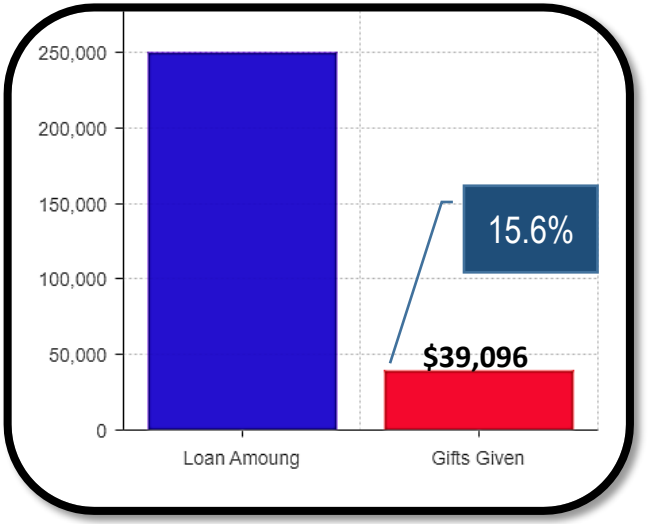
Sunday, December 8
6:30 p.m.

Experience the Christmas story through narration and song in the enchanting candlelight setting of Advent by Candlelight.

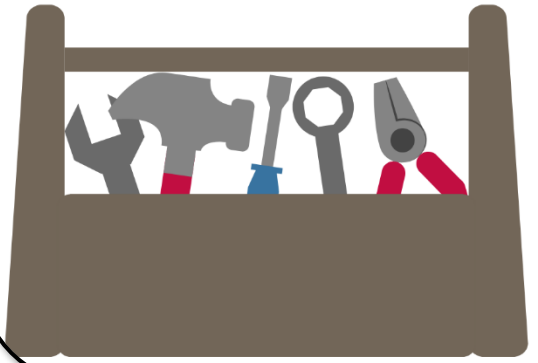
All proceeds go to missions.

Desserts are still needed. Sign up in the fellowship hall.

Roof Progress



Service @ Zion & Trinity



After a recent joint elders meeting and Lutheran Early Response Training event, your leadership hopes to identify skills, training, and passions you possess that can be utilized 4 others on a day-to-day basis or in times of emergencies.

- Jan 12 Pastor Johnson will be @ Zion to encourage you to fill out servant inventories (Jan 11 @ Trinity)
- Servant inventories will ask things like: do you own a chainsaw?; are you a good woodworker?; are you CPR certified?; and much more!
- This will help Zion & Trinity's leadership facilitate more servant opportunities in the future

Stephen, Maggie, Ginny, Gary, Isaac

中華信義神學院
China Lutheran Seminary

On Furlough in St. Louis!

← This African refugee seminary course was being taught by a St. Louis Concordia Seminary professor who received a serious diagnosis just after the course started. Being in cross-cultural mission, I was asked to step in and continue what has been a very fulfilling internet course. Each of the seven students are scattered throughout the US in LCMS churches, serving congregations of African immigrants. Struggling with adapting, English language, supporting their families and serving, they are studying towards ordination. As we have visited around the country on furlough and as I am now here at Concordia Seminary for continuing education, I'm struck by how God has not only sent us out to the growing "Global South" (Asia, Africa & South America), but He is also bringing this rapidly expanding Christian movement to our homeland churches. We have the privilege and mission of instilling here and there the treasure we've been given of the rich and solid doctrine of God's Word, the needed ROOT (Matthew 13:21)!

Having fun with Gary in San Diego on July 7 and our children having fun with Pastor Jonathan Conner's children at Zion in Manning, Iowa on July 28.

Right, we are having one of our regular fellowship dinners in our missionary apartment with (from left) Vincent & Linda Kam, Pastor Mic & Joy Wolfram, Lucy & Mark Wolfram, and Dr. Rowold (Linda, Lucy & Maggie are all from Taiwan).

Amigos en Cristo

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

December 2019

The community of Storm Lake is blessed to have bilingual Hispanic leaders who work and serve the greater community. The picture (right) is a gathering of Latin leaders from Storm Lake at the 2nd Annual Latino Voices Together Gala in Des Moines in October. Four of these leaders are members of Grace Hispanic Lutheran. Jose Ibarra is a member of the Storm Lake City Council. Matthew Marroquin is a student leader at Buena Vista University. Irma Ardon Ibarra is a HR manager at Tyson foods and Emilia Marroquin is on the Storm Lake School board, and Matthew's mother. They are not just working to serve the Hispanic immigrant population but all of the Storm Lake community. Also, they have been a spiritual blessing to our church family. God has given them many gifts and talents to be used for His glory as they give witness to their community. May they continue to use the opportunities they have received to be a blessing.

Last month we celebrated two young adults, Elian and Kimberly (photos on right). Our ministry is all about the people that God brings into our church family. Our youth are especially important as they are challenged by their Hispanic culture and the culture in this country. We not only enjoy these fellowship times with good food and friends but most importantly we celebrate the opportunity to teach them the love of our Lord for them and their families. God has brought these immigrant families to our communities and we are blessed!

Last month we celebrated Kimberly's Quincinera, her 15th birthday. A Quince (15th) is quite a party! If you have never been to one, you're missing a special family time as a young girl is ushered into womanhood, surrounded by family and friends. The picture below is Kimbertly dancing with her father, Balbino. Paula and I were invited as we have known this family for many years. I also was given a special time to share a message of Christ's love and plan for her life. God bless Kimberly and her family!

Please pray: +For our weekly home visits to meet and encourage our families in both Denison and Storm Lake. +For the Calling process of a bilingual pastor to serve Hispanics in Storm Lake and in Denison. + In thanksgiving for our recent visit with the Zion, Manning Mission board to thank them for their support. + ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of the Iowa District West who support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison & Storm Lake and also in our other 2 missions in Sioux City and Des Moines. +++***

Rev. Daniel Vogel
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Home: 712-653-2354
Cell: 712-309-1292
Email: daniel.vogel@ziondenison.org

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

December 4, 11, 18	Midweek Advent Services Trinity: 5:30 p.m. supper; 6:30 p.m. service Zion: 1:30 & 5:45 p.m. service; 6:30 p.m. supper
December 7	Cookie Walk at Trinity (9:00 – 11:00 a.m.)
December 7	Mission Saturday @ Trinity
December 8	Zion's Annual Voters' Meeting (after worship)
December 8	Advent by Candlelight at Zion (6:30 p.m.)
December 15	Children's Christmas Programs (6:00 p.m. student musicians) (6:30 pre-k – 1st program; 2nd – 8th follows)
December 19	Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)
December 24	Christmas Eve Services Trinity: 4:00 p.m. Zion: 6:00 p.m.
December 25	Christmas Day Services Trinity: 9:00 a.m. worship Zion: 10:00 a.m. Christmas Day Hymn Sing and Brunch
January 5	Zion Elected officers installed during service
January 5	Pre-K – 1st grade Sunday School classes sing at Plaza/Accura 10:30-11:10 a.m.
January 12	Zion Family and Friends Bowling at L & M Bowl in Manning 1:00-3:00 p.m.
January 19	Celebration of Generations Sunday at Zion (Life Sunday)
January 22	Confirmation Discipling Event (How to do Family Devotions) (6:00 p.m.)

December Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Robert Ewoldt
Debra Janssen
2. Renee Grimm
Kamryn Ketcham
Stephen Muhlbauer
Emma Schwieso
Melodie Boell (T)
4. Darlene Asmus
Janet Gruhn
Tracie Kurth
Rozora Schroeder
5. Tiffani Beck
Jase Hull
Ross Kusel
Brian Lage
6. Melissa Lesle
JoAnn Petersen
Eryn Ramsey
7. Mike Heaton
8. Annette Hilsabeck
Brian Stoberl
9. Piper Doyel
Wade Ranniger
Deb Birks (T)
10. Athena Bess
Breyton Johnson
Heather Kusel
Keaton Otto
11. Jaxen Vollstedt
Michell Lile (T)
12. Mike Bruch
Zoey Heaton
13. Tricia Beck
Courtney Grabill
Carla Rodriquez
Arlene Jahn (T)
14. Rachel Hofbauer
Neeka Jacobsen
15. Cheral Buhr
Sam Hansen
15. Sheryl Zinke
Mirada Lingle (T)
16. Mabel Langel
17. Derrick Janssen
Taylor Roe
Octavia Hodne (T)
Lonnie Jahn (T)
18. Zane Diersen
Jay Miller
Amanda Rosener
19. Gracelyn Pinney
20. Casie Eischeid
Courtney Eischeid
Kourtney Grimm
21. Leslee Gore
22. Kathy Vollstedt
23. Joyce Schroeder
Gary Witt
Shane Boeck (T)
24. Robert Christensen
Brittany Page
25. Ben Booth
Chris Greving
Carol Joens (T)
26. Brody Chapman
Larry Mahnke
Laurene Meeves
27. Eric Ramsey
28. Blake Diersen
Elissa Riesberg
Billy Weitl
29. Caden Muhlbauer
Jade Sellner
30. Cody Eischeid
Erica Lohrmann
Ginger Wardrip
31. Larry Ahrendsen
Amber Ehlers
Austin Frank
Ellie Ranniger

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

Anniversaries

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

Official Acts

Wedding
11/23 - David Vetter & Maria Muhlbauer; Pastor Johnson officiating

In Our Prayers

Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Natalie Mason (Bruce and Mary Grimm's daughter), Gage Carlson (great grandson of Russ and Virginia Mohr), Maridee Bohlmann (David & Joene Bohlmann's daughter-in-law), Lynn Kruse, Joyce Schroeder, Randy Saunders, Veronica Johnson (Bobby Doyel's grandmother)