Thank you, Pastor Riggert (and Diane)!

On behalf of the family of Zion, thank you, Pastor Riggert and Diane! for eighteen years of faithful service to Zion (1987-97 and 2011-19)! Your love and compassion for the people of God is matched only by your tireless commitment to share Jesus with them. We are truly grateful for the work God has accomplished (and will continue to accomplish!) through you. Thank you!

TWICE BLESSED

After a visit to our home, a niece sent a small plaque that now stands on a shelf in our kitchen. The plaque states, "When I count my blessings, I count you twice." That statement summarizes my reflections as I again transition from serving Zion Lutheran Church. I was blessed to be your senior pastor from 1987 to 1997. I was blessed again to serve as Assistant to the pastor from 2011 through 2019.

At the December annual meeting, I shared with the Voters' assembly that I would be concluding my official duties at Zion on December 31, 2019. For the past 8 months I have been serving as vacancy pastor at St. Paul, Carroll. God-willing, St. Paul will be issuing another call in January. However, even if the next candidate accepts the call, it will take several more months for that transition to take place. I do not have the time to also serve at Zion.

Personally and professionally, I also feel the need to conclude my service at Zion. Diane and I look forward to more freedom to enjoy the various activities of our grandchildren. God has again provided the opportunity to continue writing Chapel Talks and other resources for Lutheran School Ministry. If I desire, there are often area churches asking for a pastor to fill in on a weekend for pastor vacations. I won't be bored.

I have also shared that Diane and I will volunteer to coordinate the VBS program this summer as a transition in that important ministry takes place. (Volunteers are already being recruited!) We will also volunteer to lead the Fellowship Club. I have shared with Pastor Conner that I will be available to assist in an emergency or special situations. Zion will continue to be our church home, and after the vacancy we look forward to worshipping and serving with you more frequently.

Psalm 116:12, 17 has summarized my service in the church, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? . . . I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord." I have been blessed to serve in various roles and contexts for almost 50 years. I have been twice blessed to serve at Zion.

Blessings!
Pastor Bob

In Wisdom's Pursuit: The Inconceivably Complex Universe of Job

In the opening scenes of the book of Job, angels gather before God in some sort of heavenly meeting. Surprisingly, Satan is among them. ("Satan" is a title that means "accuser.") God speaks to Satan, asking him from where he has come. "From going to and fro on the earth…" Satan replies (1:7). Astonishingly, God suggests that Satan consider Job: "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" (1:8).

Thus begin Job's troubles, as unimaginable tragedy mercilessly crashes into Job's life, leaving his children dead, his livestock lost to marauders, his wife set against him, and his skin infested with sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Job is ruined. And thus the stage is set for the book's deep study of God's governance of the universe and man's finitude within it.

More specifically, the book will wrestle with the complexities of God's justness in the face of man's often unjust experiences. Job's suffering forces us to ask, *Does God govern the universe according to justice? Does God reward the righteous with success and punish the wicked with disaster (as the book of Proverbs suggests)?* If so, what about Job, a "blameless and upright man" who is enduring unimaginable disaster? This is the question the book of Job considers, but be warned: neat and tidy answers won't be forthcoming. And this is intentional.

Remember, the wisdom literature of Scripture (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job) are meant to be read together. Each book complements the other. Proverbs details the moral nature of reality (moral decisions bring good results; immoral ones bring bad), Ecclesiastes communicates the enigmatic and unpredictable nature of reality (life is often unpredictable), and Job shows the inconceivably complex nature of reality that defies human quantifying and comprehension. Reading one book in ignorance of the others will leave us with an incomplete picture of reality and an inadequate understanding of wisdom. (Remember, wisdom comes from fearing the Lord and living in line with His revealed will.)

In Job, word spreads of Job's plight. Friends come to comfort him (comfort that quickly turns into conflict, driving Job to complain, "miserable comforters are you all" (16:2)). When they arrive, they don't recognize him, so disfigured is he from the sores that have scarred his skin and the grief that has crushed his spirit. They sit in silence with Job for seven days (if only they had never opened their mouths!). Finally, Job speaks, lamenting the day of his birth:

> Let the day perish on which I was born…
> Let that day be darkness…
> Let gloom and deep darkness claim it (3:3,4,5).

He continues,

> Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
> Whom God has hedged in? (3:23).

Job can find no cause in himself for his suffering, but holds God fully responsible for his plight. One friend opens his mouth in reply:

> Remember: who that was innocent ever perished?
> Or where were the upright cut off?
> As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same (4:7-8).

In other words, "Job, you are too quick to accuse God. The innocent don't suffer. Bad things don't happen to righteous people. The fault *must* lie with you." Undergirding his words is the following assumption about how God governs the universe: God rewards wise and good behavior with success and God punishes evil and foolish behavior with disaster (essentially, an overly simplistic interpretation of the book of Proverbs, a misreading often repeated by popular health and wealth preachers today). Since Job has suffered disaster, he must have done something evil or foolish (see the fourth friend's words in 34:11).

Job, while giving full vent to his grief (crying out, "I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul (10:1)), doggedly maintains his innocence:

> My foot has held fast to his steps;
> I have kept his way and have not turned aside.
> I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
> I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food (23:11-12).

And:

> Far be it from me to say that you ("friends") are right;
> till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.
> I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go;
> my heart does not reproach me for any of my days (27:5-6).

In Job's eyes (just like his friends'), "calamity" is "for the unrighteous and disaster for the workers of iniquity" (31:3), but Job is righteous and a man of integrity. God Himself said so! As far as Job can see, therefore, God had afflicted him without just cause. Bad things happened to a good person and Job cannot understand why. Job-like scenarios continue to play themselves out today, which is why the book of Job remains perpetually relevant. All confessing Christians would benefit from a careful consideration of the book's wisdom.

Job gives words to his thoughts:

> The arrows of the Almighty are in me;
> my spirit drinks their poison;
> the terrors of God are arrayed against me (6:4).

> [God] has made me a byword of the peoples,
> and I am one before whom men spit (17:6).

Job can find no cause within himself for his suffering and can only conclude that God has treated him unjustly. Job's friends maintain God's innocence and Job's guilt as they argue back and forth for over 30 chapters, chapters well worth studying. The narrative reaches its climax with Job finally tiring of his "friends" and taking his case before God Himself, saying repeatedly, "If I have done anything wrong, show me! Tell me what it is so I can accept my calamity as Your justice" (see chapter 31).

Then God speaks, but not to answer Job, God speaks to question Job.

And then God speaks, but not to answer Job. God speaks to question Job. For four chapters God fires questions like the following at Job:

> Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
> Dress for action like a man;
> I will question you, and you make it known to me.
> Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
> Tell me, if you have understanding.
> Who determined its measurements—surely you know! (38:2-5).

Job is humbled. He replies,

> Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?
> I lay my hand on my mouth (40:4).

He has questioned God's justness and demanded God's answer. God responds by taking Job on a virtual tour of the cosmos, repeatedly showing Job the limits of Job's understanding (and limits of the three pounds of grey matter in our own heads!). Job is finite. He is not able to govern the universe. He is not able to enforce his principle of justice. The universe is inconceivably complex and God moves in ways mysterious to us to accomplish His purposes. Job acknowledges as much:

> I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know (42:3).

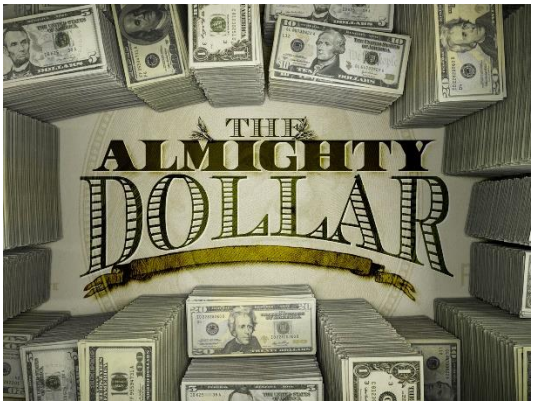
The book concludes with Job being moved to repentance, his friends being chastised by God, (with God saying to them, "You have not spoken of me what is right…" (42:7)). Job is restored to health and prosperity by God, and God never tells Job why he suffered. Never.

The book of Job doesn't answer why bad things happen to decent people… Job is an invitation to trust God's wisdom when we suffer rather than to search for answers.

The book of Job doesn't answer why bad things happen to decent people. That's not its purpose. Could we accept God's answer or even understand it, if He were to give us one? Job is an invitation to trust God's wisdom when we suffer rather than to search for answers. In our search for answers, we are prone to simplify God (as did Job's friends) or to accuse God (as did Job) on very limited evidence and from an exceedingly limited perspective. We simply aren't able to understand the ways and wisdom of God, any more than a three year old can understand trigonometry and calculus! We are in no position to question Him.

What we do know is greater than what we don't know.

We are called to trust Him. And we have great cause to do so! While God does not answer why we suffer, He powerfully shows us Who has suffered for us: Jesus! While He does not answer why bad things happen to decent people, He does show us who has endured in our stead all the bad things brought about by human sin: Jesus. He does show us who lives for us, who forgives us, who ministers to us still today, and who will return to raise the dead, reunite loved ones, and renew the earth: Jesus. What we do know is greater than what we don't know. So we walk in faith, trusting our Lord in the midst of an inconceivably complex universe that we can rely on Him to govern. – Pastor Conner



Last month during a series on money, I burned $200. Well, OK, at the last second the two $100 bills I'd taken out into the congregation were switched with two paper $100 bills. A little lighter fluid (OK, it was a lot of lighter fluid) and the money went up in smoke.

Any sort of gut reaction to losing that money reveals our internal desires. Some people might recoil at the burning because it could have been given to someone in need of money. Some people might take a look in the pan I burned the money in order to see if any of the remains were salvageable. Some people might just have shock. The point is, as much as we'd like to tell ourselves that money does not have that much control over us – if we're honest with ourselves – we're fooling ourselves.

German Pastor Martin Luther wrote a long time ago: "A god means that from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take refuge in distress." A god is anything or anyone we go to in order to feel full, whole, and in control of our lives. Luther goes on to identify money as one of the greatest things we go to in order to feel full and so on. Money is the bridge to making us happy (money buys stuff for our hobbies or comfort); money makes us feel like we matter (see Mark 10:17-27 – Jesus' Disciples thought a rich young ruler was hot stuff because he was rich); money gives us salvation ("So long as I have enough saved up in the bank, I can tackle any obstacle that comes my way!").

The reality is – again if we're being honest with ourselves – the internal, gut reaction to seeing paper money burned up is probably similar to what Jesus' followers felt when they saw Him dying on a cross; all their hopes and dreams crashed on the rocks because their Savior was dead. The thought and sight of losing $200 leaves us feeling equally helpless because money is something we go to way too much for fullness, wholeness, and control (i.e. salvation).

So how do we let go of money's lordship over us?

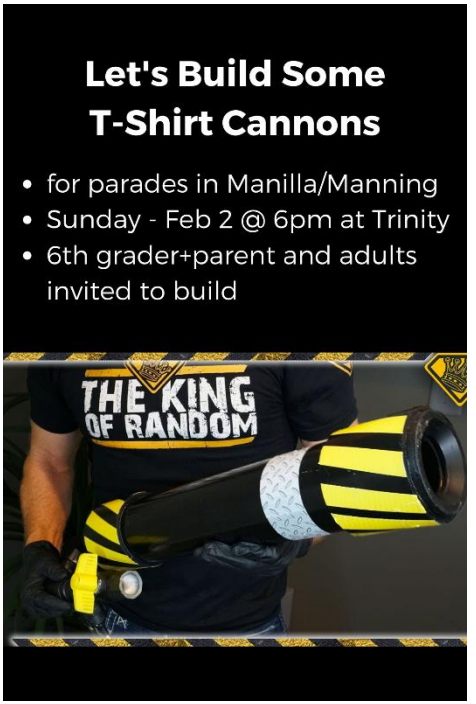
2 things:

1. **RESITUATE MONEY** in your life – money is not the problem. Paul said the problem is the "love of money" not money in and of itself. Money is a thing; it doesn't stay up worrying about you like you worry about it. To resituate money is nothing more than saying to yourself *money is a good gift from GOD*, but *money makes for a lousy god*.

2. **CORONATE JESUS** over your life – in order to escape the lordship of a person, place, or thing over your life, you need a new person, place, or thing. Ideally someone or something more powerful than that which you're trusting to make you feel whole, full, and in control. Money goes up in smoke when you set a match to it. But when humanity set a match to Jesus of Nazareth and tried to burn Him up, He rose from the dead three days later. Death couldn't stop Him! Coronating Jesus as the

Lord of your life means nothing more than trusting that when Jesus says He has your back that He means it. He alone can give you wholeness that will blow your mind! Money can't raise you from the dead, but Jesus can. So why go to anything less than Him?

The problem with greed is nobody sees themselves as greedy. But an easy way to find out if you need to hold a coronation ceremony in your life is to imagine taking all your financial resources and tossing them into a fire (please don't actually do that, however, since burning money is a federal crime). But if you did that, what would happen inside your gut? Would it churn like a washing machine? If so, maybe it's time to reconsider your relationship to money along with your relationship to the only Lord worthy of your affection and attention. – Pastor Johnson



Movie Day @ Trinity

- Free to everyone
- January 26 @ 4pm
- Bring a lawn chair or blanket
- Drinks & Snacks provided

Because Kids Ask… Love, Sex, and Marriage

As each confirmation class concludes, I invite my 7th and 8th grade students to write in their learning journal. They can share something they learned or ask a question that came up in class or one that has been circulating in their mind. Every week I am impressed both with what they gain from our conversations in class and by the thoughtfulness of the questions they ask.

Recently, a student asked a question about sex, specifically about sex within marriage. Increasingly, students are struggling to understand why the Church reserves sex for marriage (to say nothing of their increasing confusion over what marriage even is!). In this particular case the student wanted to know if and why sex was supposed to be saved for marriage. Why wasn't love enough? In other words, the student had heard the culture's message clearly: the only thing necessary for sex is love, not marriage.

Maybe you've struggled with this before, too. Why isn't love enough? The answer lies in the assumptions. More specifically, the answer lies in the definition of *love*. What is love? Our culture defines love as a strong affinity or affection between/among two or more people. For our culture that's enough for sex.[1] It, however, is not enough for Scripture, and as such, it's not enough for the Church.

Why?

Because such a definition of love is insufficient, and ripe for manipulation at the hands of sinful man. Such a definition of love leaves God out. More specifically, it leaves God's Word out. It does so on purpose to give free reign to human desires. This is an important insight. So many of the words our culture tosses around, like *love*, *marriage*, *freedom*, and *justice*, are defined apart from God's Word. This is no accident. Christians must practice careful discernment in these matters, constantly asking what people mean by the words they use. If God and His Word have been evicted from the definitions in use, we cannot embrace them.

Scripture addresses love in many places. Consider what Paul writes of love in Romans 13:

> Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (13:8-10).

This phrase "love does no wrong to a neighbor" is especially insightful. This may sound strange to your ears, but sex outside marriage wrongs a person. How? It wrongs a person by involving them in a lie. Let's explore why. Please notice what we're doing here: we're bringing God's Word into our conversation on love and sex. If you're not accustomed to doing this, you may find this

[1] Sadly, with the rise of porn culture, love is increasingly seen as irrelevant to sex. Consent is replacing love, reducing sex to an agreed upon mutual exchange, a loveless physical transaction on par with online shopping or convenience purchases at the local Grab and Go.

difficult. You may even find yourself stiffening against it. You wouldn't be the first to feel this. It's what sinful hearts do.

Scripture records God's creation of marriage in the creation account in Genesis. That account details at least two basic purposes for marriage: procreation and the one-flesh union (Scripture also speaks about companionship and support within marriage). In other words, sex lives within marriage to unite husband and wife in a loving and trusting relationship that God may bless with children.

This, by the way, is why same-sex unions cannot be marriage. Marriage, by definition, is the one-flesh union of male and female that God may bless with children. This definition has been fixed by God. We are not free to change it. This is not to say that two people of the same sex cannot care deeply for each other or that they can't, in some sense, love each other. But there's that word *love* again! And our point is that our common understanding of love is insufficient because it leaves God's Word out.

> When it comes to sex the question isn't whether two or more people love each other… The question is *What does love require of us?*

So, when it comes to sex the question isn't whether two or more people love each other, because with fallen natures it's far too easy and tempting for us to manipulate love to allow us to gratify our desires, the very desires Scripture teaches are bent by sin. The question is, W*hat does love require of us?*

True love makes demands on us, often requiring us to die to our desires that are out of line with what God has called good in creation, whether hetero-sex desires or same-sex desires. Love worthy of sex with a person requires a lifelong commitment of monogamous exclusivity; it requires marriage.

> Love worthy of sex with a person requires a lifelong commitment of monogamous exclusivity; it requires marriage.

This is not to say that an unmarried man and woman can't love each other, because they most certainly can. This is to say that love must drive them to make certain decisions because, again, the question isn't whether they love one another, the question is what that love requires of them. If sex is to be a part of the relationship, love requires them to pursue marriage.

Love, as Scripture has taught us, does not invite another person to join their body in a lie. Doing so would wrong our neighbor, which Scripture, as we saw above, clearly speaks against. Love requires us to seek the other person's good. Sex outside marriage doesn't do that because it lacks the solemn promise of fidelity and lifelong devotion that Scripture intends and it leaves people vulnerable.[2]

Scripture reserves sex for marriage because it acknowledges the good God intends for both. And this is why the Church reserves sex for marriage. – Pastor Conner

[2] Yes, there is vulnerability within marriage, too, but this is not the fault of marriage, but the fault of sinful hearts. Marriage remains God's good gift that God has designed to bless and protect men and women.

Preschool Praises for December 2019

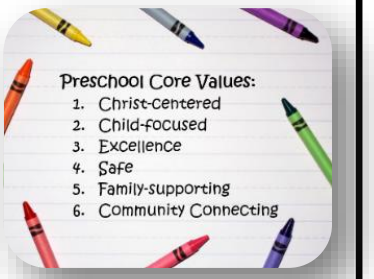
December seems like a blur as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ! The first week of December was about winter and the book The Mitten. The children enjoyed reading The Mitten and then acting it out with masks and a sheet over a table to be the "mitten". The children learned that Y is for yarn and they practiced their fine motor skills by tracing some tricky lines. They enjoyed painting with red and green and learned about the oval. In Jesus Time we talked about Mary and how the angel, Gabriel, came and told her that God has chosen her to be the mother of Jesus! How amazing and overwhelming that must have been! But Mary was faithful and said, "Let it be done according to your word."

Pastor told the children about when Moses lead the Israelites through the Red Sea and then lead them to a special mountain called Sinai. The mountain was wrapped in smoke and thunder and lightning was all around and a very loud trumpet blast sounded as God came to the mountain in fire which caused the whole mountain to tremble. God is powerful! He told us that we are his treasured possession!

The second week of December was about seasons. The children had fun making their ornaments and learning about the letter W this week. We worked on patterns, cutting and organizing. The children really enjoyed when they got to make the number 8 in shaving cream on the table top! We talked about Joseph and who he was and how the angel told him to take Mary as his wife and to care for her and the baby that she was carrying, Jesus. Pastor told the children about when the Angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of His son, Jesus! At first Mary was confused because she didn't have a husband, so how could she have a baby? But Gabriel told her that the Holy Spirit was going to make it so that Mary would become pregnant - without an earthly father. Mary was amazed but responded humbly saying," Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

The third and last week of December before our Christmas break was all about- you guessed it! - Christmas! We learned that the candy cane is shaped like the letter J for Jesus. We also worked on our parent cards and presents for Christmas. The children sang during service on Wednesday evening and they did a wonderful job! We had practiced so much and it is nice to see it pay off. The Jesus Birthday Party was awesome as we frosted and decorated our own cookies for snack and then opened presents then we finished the day playing games and singing songs. What a wonderful way to end just before Christmas break! It is thanks to Thrivent that we were able to have the Christmas cookies for snack and send home presents for the children including a nativity book, activity book, crayons, a pencil and a hand-made hat. Pastor and I both spoke about Jesus' birth and how the lowly shepherds were the first to know about it. God truly love us!

Although Christmas is a joyful time, we were saddened to lose a very special woman who was part of our Preschool Board, Heather Kusel. We praise God for the time that we had with her and the lives that she touched, and we await the day that we can be reunited with her once again. Come Lord Jesus!
Christmas Blessings,
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz



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

What's Your New Year's Resolution?

The start of a new year is the perfect time to turn a new page in your life. A new year often feels like a fresh start, a great opportunity to eliminate bad habits and establish new routines that will help you grow psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, socially, physically, or intellectually. Of course, resolutions are much easier to make than keep.

It is estimated that only approximately 9 percent of people who make New Year's Resolutions are successful in achieving them. While the statistic is alarming, it is also true that setting a resolution makes it ten times more likely that you'll change your behavior!

So, how do you do it? Pick one. And make it realistic and obtainable. Taking on too much at once can be daunting. It can be particularly difficult too because establishing new behavioral patterns takes time – and effort!

Think of it like this: you need to move from ruts to rails. Unhealthy behaviors are ruts in your life. It's where you end up over and over again. And getting out of a rut takes a lot of effort! It's far easier just to stay in the rut. Healthy behaviors require laying down rails, rails that help you rise above the ruts and keep you out of them for good. Your goal is to move from the ruts to the rails.

So what rails do you need to lay? Most people focus on the physical self – losing weight, getting into shape, or personal issues such as becoming more financially stable. Often times, however, mental health is overlooked. But this is just as important, if not more so, than our physical health. The rails of mental health begin with speaking truth into your life, which is why a strong connection to Christ's Church and His Word are so important!

Maybe you've felt stuck in a rut in 2019. Maybe you've struggled with depressing thoughts or with feelings of despair or hopelessness. 2020 can be the year you resolve to get out of those ruts and get onto the rails of truth. It can start with a resolution. Here are a few places to start:

- Focus on what God has placed in your control – *"I will focus on what I can control and leave the rest to God. Trying to do His job is not only exhausting; it's impossible."*
- Choose your environment wisely – "*I will surround myself with mature, truth-telling people, i.e. mature Christians."*
- Get help when you need it – *"I will ask for help when I need it. My pastor is trained to help and he's eager to listen."*
- Don't listen to yourself; speak to yourself - *"I will not let negative thought loops drag me into the ruts of despair, but will lay down rails of hope by speaking God's truth into my mind."*
- Fight depression with treatment – *"I will seek help to get out of the ruts of depression. Things don't always have to be this way."*

Resolutions don't guarantee things will change, but doing nothing surely ensures things won't change. You can get out of the ruts and get onto the rails in 2020. And Zion and Trinity are there to help! And, if you're a senior, Senior Life Solutions is here for you, too.

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

Ladies Guild of Zion
December 11, 2019

After the table prayer 5 guests, the Conner family, Pastor Johnson and 13 guild members took part in the potluck luncheon. Hostesses for the day were Susan Schilling, Cheral Buhr and Joene Bohlmann.

Following the meal, Christian Life Chairman, Margaret Backhaus, read a devotional entitled "The Sculptor."

There was no business meeting, but the treasurer handed out her report. Officers will meet before the first of the year to disperse the funds to various mission projects. Zone President Carmen Thiedeman spoke to us about helping to host the LWML rally in June and explained what would be involved. Several games were played before we adjourned for the day.

Serving bingo at Accura on December 27th will be Sandra Vahl, Chrm., Janet Gruhn, Audrey Roe and JoAnn Thomas.
Sue Puck, secretary

Advent by Candlelight 2019

Special thanks to Bev Grundmeier, Audrey Roe, Bob Genzen, the Zion Praise Team, and all our hostesses and donors for making Advent by Candlelight a God-glorifying, community-blessing event!

Zion Congregational Survey

Several months ago, the leadership team of Zion dialogued on our life together at Zion Lutheran. That meeting moved us to conduct a congregational survey to identify and evaluate the strengths and challenges of our congregation. We believe this survey will help Zion's leadership better plan, strategize and focus on the areas that are working well so that they can be celebrated and expanded. Zion's leadership also hopes that the survey will bring light to the areas where improvement can be made.

We will mail the survey to every member of Zion the first part of January, and we encourage everyone in the household to fill one out. You can find additional copies in the fellowship hall and the following link (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WWGY7FV) to the online version will be on the church's website (www.zionmanning.com). You can return the paper copies to a collection box that will be located in the fellowship hall.

We invite and encourage every member of Zion to participate in the survey and would appreciate your honest reflection. If you have questions concerning the survey please feel free to contact or visit with Eric Ramsey, Bruce Grimm, or Pastor Conner.

Sharing the Epiphany Light of Jesus through OGT

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN
Relief for Human Need Worldwide

Zion Fellowship Club supports the ministry of Orphan Grain Train (OGT). The Fellowship Club coordinates several clothing collections throughout the year.

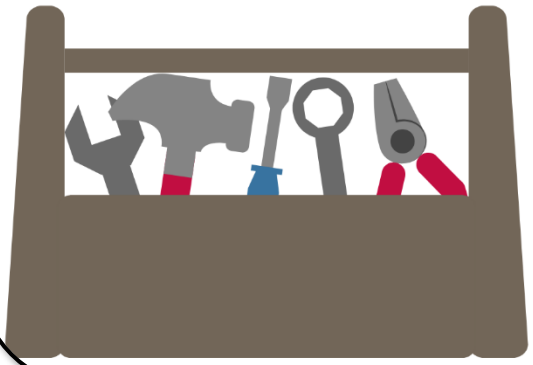
Good, used, clean clothing items of all sizes and seasons will be collected again through January 6 (Epiphany). New underwear and socks are always appreciated. Shoes can also be brought but women's shoes must have heels no higher than thumb height. Look through your closets for items that don't fit or items that have been updated with Christmas gifts. Share the opportunity with friends and neighbors in the community.

OGT shipments go around the world. A recent OGT benefactor was Point of Grace church and school in Kenya, Africa. The 724 students in the school were all smiles as they saw boxes of underwear, flip-flops, t-shirts, towels and wash cloths. The 22 teachers were amazed when school desks, posters, school books, and classroom supplies were unloaded. Nationally, Cornerstone Children's Ranch in Quemado, Texas was blessed with food, clothing, and medical supplies. The center serves about 20,000 people yearly located a few miles from the Mexico border.

In addition to clothing donations, financial donations are always needed to fund the costly shipments. Checks can be made out to "Zion Fellowship Club—OGT" and your donation will be forwarded to the OGT office.

Zion Fellowship Club meets monthly for Bible study and Fellowship. Typically, the group meets the 2nd Monday of each month. The January meeting will be Monday, January 13 at 7 p.m.

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

Did your email change? So did ours at Zion! Email us your new email at zionmanninglcms@gmail.com.

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, January, 16 at 1:30 p.m.** We'll gather in the nave and then welcome worshipers to remain afterwards for a time of fellowship.

Over 40 kids welcomed their adopted missionary (the Sharp Family in Uruguay) on Wednesday, December 4!

Over 80 children from Zion and Trinity shared the good news of Jesus' birth on December 15 in our children's Christmas programs! Special thanks to Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp, and their helpers and to everyone who made cupcakes and helped in any way!

SERVING THE LORD

ALL OVER ASIA

NEWS FROM THE FERRY FAMILY

Winter 2019/20

Glimpses of Life in Asia with the Ferry Family

Living and serving as we do in Asia, there are very few dull moments. Even the most mundane happenings can be an adventure in Asia: going to the market, taking the bus to church, visiting a local restaurant for dinner. After all, we look different, we sound different, we act different from nearly everyone around us.

That gives us incredible opportunities in so many "everyday" things to give a faithful witness to the "hope that is within us" (1 Peter 3:15). Sometimes, it's just because people see the color of our skin, and assume that we are English-speakers. And in our case, they're right! But so many people in Asia want to learn/know English, that they're willing to approach us and engage in conversation. What a privilege.

People in our partner church are no different: they also want their children to know English, and they want to interact with us as foreigners. This is especially true because most Taiwanese people are naturally warm, friendly, and hospitable. And we are here in Taiwan (and in Asia in general) at the request of our local church partners because they want (and we want for them!) to be better able to understand and articulate the Word of God and who He has made them to be in Christ Jesus their Savior. We give thanks to God for your ongoing support and love: for your prayers, for your financial sacrifice, and for your continual efforts to stay in touch with us while we serve in these wild, wonderful places. We know we are where we are "supposed to be" and where the Lord would have us serve.

We're glad to be your hands, feet, and voice to speak the Lord's Word where He has placed us through you, His church. Whether you live in the USA or far overseas, what a joy to know that simply living out your vocations faithfully is God working through you!

It was a great privilege lately to meet some new friends on a trip to Japan. During a regular visit to check on our workers in the country, I had the privilege of answering a request for a visit by a representative of the Japanese Lutheran Brethren Church. They are keen to learn more about our LCMS, and to take advantage of our expertise in theological education, as well as our passion for solid theological resources. Thanks be to God: people all over the world know about your faithfulness to the Word of God, and we are being drawn together. God grant much fruit to come from these emerging relationships, for the sake of His Word so more would know Jesus and Him crucified for them!

Please pray:

- Ongoing strife and conflict in Hong Kong, making life challenging for our called workers. God grant peace and justice for all.

Please give thanks for:

- The generous and faithful support given by our church so that we can continue to work and serve here in Asia.

Amigos en Cristo

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

January 2020

In November, some of our members from Amigos en Cristo came with Paula and me to visit the Mission Committee of Zion, Manning. Under the leadership of Jean Hargens of Zion we had a special time together. We came to thank Zion for their faithful support and for our fellowship together over many years. We told them about our ministry, we sang a bilingual hymn and we prayed for our work in mission together. Amigos en Cristo is one of four mission projects that Zion is supporting this year. We are thankful for their mission hearts!

Advent with a Hispanic tradition called a 'Posada' (in English "Inn") a remembrance of Joseph and Mary's search in Bethlehem for a shelter. Each week we gather in a home to prepare for Christmas with God's Word, songs, and of course food. At right is the Posada we had in the Perez family home in Denison. It was a full house of about 30 family and friends. This is a wonderful popular tradition that gives us the opportunity to tell the true story of Jesus' coming and it's meaning for our lives. It's also a great way for our members to invite friends and the curious to hear the Christmas Gospel.

We are grateful for the congregations and the 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. God bless you all and come visit either of our services, any Sunday at 10:30AM at Grace Lutheran in Storm Lake or at 12:30PM at Zion, Denison!

Rev. Daniel Vogel
32678 Aspen Ave., Manning, Iowa, 51455
Home: 712-653-2354
Cell: 712-309-1292
Email: daniel.vogel@ziondenison.org

Zion's Congregational Servants

Council:
Chairman: Bruce Grimm
Vice-chair: Jeff Hargens
Financial Secretary: Sonia Nulle
Treasurer: Shannon Walters
CFO: Drew Puck

Board of Elders:
Head Elder: Paul Christensen
Mike Gore, Eric Ramsey,
Paul Christiansen, Bob Genzen
Tim Kienast

Board of Deacons:
Head Deacon: Larry Mahnke
Ben Booth, Randy Dreher,
Jason Kienast, Chris Greving,
Nate Blackford, Dan Stribe

Trustees:
Head Trustee: Dan Behrens
Isaac Grabil, Kyle Arp,
Sam Musfeldt, Nate Jensen

Board of Missions:
Chair: Jean Hargens

Casie Eischied

Board of Education: ???
Chair: Joni Kienast
Shelly Gruhn (Sunday school superintendent)
Kathy Vollstedt, Casie Eischied,
Dan Dawson

Preschool Board:???
Chair: Jen Morris
Jamie England, Janet Smith,
Kari Ranniger

Stewardship Board:
Chair: vacant

Safety and Security Team ???
Chair: Jen Morris
Shelly Gruhn, Kyle Arp, David Bohlmann,
Gary Witt, Stan Musfeldt

Ladies Guild:
Chair: Audrey Roe

Altar Guild:
Chair: Monica Christensen

Choir:
Director: Dr. Tom Ulrickson

Children's Choirs:
Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp

Trinity's Congregational Servants

Council:
President: Nyle Gruhn
VP: Jason Ferry
Treasurer: Gloria Boeck
Secretary: Sylvia Bandow

Board of Elders:
Head Elder: Mike Lorenzen
Jerry Brus, Scott Lingle
Nels Olson

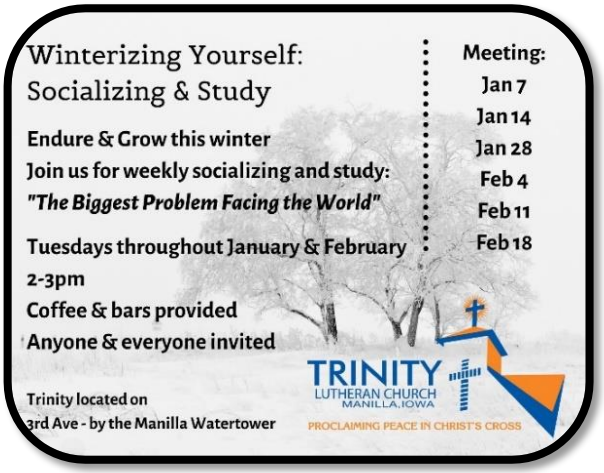
Trustees:
Wyatt Bandow

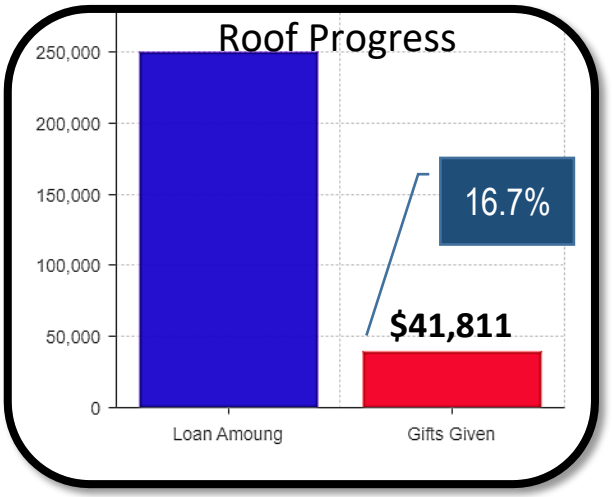
ZION
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

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

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

Installation	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 16	Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)
Celebration of Generations	January 19	Celebration of Generations Sunday at Zion (Life Sunday)
DISCIPLING EVENT	January 22	Confirmation Discipling Event (How to do Family Devotions) (6:00 p.m.)
OVERCOMER	January 26	Overcomer movie at Trinity (4:00 p.m.) Bring a comfy chair





January Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1 Greg Neumann
2. Jennifer Morris
Joel Musfeldt
Alex Ranniger
Ryan Riesberg
Rachel Winter
3. Violet Schroeder (T)
4. Alexis Dawson
Karen Kienast
Caitlin Lahr (T)
5. Kyle Lohrmann
6. Dawn Ketchum
Betty Maasen
Bennett Stribe
Sylvia Bandow (T)
Jeanette Ferry (T)
7. Jeanette Ferry (T)
8. Amy Hansen
Easton Hass
Leo Ertz (T)
9. Bode England
Blake Dahlgren (T)
11. Amy Benton
Beverly Woebke (T)
12. Daniel Grove
Jacki Nusbaum
John Opperman
Benjamin Lingle (T)
Terry Segebart (T)
14. Kamryn Lesle
David Page
15. Kari Deal
Kenneth Eischeid
Jaclyn Garrison
Colene Lohrmann
16. Chase Alexander
Mike Kuchel
Jenna Soll
Payton Vonnahme
Shona Weitl
17. Kevin Grimm
Harper Potthoff
18. Paul Christensen
Sarah Gruhn
Sara Kobus
Brian Lamp
Noah Martin
Sonia Nulle
Blake Nusbaum
19. David Bohlmann
Joe Karsten
Cynthia Ranniger
Jessa Wiig
20. Jonathan Lueth (T)
22. Crystal Dreher
Bryce Mohr
Gary Schroeder
Stephanie Winter
23. Charles Lueth (T)
25. Lucas Borkowski
Robin Heaton
Tabitha Kuchel
William Weitl
27. Marshall Hansen
Deb Knueven
28. Riley Adams
Kelly Ceminski
Karen Joens
Eugene Mahnke
Kemper Nelson
Lowell Schroeder
29. Mary Greving
Stacie Nelson
Robert Riggert
30. Michael Frank
31. Grant Behrens
Philip Vogel

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

Anniversaries

1. Kyle & Jill Arp
Stanley & Lori Musfeldt
6. Mike & Judy Jacobsen
8. Rodney & Kristin Backhaus
9. Curits & Nancy Grimm
12. Steve & Erin Renze
18. William & Carol Joens (T)

Official Acts

Funeral:
Charles E. Fielweber; Died 12/11; Funeral 12/16; Pastor Conner
Karmen G. Grabill; Died 11/ 23; Funeral (at Ohde Funeral Home) 12/ 6: Pastor Conner
Heather M. (nee: Odendahl) Kusel; Died 12/13; Funeral (at High school) 12/18; Jonathan Conner
Gale W. Segebart; Died 12/ 24; Funeral (at Trinity, Manilla) 12/ 28; Pastor Conner

Adult Confirmation:
12/15 by Pastor Conner: Robin Bunker, Jenny Bunker, Heather Wenck

Affirmation of Faith:
12/15: Ron Bunker, Maureen Bunker

Transfers:
In (to Trinity, Manilla): Alex Blankman, Jamie Hanson, Kelly Rutherford, Jason Rasmussen, Paul Kirsch, Brandi Kirsch, Laurie North

Baptisms:
Louis William & Christopher John; sons of Randy & Crystal (nee: Bruhn) Dreher; December 29; Pastor Conner

In Our Prayers

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, Veronica Johnson (Bobby Doyel's grandmother), Nancy Grimm, Arlene Mohr, Roger Curtis, Patty Meeves (Laurene's daughter in law)