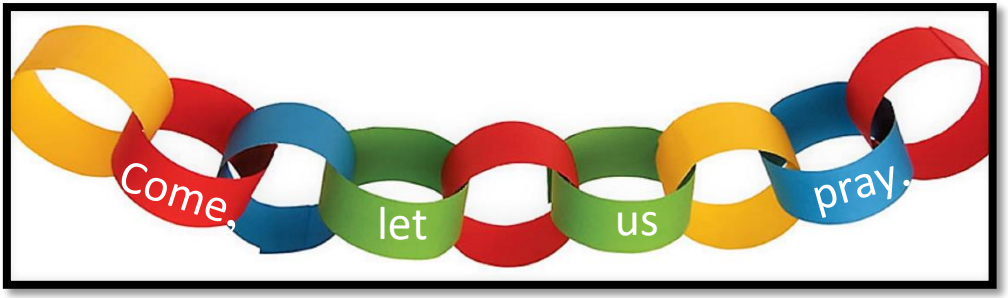


Greetings, families of Zion and Trinity!

Zion's Friendship Committee is excited to invite you to participate in a prayer project! Here's how it works: Use the enclosed pieces of paper (along with tape or staples) to construct a simple paper prayer chain (as pictured). Put the pieces together in numerical order (#1-15).

Then, tune in to the daily morning devotions on Zion's Facebook page on July 6-10, 13-17, and 20-24. Pastor Conner will address each one of these topics (in order) during his daily morning devotions on those days. You'll be invited to tear the day's link off the chain, read the Bible verse printed on it, and pray for the topic printed there.

The devotions/prayers, approximately 10 minutes long, are streamed live on Zion's Facebook page at 7:30 a.m., but you can access the videos anytime that's convenient for your family. Perhaps it's something that you can enjoy doing as a family after supper or before bed. Since the videos are all posted after being livestreamed, you don't need to worry about getting "behind"—simply pick up where you left off, or jump back in with the live topics, and finish the rest later. The prayer chain can also stand alone, without the videos. This is meant to be an activity that you can customize for your family's schedule, while still sharing the blessing of being in prayer together as a church and a community.

Speaking of which…we will be inviting the community to join us in these days of prayer as well! (Watch for posters around town, and spread the word!) If you'd like an extra paper prayer chain for your family, or to share with a friend, you can get one by contacting the church office (or stopping in at Veterinary Associates of Manning, The Market Place, or Manning Library).

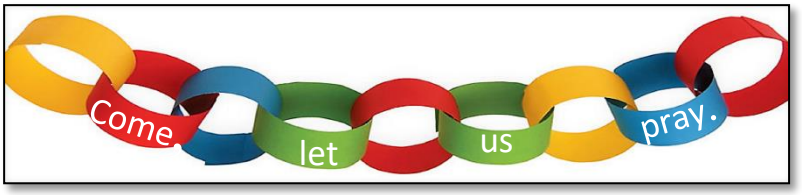
We'd love to encourage and uplift others by sharing pictures of you and your kids making and using the prayer chain! If you don't mind having them posted to Zion's Facebook page (without last names), send them to zionmanninglcms@gmail.com or 571-651-4556. You can also send snippets of prayers.

The prayer schedule is on the next page.

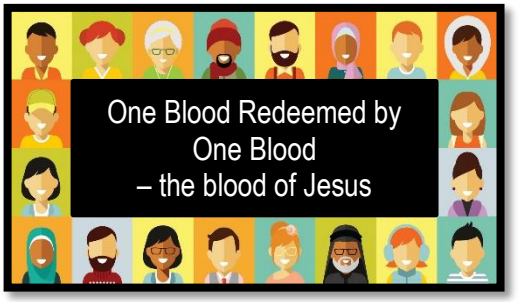
Celebrating and Sharing Christ with you!
Pastor Jonathan Conner and the Zion Friendship Committee

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love
Friendship Committee

"A friend loves at all times…"
(Proverbs 17:17)



July 6	1. Pray that when you are afraid, you will find strength and hope in God's promises. (See Psalm 46:1)
July 7	2. Thank God for three of His gifts to you today. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
July 8	3. Pray for nursing home residents (who may be lonely) and workers, along with other healthcare workers (who may be experiencing extra stress and risk). (See Psalm 9:9)
July 9	4. Thank God for your food, and for the ability to enjoy different flavors. (See Psalm 145:15-16)
July 10	5. Pray for a vaccine and treatments for COVID-19. (See Isaiah 33:2)
July 13	6. Pray for your pastor(s) and for church workers and missionaries. (See Acts 20:28)
July 14	7. Pray for people in our community to be safe as they work, and for local businesses to thrive. (See Colossians 3:23-24)
July 15	8. Thank God for your pets or for animals in general. (See Matthew 6:26)
July 16	9. Pray that God would move you to be generous in sharing the gifts He gives to you, and in loving others as He loves you. (See 2 Corinthians 9:11)
July 17	10. Pray for a friend or relative who doesn't know Jesus. (See Luke 19:10)
July 20	11. Pray for teachers, administrators, and school workers. (See Proverbs 2:6; 3:13-14)
July 21	12. Pray for your parents and grandparents (or other relatives). (See Exodus 20:12)
July 22	13. Thank God for what Jesus accomplished for you on the cross. (See Ephesians 2:13)
July 23	14. Pray for your siblings, cousins, or other family members. (See John 16:33)
July 24	15. Thank God for His creation—including His creation of you! (See Psalm 139:13-14)



The apostle Paul stood before the Areopagus and confidently declared, "[God] made from one man [literally: *one blood*] every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth…" (Acts 17:26). The Bible makes it clear that there is only one race: the human race. Yes, there are different people groups with distinctive skin color, eye shape, hair type, etc. These people groups are included in the kaleidoscope Kingdom of God. Individuals from every nation, tribe, people, and language are included in the Kingdom, but there is only one race.[1]

So, racism is sin. It's sin on multiple levels. First, it's sin because it rejects what God has called good. It segregates what God has not segregated. It ranks what God has not ranked. It's a rejection of the good God has created. Christianity roundly condemns all forms of racism as a complete rejection of what God has called good. We are all one blood. So, racism is sin. Period.

But that's only part of the story. We need to be careful not to fall off the other side of the horse by failing to condemn uniformism. I know that's not really a word, but I'm talking about judging a man or woman by the color of his or her uniform – the police uniform to be precise. And, to be lovingly blunt, this breaks the 4th commandment.

But police have done bad things! True. But is it fair to condemn an entire group of people because a few of them have done bad things? Do you understand why this is an important question? Do you see how uniformism is just falling off the other side of the horse? It essentially does the same thing racism condemns. It too is sin. What about the rioting and the looting? It's evil. It breaks the 7th Commandment. So, it's sin, too.

Okay, there's another point I want to make and it's important; it's just hard to appreciate. So, let me illustrate first by talking about a different situation. In marriage counseling I often work with couples on hearing each other's heart. Underneath and behind the barbed words and unloving or disrespectful tone in conflict is usually a hurting heart. Now, we are typically really bad at saying what we're actually feeling or thinking. In fact, most of the time the way we present our feelings is exactly the opposite of how we should. Wives who fling barbed arrows at their husbands aren't going to motive him to respond lovingly and they aren't helping him hear their heart. And husbands who are harsh and blunt with their wives aren't going to motivate her to respond with respect and they aren't helping her hear their heart.

In the current climate I think we need to work really hard to hear the hurt, to hear the heart behind the yelling and the harsh words. People in the Black community will tell you story after story about how they've been pulled over and harshly questioned for doing nothing wrong. They feel like their guilt is assumed. In the black community "the talk" isn't about sex; it's about how to talk respectfully to a police officer to avoid trouble. And when you hear their stories you realize that people shouldn't be treated that way.

[1] This article is adapted from my morning teaching/prayer on June 9.

But we also need to hear the hearts of our police officers. Hear their stories. They are routinely demonized, trolled, and mocked. They are lied to every day and they've learned the hard way not to trust people. They are called into some of the most dangerous and explosive situations. And now everybody has a cellphone to video them, to plaster their face and their name all over the world. I'm sure it feels like a great, global target being fixed on them and on their families.

My concern is that we're not listening to people's hearts. We're getting riled up by the media who has grabbed this situation and spun it for political gain, but we're not actually listening to people's hearts.

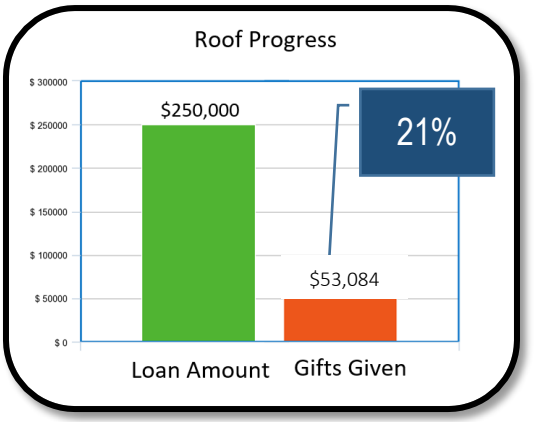
Black, White, Asian, Hispanic – we're all one blood. And it doesn't matter what uniform you wear – we're all one blood. And here's the astonishingly good news: we're all redeemed by the same blood – the blood of Jesus Christ. It's so important that the Church doesn't lose this message. It's so important that we don't fall off either side of the horse – into racism or uniformism – but that we ride confidently confessing Christ's cross for the forgiveness of all sin. It's so important that we don't lose our Gospel voice for the sake of a political platform or an emotionally driven, myopic political solution.

Political peace may establish a surface peace of some sort, but it will be achieved with the threat and force of the law. The Church doesn't preach that kind of peace. We preach peace not as the absence of conflict, but as the presence of wholeness and that is only found in Jesus Christ. We must maintain this message. We must preach Jesus. We cannot lose our voice.

We are one blood. We are redeemed by one blood – the blood of Jesus. – Pastor Conner

Let us pray.

Lord God, King of peace, bring Your peace, bring Your wholeness into our lives, into our communities. Empower Your Church to preach peace in Jesus, peace in His blood, peace in His cross. Remind us that we are all one blood. There is only one race. Further, help us to hear people's hearts, to hear their hurts, their fears, their frustrations. Help us to listen through the yelling, the venting, the unhelpful ways of communicating, to hear people's hearts so that we can bring Christ to bear. Help us not to veer to the right or to the left but to keep centered in Jesus Christ, to keep His Gospel in the center of all things. His blood has been shed for us all. We are set free from our sins by the shedding of His blood. Empower Your Church with this message and bring Your peace into our hearts, into our communities, into our country, and into the world. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.



Statement on the death of George Floyd and the ensuing riots

Discriminatory treatment of human beings on the basis of race is irrational evil and results in evil. It is folly, which can produce only anger and hatred. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” America’s original sin of legal racism, the denial of human rights based on race, has reaped the whirlwind.

God’s Word rejects racism. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “No one is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). All are equally created by God. All are equally accountable to God. The sins of all are equally atoned for by Christ. All are equally precious to God. Racial animosity is the result of sin and is sin in itself. Racism is not acceptable in the church. Jesus Himself bids us love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) and did so precisely while rejecting racial preference (cf. Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25–37).

Unity in the church according to the Augsburg Confession is defined by Article VII: “For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached … and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word.” Christ and His gifts bring unity and equity in the church. Racial discrimination in or by the church is sin. Racial conflict in our nation calls every Christian to introspection. “It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17). “Righteous indignation” without self-reflection and repentance is meaningless, or worse, hypocrisy.

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

The one who grievously and unjustly took the sacred gift of life from George Floyd — resulting in a charge of 3rd-degree murder — will, ironically, be given the very thing he denied his victim, due process of the law. Justice must be meted out according to the law. Others may be charged.

We weep for George Floyd, for his family and loved ones because he was robbed of life. We weep for our nation. We weep for those across our nation who believe their only recourse is destruction. We weep for police officers everywhere, who carry out their honorable vocations with courage and goodwill but find their task infinitely more challenging and dangerous in the wake of the sad events in Minneapolis. We pray for the safety of all and the welfare of those who have lost property and livelihood. We pray for the police who must stand against mayhem. We support the First Amendment rights of the peaceful protestors.

We deplore injustice. We deplore destruction, robbery and doing physical harm to others. That, too, is injustice. We plead to citizens and governments of this nation for communities beset by poverty, crime and injustice. We plead for rational and unifying policies that will end injustices and address social breakdown, lack of economic access, and other factors that fuel anger, hatred and dissension.

We shall pray, but we shall do even more. We shall follow the ancient mandate of the prophet of Yahweh: “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do

justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).

And we shall proclaim Christ, "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). "For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7–8).

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:1–17 ESV).

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

> 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" (Genesis 1:27-28).

Marriage, family, sexual ethics, the stewardship of creation, and more are all built on this creational bedrock. So this is where we begin our discussion on the ethics of marriage, family, sex, and stewardship. Consider marriage: marriage, as God reveals in creation, is the exclusive, life-long, one-flesh union of one man and one woman aimed toward procreation. God calls this good, even very good. And this good has a moral quality to it. That means it is good for us as a people and it is a good God gives to His creation. Further, it is the good toward which we should aim in our family structures and the good around which we should build protective fences (i.e. laws) as a society. It is the good we should revere, support, extol, and cherish. And it is the good against which all contemporary claims, definitions, and arrangements of marriage, sex, and family must be evaluated.

In other words, creation is how we evaluate man's claims. We must ask how man's claims and definitions square against what God has called good. And that is what we will be doing in this article as we have the opportunity to consider the claims of a powerful, contemporary political movement that is well-funded, well-connected, and is receiving exceptional press coverage. Before naming the movement, however, we will take a few moments to consider a few of their published position statements, the things they claim to support and the aims they claim they're trying to achieve. Some of the language might be new to you, but be patient; we'll unpack them in turn. Here are the claims of this movement:

- We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.
- We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and "villages" that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.
- We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).

Unpacking the Jargon

Now, let's unpack the jargon. *Cisgender* basically refers to people who believe a person's birth sex (male or female) defines a person's gender identity, that biology informs identity. *Trans* refers to a person who identifies as something other than his/her birth sex. So, if a biological male believes he's a female, that person would call himself a *trans woman*.

The Western-prescribed nuclear family is code for "White, Christian definitions of the family as consisting of father, mother, child(ren)." And

queer-affirming is set against *heteronormative thinking* as a way of saying that heterosexuality should be rejected as the norm and be relegated to one expression on a spectrum of morally equal sexual expressions.

What's Being Endorsed

That's what the words mean. Now, let's see what they're endorsing by using these words. This group aims to "dismantle cisgender privilege." Here's what that means: they are aiming to destabilize such thinking and to shame anyone who affirms it. So, they are aiming to dismantle the teaching that God has created male and female (not a gender spectrum) and to shame anyone who affirms God's creation. They seek to shame anyone who believes biology informs identity, anyone who believes male and female should be celebrated as creational goods that define humanity, which is what Scripture teaches.

This is an important point. This group is saying that biology is NOT reality. Chromosomes are NOT reality. Male and Female are NOT reality. A person's internal sense is reality. This is a big deal because it affects the way we care for people. The Church, taking reality as it stands and God at His Word, believes people should be loved in line with reality. So, they should be loved and accepted as the male or female they are in their bodies.[2] The political group of which we are speaking wants to shame this position in favor of a person's internal sense.

This group seeks to disrupt "the Western-prescribed nuclear family," which they see as White and Christian. As detailed in the opening paragraphs, however, the nuclear family (better termed "the creational family," the family created by God) is not a White idea and was not invented by Christianity. The creational family was created by God. It is a defining good of His creation. It is the good that allows human flourishing – man and woman marrying then having children and partnering together to raise them in the fear and instruction of the Lord. Children do best in every measurable category when raised by their committed father and mother.[3] All reputable sociological studies make this abundantly clear.

It is also exceedingly revealing and suggestive that this group completely omits any reference to fathers in its description of its idealized family and leaves the raising of children up to the comfort of the ones raising them. But God has called fatherhood and motherhood good. He intends fathers and mothers to raise children together. Yes, there is a place for "villages" to participate, if by this we mean extended families and communities partnering together to support fathers and mothers, but we cannot support leaving the raising of children to the comfort of the adults raising them. Anyone prioritizing comfort isn't likely to parent well because fatherhood and motherhood require daily denying ourselves for the wellbeing of our children.

Finally, this group fosters a *queer-affirming network* and opposes *heteronormative thinking*.

[2] And research shows that many people struggling with gender identity have experienced some sort of trauma or dissociative disorder specifically connected to their sex as male or female

[3] In saying this, we are aiming no judgment at divorced and/or single parents. Rather, this is a call for the Church to step into the gap and to show love and support in such circumstances. Further, we all must find our comfort and confidence not in our performance in our vocations, but in God's grace in Christ. We are all sinners. We are all one blood redeemed by Christ's blood.

These are heartbreaking statements because they buy into sexual labeling. They simply exchange one sexualized label – *heterosexual* – for another – *queer*. As mentioned in many and various contexts (sermons, newsletters, conversations, Bible studies), Scripture does not speak this way. Scripture does not label people with sexualized terms. Scripture does not attach an L, G, B, T, Q or an H (for heterosexual) to people. Scripture uses the words *male* and *female.* It grounds identity not in sexual behavior, but in creation.

We are male or we are female. God calls this good. Once we establish this, we then evaluate our desires against what God calls good. We may discover that our desires are out of line with what God has called good in creation (sexual desires are simply one kind of desire in a panoply of human desires). The fact is, Scripture is quite certain that we will find that our desires are out of line with what God has called good! Scripture is exceedingly clear:

> None is righteous, no, not one;
> no one understands;
> no one seeks for God.
> All have turned aside; together they have
> become worthless;
> no one does good,
> not even one (Romans 3:10-12).

Since the fall of Adam, no one is born without bent desires. In fact, every last one of us is born with desires opposed to what God calls good. That's why we need a Savior! And that's what we have in Jesus. But establishing a certain class of desires that are unquestionable keeps us from finding grace and mercy in Christ.

Identity Revealed

By now, you've probably surmised that the political movement espousing these positions is Black Lives Matter. Let's be clear: We most emphatically believe Black lives matter and have made this point in numerous contexts and settings (we are one blood redeemed by Christ's blood!). We condemn racism and eagerly announce the in-breaking of Christ's kaleidoscope kingdom for all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages (Rev. 7:9).

And, yet, we cannot affirm the position statements of BLM. Not only are they contrary to the Word of God, but they are ultimately destructive to Black lives and to any and all lives who practice them. Husbands and wives, children, and communities are not strengthened by dismantling creational identity (cisgender), by disrupting the nuclear (creational) family, or by adopting sex-saturated language (queer affirming/heteronormative).

Husbands and wives, children, and communities are strengthened when they appreciate what God has created, when they affirm what God has called good, when husbands and wives commit themselves to lifelong faithfulness and the humbled and awed reception of children and the call not to personal comfort, but to self-sacrifice for the sake of their children so that they might know Jesus.

The Black Lives Matters political organization will not unify people. It will not heal our communities. It can't. It is opposing what God has called good – and you can't produce good when you're opposing God's good. To truly love our Black neighbors, to truly love our Hispanic and White neighbors, we must affirm creation. We must embrace and extol God's good as good for us. Further, we must affirm redemption: we are one blood redeemed by Christ's blood. We cannot be co-opted into a political movement. Our neighbors need better – and God has better! His good *is* good. Let's affirm and celebrate it together. – Pastor Conner

Constantly, we begin our time together in worship invoking the Triune GOD's presence, and then what do we do? Confess. We confess our sins. Things we've done. Places where we should have acted and we didn't. We confess the times where we replace GOD with our schedules, our incomes, our comforts, our anger, and so on.

Point being, we enter the Sanctuary confessing that there's a problem plaguing the world…and it's us. So, if we consistently start our time together confessing sin, why are we surprised when conflict arises in churches? When we open a bag of M&Ms and there are M&Ms in the bag we're not surprised. Why? Because we knew what we purchased. Oddly enough, we profess that sin infects our lives in worship, but we're shocked when sinners act like sinners; we're shocked when conflict sparks up in our congregational family. Which means we either don't believe our confessions of sin in worship or we're missing out on the Christian Faith's radical recipe for confronting conflict (maybe both are true).

Conflict has always been there

In our Where We've Come From study on Tuesdays, we've examined significant people, places, and moments in the story of the Holy Christian Church.

In one of our earliest accounts of the Church's existence, there was conflict. Favoritism hindered non-Jewish or Gentile widows from receiving what they need to live. A couple named Ananias and Saphira embezzled money from the Holy Spirit, and it *cost* them their lives. Then in Acts 15, the Church held her first Council because there was a dispute over whether or not Gentiles could enter the Church with or without obeying the former Laws brought to life in Israel's ancient leader Moses. While the Church faced plenty of obstacles outside of Herself, disputes dominated the members of the Church too.

What's that mean for us?

As much as I detest conflict (a root canal sounds more pleasing!), we should expect it. As relatively passive Midwesterners, our upbringing tends to shun forthrightness and to submerge anger and hurts. But in submerging those feelings and faults, we, as a professor told me recently, create road blocks for the Holy Spirit to do His work in the midst of congregations.

But the encouraging news is there are healthy responses to confronting conflict in one-on-one situations as well as community sized confrontations.

Peacemaker Ministries has done a nice job of summarizing biblical responses to conflict with what they call the 4 G's:

1. **Go to Higher Ground**
   a. Glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31)
   b. "See conflict as an opportunity to grow and serve others"
   c. "Live out your highest values and beliefs in the midst of conflict"
   d. "Christians should ask, 'How can I please and honor God in this conflict?' and 'How can I show love and mercy that God has shown me?'"

2. **Get Real about Yourself**
   a. Get the Log Out of Your Eye (Matthew 7:3-5)
   b. "Focus first on your own attitudes, words, and actions"
   c. "Check your heart for idols (desires turned into demands)"
   d. "Confess humbly and thoroughly"

3. **Gently Engage Others**
   a. "Overlook minor offenses"
   b. "Go with an attitude of love and concern for the other person"
   c. "Talk privately first, and then get help if necessary"

4. **Get Together on Lasting Solutions**
   a. Go and Be reconciled (Matthew 5:23-24)
   b. "Look out for the interest of others"
   c. "Forgive the same way you have been forgiven"
   d. "Keep doing what is right, regardless of what the other person does"

You can find more resources for peacemaking in the midst of conflict at www.rw360.org.

At the end of the day, in many of the conflicts we experience in our families, work, and in the Church it takes *two* to tango. Point being, we need to recognize how we personally added to the conflict by what we've done and by what we've left undone.

Encourage to Seek Peace *WHEN* Conflict Arises

While addressing conflict in our lives is difficult, it's not the worst possible thing we can endure in life; that's eternal separation from our Maker, and Jesus of Nazareth reconciled you to His Father. So we're not going to spontaneously combust if we face conflict because it's not the deadliest experience you will face in life.

But on top of that, Jesus promises that those who seek peace, even in the midst of conflict, will be called sons of God. While I don't have time to pull that text apart from Matthew 5, suffice it to say, Jacob wrestled with God all night in order to receive that sort of status from an eternal Father since his father Isaac was incapable of blessing Jacob the way Jacob needed. Wrestling might be a good picture for seeking that status as a son of God because intentionally engaging conflict may put your hip out of joint, but you will be blessed.

– Pastor Andrew Johnson

Running Commentary
2 John verse 3

3 Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

John addresses his hearers with a common greeting which is packed with powerful implications! You might recognize these words since we often begin sermons with this sort of greeting.

In 4 words you hear the Gospel story. Grace → GOD's undeserved love; it comes to people who realize they've unleased chaos, big and small, into GOD's Creation. But from Christ Jesus we receive GOD's undeserved affection and attention.

Further, we receive mercy. We throw ourselves before the ultimate Judge hoping for pardon. And the ultimate Judge grants it; however, the Father does not overlook our sin, He dealt with it in His Son so that He is on the one hand merciful but on the other hand just. He's, therefore, a GOD worthy of our praise.

Finally, because the rift was mended between the Father and the children of man there is peace; like a dam that was once devastated due to water pressure, there are no more cracks or leaks lining the dam's edifice. – Pastor Andrew Johnson

A unique Priscilla Guild meeting on June 16. We were all wearing our masks, but it was good to be back together!

Due to our creative and flexible partnership Trinity & Zion can provide care to other congregations in the Carroll Circuit when a pastor is away. Pastor Johnson was able to help out at Trinity-Coon Rapids last month.

Thank You, ZION

Thank you, Zion, from a country of persecution on the other side of the world. Thank you also from Brookfield, Wisconsin. Thank you to all who have worked so hard to make Zion's online services, teachings, and prayers take place each day. We realize that significant time and money must be invested by tech volunteers and by both regular and 'special' givers to make all of this happen—and seven days a week! So we wanted you to know a bit about Zion's far-reaching impact during this time of pandemic and change—and, we trust, well beyond.

We know that some of you Zion members have prayed for "iO," the international outreach ministry with which my wife Cheryl[4] and I are involved in the Milwaukee area. Along with another two dozen volunteers, we offer friendship and Gospel truth to the internationals who come to study and do research at our local universities. Most are professors in the Visiting Scholar program who are with us for a year or less. They're experts in just about any field you can imagine—from microbiology to mathematics, from physics to philosophy, from information science to international relations, from art to agriculture. We've also had surgeons and entrepreneurs in our program, and even a television news anchor with a regular reach of one hundred million people!

Looking for a friendly face and an opportunity to improve their English, these internationals wander into the English as a Second Language and "Worldview Conversations" classes we offer at a nearby Lutheran church. And in many cases, we've found that they're hungering even more for trustworthy answers to 'the big questions of life.' It's been a great privilege to use science, history and logic to point them toward rock-solid Scriptural answers to those questions and to the One who *is* the answer.

Our new friends come to us as atheists, agnostics, Buddhists, and Muslims. They come mostly from China, but also from Iran, Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, Belarus, Sri Lanka, Turkey and a half-dozen other countries. Now, by God's grace, well over 300 of them have cycled through our 'anchor' class, Worldview Conversations, and more than 40 baptisms have taken place, as well as many more professions of faith.

As they return to their home countries, a number of these internationals ask for resources to continue in their faith or to learn more as they consider the life-changing claims and promises of Jesus Christ. One professor, now back in a country of persecution, reminded me just recently in one of our long-distance conversations that he is able to access Pastor Conner's sermons and that he listens to them regularly on the subway to his university where—we might add—he influences many young minds. Another professor, though a professing atheist, has been drawn to watch the sermon videos routinely with his Christian wife!

Now—like many of you—during the world-wide quarantine restrictions, we've had to shift our local iO focus to online classes and meetings. As we've done so, we've found that Pastor Conner's daily

[4] Tim and Cheryl Albers are Rebecca Conner's parents.

prayer-teachings are often spot-on for our purposes. His Scriptural thoughts on anxiety and depression and suffering and comfort have been particularly important for both 'baby' Christians and non-believers. And just this morning, via a 7,000 mile Skype call only fifteen minutes after Pastor's 7:30 prayer-teaching on how to think about the 'riots' in the U.S., we saw a need to do 'turnaround teaching' of that as well. And then tonight, as I write this, in another call, a professor who is still in the U.S. asked for a Christian resource "about the riots." He looked up that same teaching and bookmarked it as we spoke! As he did, this husband and father of two mentioned that he'd already accessed Pastor Conner's teaching on the family and found it very helpful to him.

Finally, we want you to know that at least a half-dozen of our iO *volunteers* have begun watching Pastor Conner's daily prayer and many are tuning in to Zion's Sunday service. One of them, Deb Madigan, is a 'granddaughter' of Zion. Her dad—the late Rev. Dr. Leroy Hass—grew up in your midst before becoming a missionary to China and then to Japan.

It's a small world indeed, and the Church is truly one Body, when the ministry of Zion-Manning reaches all of the way around the globe and back. Thank you again!

Tim and Cheryl Albers

Ladies Guild,
You may bring your mite offering in any time and drop it at Zion. Thank you!
Audrey Roe

God's Real Presence Communicated Virtually

Thanks to a Thrivent Action Team, Zion was able to purchase four digital tablets for our local care facilities (two for each). Every Wednesday, Pastor Conner sends a recorded devotion to all Zion members that staff members deliver via the tablets. Below Zion members are pictured viewing one of the messages. Despite a global pandemic, the mission and ministry of Zion moves forward. Thank you for your continued support!

← Gordon Schmarzo

Virgene Kroeger →

← Marion Ream

Help for the Caregiver

If you looked up resources for a person with a health condition, there's a vast array of service options to help the person. But what about the caregiver? Who takes care of them? It's important not to overlook the caregiver in the conversation.

Some signs of caregiver stress include:

- Feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and angry
- Feeling alone, isolated, or deserted
- Not getting enough sleep
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Losing interest in activities the caregiver used to enjoy
- Becoming easily irritated
- Feeling constantly worried or sad
- Having headaches or body aches often

For extra support, inquire about resources in the community. Sometimes the simple things – meal preparation and grocery delivery – make the overwhelmed caregiver able to manage the daily tasks of caregiving. Outside agencies, such as visiting nurses and hospice, are also available to help, along with family, friends, and the church. Further, the caregiver needs to be encouraged and helped to delegate responsibilities so as to take some burden off.

Caregiving increases stress levels, so it's important to find a way to relieve some of that stress. Breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, and physical activity may prove helpful. Meditating on God's Word, specifically His promises in Christ, are a great way of bringing God's truth to bear in difficult situations. Further, Zion's morning prayer, streamed live at 7:30 a.m. Monday through Friday and available afterwards by recording, is a great way to bring God's promises into an individual's life.

Don't forget to take time for yourself. You may feel that you have to stop all of the activities that you used to do; however, that adds more stress to the caregiver. You may need to spend time with a friend to shop, have coffee with friends, or have appointments at the salon.

Stress on the caregiver also develops when there is fear of the unknown. It is important to educate yourself on the health issue that is of concern with your loved one. However, when researching the health issue, it is important to seek information from reputable resources. Talk to the health care provider, a nurse, or access reputable web sites regarding the health issue.

Take care of yourself. It is important to set routines, especially to reflect on God's promises in Christ, and to stay organized during your journey. You need to applaud your own efforts as a caregiver and recognize small victories. Celebrate the good days with your family and get help when you need it. We, along with Pastor Conner and Pastor Johnson, are here for you.

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

2020 Legislative Recap

Lutheran Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

The 2020 legislative session was quite different given its interruption and significant focus on COVID-19 issues and impacts. Lutheran Family Service began the year preparing to build support toward passage of the Protect Life Constitutional Amendment.

This amendment would have set in motion a multi-year effort to determine that the Iowa Constitution did not guarantee a "right to abortion." That effort was stalled at the 11th hour. However, in a last-minute effort, the House of Representatives passed a 24-hour waiting period for an abortion after an ultrasound is performed. The Iowa Senate also voted in favor and it now awaits the Governor's signature, which is expected.

The 24-hour waiting period came about as an amendment to Alfie's Bill, a measure to stop courts from removing life support from children when the child's parents object. It is designed to be once again challenged to the Iowa Supreme Court in hopes that it will reverse the Court's 2018 opinion finding a "fundamental Constitutional right to abortion".

While we and many in the Pro-Life arena believed a Constitutional Amendment would be the best and most permanent path, the Iowa Supreme Court does have a substantially different landscape then it did in 2018 when the original opinion was rendered. Four judges have been added to the high court through an appointment by Governor Kim Reynolds, who is a pro-life supporter. One of those appointments was Judge Dana Oxley, a Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod Member in Iowa District East.

It is certainly our prayer that the outcome of the passage of this new 24-hour waiting period would be a new decision by the Court protecting life. No doubt, there will be many challenges and hurdles along the path.

Lutheran Family Service will continue our efforts to have a positive influence on life; both with God's strong voice in the public setting of the Capitol and privately as we continue our work of counseling women facing unplanned pregnancies in Iowa, Nebraska and Illinois.

We are dedicated to serving pre-born children, the infirm, elderly and marginalized. We are committed to monitoring the litigation that will most certainly follow the signing of the 24-hour waiting period into law, and pray for a court ruling that will favor life! We invite you to join Lutheran Family Service in this watching and fervent praying.

As always, we look for God to work for the good of His children of every age.

In Christ,

Rev. Max Phillips
Executive Director of Lutheran Family Service

Learn more at www.lutheranfamilyservice.org or call 515-573-3138.

PANAMÁ NEWS

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

May 31, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Over the last four years, I have repeated to myself the following refrain, "The church is the Lord's. He will indeed care for it." Through sad, frustrating and joyful moments, my prayer has been that I faithfully serve in our Lord's church as He sees fit. Recently, the Lord has decided that it is time for my service in His church to shift as I was called to and accepted a faculty position at Concordia University (Seward, Nebraska) to teach theology.

For the last three and a half years, Panamá has been our home. We have made friends, developed habits and discovered our favorite places to eat or grab a coffee. We have been incorporated into a church family that loves us. I have baptized, preached and confirmed in those churches. In this beautiful country, we have lost two children to miscarriage, but the Lord has also given us a beautiful daughter, Aviva Eliana. As we prepare to leave Panamá, we do so with a mixture of great sadness and inexplicable joy. Ezra and Aviva know Panamá as home more than anywhere else, but we know that the Lord will care for His church in Panamá because "the church is the Lord's."

During our time with the LCMS Office of International Mission, your partnership in the Gospel has blessed Panamá as well as many countries throughout Latin America, the Caribbean and South America. In addition to serving, in various capacities, four congregations and a church plant in Panamá, I also served on the faculty of Concordia El Reformador Seminary in the Dominican Republic, teaching Old Testament exegesis. My work with the seminary also brought me to Mexico City and Zacapa, Guatemala, to provide continuing theological education for pastors. Your partnership has supported the pastoral formation of men from 10 different countries as well as the formation of deaconesses in Panamá, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. God willing, 135 deaconesses will be consecrated in the next two years and 50 men (a 20% increase!) will be ordained to serve our Lord's church as pastors.

While leaving Panamá is certainly not easy for us, we take joy in knowing that our Lord Jesus is Lord of His church. Panamá has long had a missionary presence. We were not the first missionary family to serve here, nor will we be the last. The Lord's work will continue in the hands of the Panamanian Lutheran church, which is in a good place to continue faithfully serving and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support of our Lord's work through our missionary service. Amanda and I marvel at how many individuals and congregations, without having ever met us, have willingly given of their financial resources to support the work of the Gospel in Panamá. If you have been supporting us as your missionaries and would like to continue supporting the spread of the Gospel around the world, please contact Julie Loehring, Together in Mission (TIM) coordinator, or Michelle Beckmann, Mission Senders coordinator, at 888-930-4438 to discuss options for transferring your support. The Rev. Dr. Brent Smith or Gary Thies at Mission Central can be reached at 712-882-1029.

Transitioning from one country to another is difficult enough as it is, let alone trying to do it during a pandemic. In the midst of quarantines, curfews and travel restrictions, we are making our plans to return to the United States as well as provide pastoral care to El Redentor Lutheran Church in Balboa, Panamá. We continue to ask for your prayers as we prepare to depart Panamá and transition to Nebraska and into the Concordia University family. Thank you for being a part of our lives and for supporting our work of proclaiming the Gospel in Panamá and throughout Latin America.

The church is the Lord's, and He will indeed care for it and see to it that its mission of preaching Jesus crucified and resurrected for the forgiveness of sins continues.

In Christ, Pastor Brian, Amanda, Ezra and Aviva Gauthier LCMS Missionaries to Panamá

PANAMÁ NEWS

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

brian.gauthier@lcms.org
https://www.lcms.org/gauthier

Exactly the Same and Totally Different

That is how I describe serving as a missionary during a global pandemic. For 67 days, we endured one of the most strict, complete lockdowns in all the world. Our lives were different. The work I did as a pastor was different. I spent hours on a computer using various digital platforms for meetings, bible studies and church services. Before entering any building my temperature is taken, sanitizer is sprayed on my hands and I walk over a special disinfectant mat to ensure that my shoes are clean. Totally different.

Yet, on the other hand, missionary work is exactly the same as it was. I may now wear a mask wherever I go and 75% of my work is on a computer screen, but the content of my preaching, teaching and pastoral care is 100% exactly the same. Jesus, the Son of God, is your Savior having died on the cross to fully forgive you for your sins. After three days He rose victoriously from the tomb. Whether I am masked, speaking through a camera mounted on my computer screen or am face-to-face speaking in Spanish, what I say has not changed. The same great news of "Jesus for you" remains the same yesterday, today and forever.

In three weeks our lives will be totally different again as our stuff heads off in a shipping container and we make our way to Seward, Nebraska (pop. 8000). This life will be totally different from that in Panama City (pop. 1.8 million). Yet what I do, say, confess and teach will be exactly the same. It is an honor and absolute privilege to serve in the Office of the Holy Ministry where I can preach and teach Jesus crucified and resurrected from the pulpit as a missionary or within the classroom as a professor. In that sense, our life will be exactly the same. Thank you for your prayers, your financial support and your words of encouragement. Because of you and your desire to serve our Lord Jesus, our lives will never be the same. The Lord's continued blessings to you and your families. ¡A Dios sea la gloria!

Family Update.

Moving is never easy. Moving internationally is worse. Moving internationally during a pandemic is the worst, but we are making do. Our plan, given that the international airport opens back up again on June 22, is to leave Panamá on June 26. Please keep us in your prayers! In the last six weeks we have celebrated both of our children's birthdays and baptismal birthdays (Ezra - 5 and Aviva - 1). Ezra is looking forward to life in Nebraska. He will enter kindergarten at St John Lutheran. He also cannot wait to play in snow. Aviva is happy as long as she can still play with her brother. Since Aviva was born in Panamá, we hope to visit with some regularity. Her godparents also serve in the Panamanian Lutheran Church. Amanda is excited to settle down, again, in Nebraska. She lived in Beatrice for a number of years when she was a little girl. Brian looks forward to teaching at Concordia and finishing his dissertation. From our family to yours, thank you!

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

Please Note! All times and events are subject to change

	July 2, 7, 14	**Reflections on Faith and Finances (7:00 p.m.)** **Stewardship Training for Zion Leaders** **In-person and live streamed**
	July 5	**Manilla Community Cleanup (9:00 a.m.)** **Worship (10:00 a.m.); Potluck (10:30), bring a side**
	July 10	**Feed Fire Department in Manilla (meet at 6:15 p.m.)**
	July 16	**Thursday afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)**
	July 21	**Trinity Priscilla Guild Kitchen Cleaning Day and Meeting (11:00 a.m.) bring sack lunch**
	July 23	**Historic Trinity Summer Series** **7:00 p.m.**

ZION

June schedule:

- Morning Prayer (M-F) via Facebook Live at 7:30 a.m. (viewable anytime)
- Sunday worship at 9:00 a.m.
- All Sunday services will also be live streamed
- Bible studies will continue to be offered via Facebook Live on Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

TRINITY

Summer Schedule:

- Thursday 6:30pm in-person & live-streamed on Facebook (different service than Saturday) Holy Communion on last Thursday of the Month
- Saturdays 4pm in person & live-streamed on Facebook @ Trinity-Manilla church building. Every last Saturday service will be outside at Manilla Manor during the summer (rear of property). In case of rain, we'll move to Trinity-Manilla Fellowship Hall. For July & August we may try to move to the Manilla Bandshell, but we'll keep you posted.
- June 27, July 25, August 29 bring a lawn chair or blanket for outdoor services.
- We have a new FM transmitter so if you prefer to sit in your car and listen to the service on your car radio you're welcome to do so.

July Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Heather Adams
   Nathan Jensen
   Judith Lee
   Samantha Smith
2. Becki Ehlers
   Rylan Hass
   Brenna Hodne
   Jessica Soll
3. Jace Kucik
   Landry Wiig
4. Paige Saunders
   Mallory Weitl
5. Chelsea Page
6. Janet Smith
7. Leonard Dammann
   Lisa Drier
   Valda Lamp
   Taylor Potthoff
8. Matthew Weitl
9. Reid Neumann
11. Olivia Beck
    Jax Greving
    Jason Kienast
    Jessica Kurth
    Jordan Weller
12. Casey Karsten
    Scott Rosener
    Trisha Rosener
    Clark Tibben
13. Arlene Bald
    Jason Ferry (T)
    Dereck Hilsabeck
    Emma Martin (T)
14. Stephanie Ahrenholtz
    Gregory Conner
    Bary Kienast
    Duane Monson
15. Bill Bruhn
    Owen Kropf (T)
    Jesse Weitl
16. Dean Genzen
17. Brock Jensen
18. Joni Kienast
19. Bob Genzen
    Brad Otto
    Rebecca Salter
20. Morgan Bruck
    Katie Gaskill (T)
    Shala Hass
21. Louise Bruhn
    Kaylee Martin
22. Axsel Olson (T)
    Christopher Smith
    Alle Stoeckel
23. Denise Christensen
    Jill Saunders
24. Sophie Alexander
25. Nancy Goodwin
    Nick Woebke (T)
26. Grant Lahr (T)
    Sharon Mohr
    Susan Schilling
27. Kevin Brus
    Ron Soll
28. Bricy Lorenzen (T)
    Rita Saunders
    Adam Vollstedt
30. Dewayne Buhr
    Kathy Lage
    Howard Roe
    Natasha Schultes
31. Markus Neumann
    Lyle Ranniger

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

Anniversaries

1. Randy & Crystal Dreher
3. Warren & Sue Puck
4. Nate & Jessie Blackford
5. Dennis & Michaela Chapman
6. Luke & Taylor Potthoff
8. Brian & Kathy Lage
9. Dan & Cheryl Kerkoff
11. Joe & Cindy Scheuring (T)
12. Craig & Debbie Musfeldt
16. Doug & Kate Greving
    Todd & Shelly Gruhn
24. Gale & Linda Vinke
25. Pastor Robert & Diane Riggert
    Ron & Sue Soll
27. Nick & Kristin Woebke (T)
29. Pastor Jonathan & Rebecca Conner
    Eric & Jodi Ramsey
31. Steve & Holly Borkowski
    Chris & Mary Greving

Official Acts

Baptisms:
Josephine Christine Nusbaum, daughter of Aaron and Jacqueline (nee: Ranniger) Nusbaum, June 27; Rev. Conner

Funerals:
Charlene Sue (nee: McCubbin) Hickman; Died June 8; Funeral June 15: Rev. Riggert
Marlyn Yvonne (nee: Gruhn) Fielweber; Died June 18; Funeral June 22; Rev. Conner
Dorothy Anna (nee: Lake) Larsen, Died June 22; Kessler Funeral Home, Audubon, June 26; Rev. Conner
Deanna Hagedorn (nee: Petersen), Died June 28; Funeral June 30; Rev. Conner

In Our Prayers

Patty Meeves (Laurene's daughter in law), Ron Brus, 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), Janet Smith, Nancy Grimm, Dewayne Buhr, Rosemary Stamm (John Erich's sister), Nancy Walters, Ron Schilling, Connie Sorbe (Annette Hilsabeck's mother), Russ Mohr, Jean Kusel, Carolyn Werner