As you are surely aware, I (Pastor Conner) received a positive COVID test on Thursday, August 13. I immediately transitioned into 10 days of isolation as my family entered 14 days of quarantine (per the requirements of public health). Fortunately, my symptoms were very short-lived; I felt normal again within a few days and my family never developed symptoms.

On behalf of my family, thank you for your kindness as we journeyed through isolation/quarantine. Thank you to everyone who called, texted, emailed, and wrote words of encouragement. Thank you to everyone who prayed. Thank you to everyone who dropped meals, produce, groceries, and supplies at our doorsteps (I stayed in a separate house from my family).

Thank you to Zion's elders for leading the service on August 16. Thank you to Shannon (Zion's secretary) for all the extra time and effort you put in during my time in isolation. I and my family are humbled by your kindness.

Over the last few months, I have had the opportunity to visit with several Zion members who have experienced COVID and they, too, have been humbled by your kindness. Truly, Zion, you love not simply in words, but in action and truth (1 John 3:18).

On Friday, August 14, I reflected on my experience in our streamed morning prayer time (live on Zion's Facebook page at 7:30 a.m. M-F, recorded for later viewing). I share it again to help you consider how to process the prospect of contracting this virus:

How am I processing this? I've had a little bit of time to think about this and it occurred to me that one question I'm not asking is "Why me?" As I thought about it, I realized how fraught this question is with problems. If I ask "Why me?" am I suggesting that somebody else is more deserving? *Why didn't You give this to so-and-so, God? He deserves it.*

And then Job's question echoes in the back of my mind, "Should we accept good from the Lord and not evil?" But if I were to persist in my question, would I even accept God's answer if He provided it, which He is under no obligation to do? Would I tell Him that His reason wasn't good enough? Or would I even be able to understand His reason?

And what would lead me to believe that God would do anything other than what He did with Job? He took Job on a virtual tour of the cosmos, asking him question after question about the inner workings of it all and if Job had any idea how to run a universe. Job ended up humbled with his hand on his mouth. I'm sure I'd be no different.

This is where the wisdom literature – Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job – again speaks to our situation. Ecclesiastes conveys the enigmatic nature of the universe – time, chance, and death happen to us all, and trying to sort it all out is no different than chasing wind. And Job conveys the inconceivably complex nature of the universe which God governs in wisdom, even when we suffer.

But maybe, maybe I'm not really looking for an answer to the "Why me?" question. Maybe I'm

really desiring a person. Maybe I'm really desiring someone who cares, someone who has the power to do something about my situation.

And, friends, that's precisely what God has provided in Jesus. God has provided a person who cares, a person who has the power to do something about my situation, a person who has done something about my situation.

No, He didn't prevent me from getting COVID, but He didn't make that promise. We need to be really careful that we don't invent promises for God to keep that God didn't make. So He didn't keep me from getting COVID, but He did die for my sins and rise for my life and He's coming back to make it all right again.

I'm reminded of something I wrote for Zion's May newsletter. I'll share an excerpt:

> God is not indifferent to our sorrow. He is not ignorant of our pain. He's not socially distant from our pandemic. In Christ, God has come near. He has made His dwelling *among* us! He has locked Himself down with us! And on His cross He is crowned with creation's curse, its cursed corona. He absorbs the virus of sin into Himself and takes it into death with Him.
>
> This doesn't mean we won't suffer, that we won't wear creation's cursed corona, or that we won't catch this virus. In this fallen world, we will suffer, and we might contract this virus. But it does mean we aren't defined by creation's cursed corona and that we are not abandoned to it. Our God has worn it. Even more, He has defeated it and He will, one day, banish it forever! As a dear and wise Christian friend recently shared with me, "As disheartened humanity sits in a stupor, God megaphones from the cross, "IT IS FINISHED!" And on Easter morning, God triumphantly trumpets, "HE IS RISEN!" She added, "The End became the Beginning. Hopelessness emerged as Hope. Darkness revealed Light. Death birthed Life."
>
> And yet, as she wrote, we may in this life "walk with a limp," wounded by creation's curse. This present pandemic may not end soon. This coronavirus may not go away quickly. We may limp financially, emotionally, socially, and mentally. Our limp may, however, prove beneficial. It was C.S. Lewis who perceptively wrote, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

If this pandemic has shown us anything, it's how little we control, how quickly our pillars of surety and confidence can crumble, how desperately we need a Savior. And it is this Savior, Jesus, not the current pandemic, who calls for our attention.
– Pastor Conner

Words Matter

A Call to Do a Very Brave Thing

This article has a very simple point: words matter. More specifically, God's words matter. More specifically still, using and speaking God's words matter. One of the ways Satan works to deceive and lure us is by getting us to use the world's words. That's the simple point. Now, let's consider a story to help illustrate our point. It comes from C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*, which is one of the novels in his must-read *Chronicles of Narnia* series.

We'll have to cut to the chase here for space purposes, but the Prince of Narnia (the world enchanted by Aslan, the God-figure of the story), has been captured by the Queen of the Underworld. You can probably figure out who she represents. The protagonists, along with Lewis' delightfully pessimistic marsh-wiggle Puddleglum (think of a green-gray man with webbed feet) have been sent to rescue him.

They find the Prince in the Queen's underworld kingdom and release him from his bondage, but the Queen finds them before they can escape. She sprinkles some magic powder into a burning fire and it starts to numb their minds and cloud their thinking. They're trying to remember why they came, what their mission was (to get the Prince back to the overworld, back to Narnia), but Narnia begins to fade in their minds.

Puddleglum remembers that the overworld had a sun, and a really bright one at that, something the underworld doesn't have and he tries to rally his companions with talk of the overworld's bright, blazing sun. The Queen questions them to cast doubt: "*What is this sun that you speak of? Do you mean anything by the word?"* The Prince's mind is clouding, but he compares the sun to one of the lamps in the underworld.

And the queen pounces on it: "*Your sun is a dream; there is nothing in that dream that was not copied from the lamp. The lamp is the real thing; the sun is but a tale, a children's story."*

Now, I want you to notice what's happening here. There's a war of words going on, but it's not really about the words, it's about reality. What is real? Is the sun real or is it a dream conjured up by seeing a streetlamp? Maybe the lamp is the real, the true source of light, and there is no sun.

You see, the Queen's goal is to get them to forget Narnia, to forget the overworld exists, to accept her words, her definition of reality. Because words matter. Words reflect reality. Words shape how we see, how we think about the world.

But in the story, Puddleglum does *a very brave thing* – and that phrase has parked itself in my mind and I'm going to park it in yours in a minute. Puddleglum knows he needs to break the spell or they will forget the sun and Narnia forever. He needs to put the fire out because it's disseminating the magic powder. So he takes his bare, webbed foot and he crushes the fire, getting a very fine burn in the process, but he breaks the spell.

And with the spell broken, they are able to remember the overworld clearly and complete their escape from the Queen's underworld.

Here's what I want us to understand: words matter. In Lewis' story, the Queen commits what

Lewis calls elsewhere *verbicide*. She murders words. And, by doing so, she hopes to murder their memory of Narnia and Aslan's enchanted world.

It happens in our world, too. So much of the radical, sexualized, woke ideology today is a war on words, which, as with the Queen in Lewis' story, is really a war on God's creation, a rejection of what God has called good. But it shows up in words. Let me show you.

God places a hedge around sex, reserving it for the one-flesh union of husband and wife and the procreation of children. So, things like prostitution, polygamy, pornography, fornication, adultery, and so forth are sin because they are a corruption of what God has created and called good. But look what the world does: prostitution is rebranded as *sex workers*; polygamy is rebranded as *plural marriage*; adultery becomes *open marriage*; fornication becomes *living together*; pornography is *adult entertainment*.

God places a hedge around identity – male and female – and He calls them good. Our world derisively rails against the binary and praises its invented spectrum. God places a hedge around the creational family – father, mother, children – and He calls it good. And our world is branding this white, western, Christian, and oppressive. (Read more in July's newsletter in the article "How We Discern What Matters.")

God places a hedge around life; He calls it good. That would include the unborn. But our world rebrands abortion, the murder of the unborn, as *health care*, even though killing the unborn is neither healthy nor caring.

God defines marriage; it's a specific thing, not a mere joining of two (or more) people. It's something specific: male and female joined in a one-flesh union aimed toward procreation. But the world is out to murder these words – verbicide – because words matter. But understand, it's a war on creation, on what God has called good. Every last one of them is a rejection of what God has called good.

And if you don't hear the whisper of Lewis' underworld Queen – *There is no overworld, there is no Narnia, there is no sun, that's the stuff of children's tales. Here's the real. Here's the good.* If you don't hear that whisper, you are fully under her magic.

What do we need to do? Remember Puddleglum? He did *a very brave thing*. We have the same call. We need to do *a very brave thing*. We need to use God's words. Words matter. God's words matter. If we lose the words, we run the risk of losing Narnia, of losing God's world, of losing our citizenship in God's world.

This brave thing may come at a cost. In fact, it probably will in a cancel culture that is trying to silence anyone who uses different words than the mob approves. But we are in need of a brave generation who isn't afraid of the cost, who isn't afraid to use God's words.

But here's the thing: we need to learn God's words. There's a lot at stake here. Words matter. They have been given to us by God to reflect and describe His world and if we lose His world, we run the risk of losing our knowledge of His world and our citizenship in it. It's time that we do a very brave thing – no matter the cost. It's time to learn God's words and start insisting on them. – Pastor Conner

I've had a handful of people ask me how my health is. You might recall that before arriving a little over 3 years ago, a new bout of cancer arose. Thankfully, our Father has been very giving because chemo and surgery and a loving wife have done the trick.

It's hard not to, however, go down memory lane when someone asks. With hindsight and time, there are personal responses to a very personal crisis that I wish I had handled differently, and if you don't mind I'll share an experience now.

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Chemo leaves an ongoing metallic flavor in your mouth. On top of that, when you do feel like eating that metal taste robs the flavor of whatever you're eating.

After four years of college and then an additional four years of grad school, I was ready to work. Being benched immediately in the hospital lit an inner pilot light which then fueled rage throughout the rest of my being. "How dare you, God, send me through 8 years of schooling and then vocationally castrate me?!"

In short, my body hurt and my spirit faded.

Things really came to a head during one particular worship service. Pastor Conner was gracious enough to cover the sermon while I led liturgy. I knew that it was unrealistic for me to do both. I have to apologize to Pastor Conner, because I was having a bitter conversation with God during the sermon.

It was all a bitter joke it seemed: "God, it feels like you're letting me play dress-up, but you're not allowing me to serve as an actual pastor. I want to preach and visit and teach. Isn't that what you taught me to do at the sem?"

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During the first year of seminary, one of the introductory classes explained Martin Luther's view on what made a theologian a theologian. He had three Latin phrases that summed up a theologian's job, but one of the criteria was *tentatio* or what we might call tension or trial. In other words, Christian people – Pastors and people alike – must go through trials if they are to experience God for who He is.

I had forgotten that. I had become convinced that the best thing I could do was preach, teach, and make shut-in calls; that's what I needed to do. And that's why I was so angry when I couldn't do those things.

But maybe, just maybe, the best thing I could do for myself and others was endure the tension. Why? Because, with an emaciated body, I wasn't able to rely on myself; I wasn't able to fallback on my qualities or skills. I was forced to rest in Him who had confirmed His call to me into His family in baptism. I was forced to rest in the Divine pastoral Call – in other words, I was there because of the presence and authority of Jesus…not because of my own authority. More than that, I was forced to

rely on Christ's ongoing masterpiece – the Holy Church – the assembly of people united by the Bible and the Sacraments and Jesus of Nazareth who helped me and were patient with my situation.

Point is, I was forced to wait on God rather than God waiting on me and my desires.

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I'm still digesting that experience from three years ago. In hindsight, I wish I had recognized that *tentatio* for what it was, but maybe my lack of response can inform your response as you face less than stellar circumstances; that you rely on the God revealed in history and the Scriptures more, and take yourself a little less seriously. Worth a shot, right?

In any case, I do know that you have a God who is not indifferent to tension and trials. This God in Jesus threw Himself into the grinding garbage disposal so that your experiences with suffering wouldn't have to be wasted – so that you can experience things like radical resurrection in your body one day. Please don't waste trials. – P. Johnson

Running Commentary

2 John verse 5

"And now I ask you, dear lady—not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but the one we have had from the beginning—that we love one another."

John utilizes a powerful word: ***love***. Not just any kind of love though, but unconditional, not-looking-for-a-reward kind of love (agape); the kind of love Jesus gave when He died, and all He received initially was a bunch of "good riddance"-es from the crowd. More than that, this love is a "we"-communal experience.

Lastly, this love showing isn't anything new. It was the plan in the Old Testament and even before creation ("not as though I were writing you a new commandment").

Beware of Equality (Falsely So-Called)

There's a piece of legislation that's been circulating through congress for some time now, the contents of which should gravely concern every Christian who treasures the Biblical, creedal, and historic confession of the Church. It has been deceptively titled "The Equality Act." Such titling is false advertising in the highest degree, right up there with pornography's marketing as being for "mature" audiences.

If it becomes law (and powerful politicians and presidential contenders have endorsed it and prioritized it) it will result in what Dr. Robert Gagnon, esteemed scholar and author of *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, calls, "the greatest loss of free speech and free exercise of religion and the greatest promotion of sexual immorality in history of the country" (full interview at issuesetc.org). Process the enormity of that statement! Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage has called it, "a nuclear bomb on faith communities and any communities or individuals who have a traditional understanding of marriage and sexuality" (full interview at issuesetc.org).

Some in the Church are quick to insist that Church and state are to remain separate, but where does Scripture teach that the Church has nothing to say to the state? Yes, Scripture exhorts us to honor governing authorities by esteeming their God-given roles (see Romans 13; Titus 3:1;1 Peter 2:13). Further, the Church must never turn the pulpit into a political podium or sacrifice the gospel of Jesus Christ for political rhetoric, but this does not require us to be silent on salient issues that would infringe upon our ability to confess Christ and/or threaten what God has called good and, thereby, threaten human flourishing.

In fact, the Church has a creational mandate to extol what God calls good and to advocate for the defense and protection (through wise legislation, for instance) of that good. This is what's at the heart of the biblical understanding of justice – that which aligns with God's good.

The Church has a creational mandate to extol what God calls good and to advocate for the defense and protection (through wise legislation, for instance) of that good.

Further, the U.S. Constitution guarantees our right to *exercise* our religion in the public square, not merely to worship within the walls of our church buildings. The First Amendment states:

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...

The amendment is clearly aimed at limiting congress, not the Church. Further, consider the very nature of laws. Laws are not neutral; they are moral statements. Laws declare what a given people considers valuable and worthy of protection.

If the Church doesn't speak on the morality of our nation's laws, who will? If we remain silent, we will simply turn our laws over to people who do not fear God or His law and who reject what God has called good in creation. So while the Church must never lose its Gospel proclamation, it must also never be silent in defending and extoling what God has called good.

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As such, we must expose the aforementioned Equality Act as a direct attack on what God has

revealed to be good in His creation and we must discourage Christians from giving it (or the politicians who endorse it) their support. With that in mind, we turn to the substance of the Act. We will be as brief and concise as possible, but the Act is sweeping in its reach and comprehensive in its aims.

The Equality Act

- Establishes sexual orientation and gender identity as civil rights categories with included protections and punishments on anyone who thinks differently.
- Eliminates The Religious Freedom Restoration Act as a means by which to challenge it.
- Removes any religious exemptions from any public entity or private, non-religious entity.
- Allows men who identify as women in any restroom, dressing room, locker room of their choice. Further, it allows men who identity as women in female shelters, prisons, and sports.
- Requires teachers to undergo mandatory indoctrination in LGBTQIA+ doctrine.
- Prohibits parents from opting out of any such content being taught in the school (at any age) and does not require any parental notification of such subject matter.
- Establishes speech laws that punish (whether through steep fines or firing) employers/employees and every business and public accommodation, including schools, health care facilities, and day care centers for "misgendering" someone (i.e. failing to use a person's preferred pronouns/gender specific name).
- Forces small business owners to wed their craft (cake decorating, flower arranging, T-shirt making, photographing) to something that is contrary to their conscience.
- Gives the federal government the right to withhold funds from states that don't rigorously promote the LGBTQIA+ agenda.
- Allows accreditation, federal funding, research grants, student loans, to be removed from religious schools and colleges.
- Massively funds federal agencies in charge of promoting this agenda with schools, corporations, and businesses.
- Expands Title VII (law to protect employees from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and religion) to include sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Prohibits any foster care agency receiving federal funds from giving preference in placement to homes with a married father and mother.
- Allows federal identification documents to be marked according to a person's preferred identity or by an X if the person is "non-binary."
- Mandates health insurance cover treatment related to sex transitioning, including sex reassignment surgery.
- Ties overseas aid to the recipient nation's endorsement of the LGBTQIA+ agenda.

Space prevents further detail, but this has been enough to give a flavor of the Act's sweeping reach and comprehensive nature. No area of life, whether we're considering the family, employment, school, or the Church, is left unaffected. It is clearly aimed at giving full support to the LGBTQIA+ agenda and punishing and silencing dissent, all under the guise of equality.

Loving a person does not mean affirming his desires or his beliefs about reality; it means loving God, desiring His good, and affirming the reality He has created.

Some will ask, doesn't love require us to affirm people who identify as LGBTQIA+? No. Loving a person does not mean affirming his desires or his beliefs about reality; it means loving God, desiring His good, and affirming the reality He has created as we encourage and help people live in line with it. The Creator precedes the creature. This must be understood. Further, we believe God is good and we believe that what He has called good (in creation) is both good in and of itself and good for us (and we want people to experience the good of God!). We love in line with what God has called good.

What isn't good is us. Our desires, as Scripture reveals and reality bears out, are bent. They are turned against God and His good. They war against God's good creation. They must never, therefore, be given free reign. They must never be endorsed and affirmed in law. We must be called to repentance or we will pursue our twisted desires to our own demise, even to our own damnation. This goes for Every. Last. One. Of. Us.

Scripture is emphatically blunt:

> 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).

The problem with establishing laws that affirm deviant sexual behavior (or any sinful behavior or creation-rejecting belief) is that it prevents people from hearing the call to repentance, receiving forgiveness in Christ, and embracing God's goods[1]. We can see this with abortion. Its legality often clouds its immorality. The reality of an unborn child being killed is obfuscated beneath a law that ensures a woman's "right to choose." Here, too, immoral behavior is being praised in law under the lie of "equality."

Laws, as mentioned above, always reflect moral beliefs. The Equality Act is no different. The problem is that The Equality Act reflects false moral beliefs. Specifically, it echoes the lie that people are defined by their desires (and their inner sense) rather than by their creation as male or female, rather than by what God has said. It rejects what God has called good in favor of what man has called good.

As the Church, we recognize that affirming God's good will put us out of line with current cultural trends and politically out of favor, perhaps even on the wrong side of the law. It may result in ridicule, rejection, or worse. These are prices we are willing to pay in order to honor our Creator and to celebrate what He has called good, a good that we fully believe is good for us. Further, they are prices we are willing to pay to call sinners to repentance and forgiveness in Christ.

Equality, therefore, is not found in forcing people to affirm behaviors and beliefs that are contrary to what God has called good. It is found in acknowledging our equality as male and female in God's creation, our equal fallenness and need for a Savior, and our equal opportunity to receive God's merciful forgiveness in Jesus.
– Pastor Conner

[1] At root, the LGBTQIA+ rebellion against God is a rejection of what He has called good in creation, whether in a rejection of God's definition of marriage and the sexual ethics connected to it or in God's definition of the human person as male or female.

Preschool Praises for August

Although we have only had 2 days of preschool in August, we have been super busy all Summer getting prepared! With Covid always looming and constant emails and updates from DHS as to how to handle schooling, we have been working really hard to stay up to date. We are excited to have preschool on a little different schedule this year of Tuesdays and Fridays. We will reassess in December and see if we can return on Wednesdays as well. Even with all the uncertainty around, we managed to grow the number of children to 23 in our program this year! We modified our start to the year and, instead of doing home visits, we had an open house/ teacher visit in the classroom where the families came in at scheduled times with their children to meet us and see the room. We felt like this was really beneficial as the children got to see the room and feel comfortable with us prior to the first day of school especially since parents are not allowed into the building and have to say good-bye at the door.

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

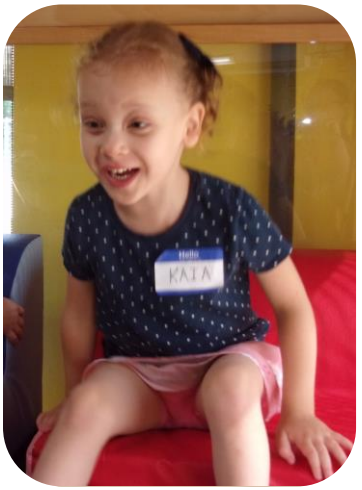
The first week is all about getting used to preschool and the routine as well as learning school rules. There were no tears the first day as the children often ran into the classroom ready to get started. One of my favorite books at the beginning of the year is *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. It is a very sweet book about a young raccoon leaving for the first day of school and the unique way that his mother helps him to remember that she loves him even when they are apart. The children really love the story as well and help me act out parts of it as we read it. The afternoon children had time to play instruments, which is always a favorite! We spoke about how our powerful God created everything we see in 6 days and how the first day he created light and dark. We started learning a new creation song that we will sing at the Pancake Breakfast on October 11th. Mark your calendars!

We did not have a supply tree up this year in the fellowship hall, but we do still need donations especially with the modification we have had to make this year. Our needs include $5 donations to cover Scholastic magazine subscriptions (we have 23 children), bleach, Lysol wipes, Clorox Anywhere spray (if you can find it!), Bounty Select-a-size paper towels or any cash donation you would be willing to make. Donations can be mailed to the church or left in the fellowship hall. Thank you in advance for your help!

Please keep us in your prayers this school year as we help teach these children and show them God's love. Encourage their parents as many of us know that being a parent is the most important calling that God has given us, but also the most challenging! Pray that we all stay healthy and for God's protection from all illness and for the teachers navigating all the new regulations that are constantly updated.

Your servants in Christ,
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz

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



I Will Always Love You

In this day and age, it is not uncommon in the Midwest to see anniversary wishes for couples that have been married for 50, 60 or sometimes 70+ years. Those couples are blessed to have spent those years together and so they tend to rely on each other for companionship and emotional support as well as some physical support.

Zion Cares

However, loss is inevitable. Loss is a life-shattering experience. And with that loss, comes grief. Grief is a natural and expected reaction to any loss. It is the process of experiencing psychological, behavioral, social, and physical reactions to loss.

Normal reactions that individuals experience after a loss of a loved one include denial, confusion, lack of concentration, fatigue, forgetfulness, irritability and anger, sadness and anguish, anxiety, and horror.

For some, the loss of a spouse may also mean a loss of independence. If the person has limited mobility, they may not be able to remain in their own home any longer and have to look at an extended care facility. They may also have to take on additional responsibilities that they have not had to do before such as domestic chores or managing financial matters and make decisions without being able to discuss with their spouse first.

For many, a person may feel plunged into isolation. Older adults are often together all the time and may not feel the need to develop a wide social circle. Every activity that the couple did together may now not have any meaning.

Bereavement can also lead to a devastating effect on a person's immune system and cause them to lose interest in their own care. After the death, family should ensure proper emotional and physical care for the surviving spouse. For some families, this may be difficult due to living away from their family member. In that event, it is important for friends or neighbors to check on them at intervals.

It may be difficult for friends or family to understand the emotions that a person is going through. Some may say "Now you can do what you want". Caring for their spouse may be just what they wanted to do and they felt that was taken away when their loved one passed away. The most effective way to help someone who is grieving is to listen, be empathetic, acknowledge the person's loss, and help the person experience the event at his or her own pace. Just because the loved one is physically gone, does not mean that they will ever be forgotten.

Grief is a natural response to the death of a loved one and a healthy grieving process can last for months or even years. However, if the grief is beginning to affect the person's health, it is important to follow up with the person's medical provider.

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

Amigos en Cristo

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

September 2020

We thank the Lord for our faithful leaders who are keeping our Hispanic ministry going during this difficult time of the pandemic in Denison. The picture (right) includes some of those important leaders. Without these faithful members we could not continue our outreach at a time when many are still very fearful of going out to public events. So we continue to offer our service on-line each Sunday, too.

Domingo and his wife Marbella are faithful leaders each week in Sunday worship and at our Wednesday Bible Class. They often bring their granddaughters, Yamilet and Yaretzy. Their daughter, Adriana just had a third baby girl, Alejandra. Domingo is our congregational president and reads the Scripture lessons in our worship services. He works at the Farmland pork plant, but as a worker over the age of 60, he has been given a paid vacation for the past 2 months. Maru and Eliseo have been with us for 20 years. Maru is our social director and a very busy one. There are always goodies after church. Marta is also a long-time member and enjoys making evangelism visits to members and friends. Mike is our Financial Secretary and while he is not fluent in Spanish keeps in touch with everything and everyone. Paula, my wife, faithfully teaches our Sunday Schools in both Denison and Storm Lake.

I wish you could meet these special folks and the other members of our Amigos en Cristo congregation. They are all a special blessing!

Amigos en Cristo Call Committee met last month with Rev. Keith Haney, Iowa District West Assistant to the President for Missions. In a bilingual meeting we discussed the process and our vision for ministry in our community of Denison and Storm Lake. We started with a job description for a bilingual pastor at both Denison and Storm Lake and wrote a list of what our congregations need in a Pastor. And we began to receive names of possible pastors to consider. This work was shared with the Storm Lake Hispanic church and also President Turner of the Iowa District West who is developing a Call list of pastors to consider. The list includes bilingual pastors serving in the U.S. as well as pastors serving in foreign Lutheran churches. We look forward to future discussions with our members, with the Storm Lake Hispanic members, with our partner churches and with the IDW leadership. Please keep the mission of Amigos en Cristo and Storm Lake Hispanic church in your prayers as we move forward with this historic Call.

PLEASE PRAY: + That the Lord will strengthen our churches and especially the elderly and sick during this time of uncertainty. For our goal of calling a bilingual pastor with the help from Rev. Haney and the District leadership. + For the future partnerships with Storm Lake and Amigos as we work together this year. + For our plans and goals both in Denison and Storm Lake. + ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of the Iowa District West who support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison & Storm Lake and also in our other 2 missions in Sioux City and Des Moines.***

Rev. Daniel Vogel
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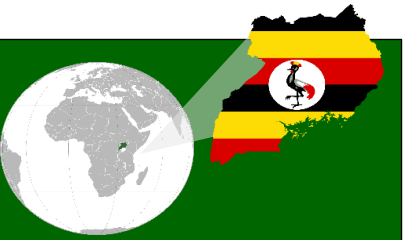

Introducing Rev. Mark and Megan Mantey
Serving in Uganda

Dear Friends in Christ,
Greetings from Jinja, Uganda! Mark and I serve as your LCMS missionaries in Uganda and are extremely grateful and overjoyed to be your missionaries. Thank you for sending us out to do the Lord's work in East Africa. We have lived in Uganda for 3.5 years and serve alongside the Lutheran Church of Uganda in our roles of project management and teaching. Mark serves as an administrator at the Lutheran Theological College Uganda (LTCU) and I teach Christian education and counseling classes. It's a joy to walk with the Lutheran Church of Uganda in this way.

Some fun facts about Uganda and the LCU:

- Uganda's population is around 43 million, with 75% of that children.
- The Lutheran Church of Uganda (LCU) is a national church as it spans all seven main regions of the country.
- The LCU was a mission plant of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana in 1993.
- The LCU have over 150 congregations and 29 pastors

During this time of COVID-19, the seminary has not been operational. Like a lot of the world, we have been working from home and serving in different capacities with the Lutheran Church of Uganda. Recently, the LCU was able to host a month long training for their year 4 students. These men will be the first graduating class of the LTCU, which opened in 2016! When these men graduate, they'll almost double the amount of pastors in the LCU! We praise God for these efforts! So, we have both been working with the church leadership to train these men safely and adequately for their work in the ministry. There are currently 3 different stations set up throughout Uganda to train the seminary students in their home region. I have been teaching in the eastern region where we live. My time with them has been focused on teaching the faith to children and adults, including Catechism class and Bible studies.

Some fun facts about the Manteys:

- Mark and Megan met at a Starbucks in Raleigh, NC where they lived at the time. They were married in 2012.
- You can usually find Mark fixing up a car or computer in some way when he's not working
- Megan also runs a part-time mental health practice in Jinja
- Mark is a Green Bay Packers fan while Megan is a KC Chiefs fan… Mark also likes the Milwaukee Brewers while Megan roots for the LA Dodgers and KC Royals. Somehow they still get along.
- They're both passionate about living out their faith in Christ Jesus in all they do and say and are especially grateful for the missionaries at Zion Lutheran who support the LCMS through their hands.

Again, we're so grateful to our new friends at Zion Lutheran. Thank you for encouraging us and helping us share the Gospel in Uganda through our work. We take you all with us to the mission field and are happy to report on the work here. We're thankful we get to partner together to do the Lord's work in Uganda.

Peace in Christ, Megan and Mark

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

Please Note! All times and events are subject to change

Morning Prayer (M-F) via Facebook Live at 7:30 a.m. (viewable anytime)

Tuesdays	**Griefshare at Trinity (2:00 p.m.)**
September 2	**Confirmation Begins (4:00 p.m.)**
September 17	**Thursday afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)**
September 30	**Smart Money, Smart Kids at Zion** **Supper at 6:00 p.m. for confirmation families** **Session at 6:30 p.m. for all**
October 11	**Preschool Pancake Breakfast at Zion (9:00 – Noon)** **Worship at 8:00 a.m.**
October 21	**Mission Central at Zion** **Supper at 6:00 p.m. for confirmation families** **Session at 6:30 p.m. for all**
November 15	**Whose UR / Political Engagement for the Christian** **Supper at 6:00 p.m. for confirmation families** **Session at 6:30 p.m. for all**

September Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Lucille Ress
2. Collin Brus
   Cindy Scheuring (T)
3. Graham England
   Bruce Grimm
4. Brock Kusel
   Alaina Salter
5. Madelyn Dreher
7. Kyle Arp
   Taylor Lapel
   Timothy Rosener
8. Austin Johnson
   Caleb Lahr (T)
   Mary Lueth (T)
   Jaide Paska
   Carlys Stribe
   Darlene Vollstedt
9. Katie Cornelius
   Brice Shrimpton
   Diane Vetter (T)
10. Alison Karsten
11. Natalie Griesman
    Ambria Johnson
    Harold Jurgensen (T)
    Brandi Wiig
12. Christian Birks (T)
    Kristie Borkowski
    Robert Hagedorn
13. Dennis Backhaus
    Carol Brus
    Allen Stribe
14. Dakota Bradley
    Lauren Greving
    Erin Renze
15. Dylon Bauer
16. Diane Lahr (T)
    Brooke Long
17. Ben Langel
    Kaien Stoeckel
    Charlie Tibben
18. LeAnn Hacker (T)
19. Kora Kusel
    Sue Soll
20. Marlene Jahn (T)
21. Daniel Hilsabeck
    Alexis Karsten
    Wendy Stribe
    Daniel Vonnahme
22. Jason Boell (T)
    Isla Haubrich (T)
    Haley Kuchel
25. Jennifer Grau
26. Tanner Crawford
    Lillian Genzen
    Terri Rosener
27. Don Beck
    Shaun Grau
    Ashley Martin (T)
28. Cassandra Burcham
    Susie Ulrickson
29. Michael Lorenzen (T)
30. Karl Albertsen
    Jason Ehlers
    Judy Irwin (T)

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

Anniversaries

2 Mike & Becky Bruch
3 Frank & Gloria Boeck (T)
Bary & Karen Kienast
4 Don & Trisha Beck
Jon & Jill Saunders
6 Gary & Joyce Schroeder
7 Derek & Brenna Hodne
10 Jason & Lori Ferry (T)
11 Rodney & Deanna Frank
14 Scott & Kristine Lingle (T)
15 William & Louise Bruhn
16 Eugene & Susan Mahnke
19 David & Joene Bohlmann
Kevin & Janet Brus
Jeff & Jean Hargens
20 Todd & Dawn Ketcham
Alex & Kari Ranniger
22 Larry & Connie Ahrendsen
24 Ben & Beth Booth
Karl & Donna Rutz
25 Richard & Sylvia Saunders (T)
27 Jesse & Katie Weitl
28 Conrad & Juanita Kurth
30 Allen & Carlys Stribe

Official Acts

Baptism:
Hazel Elizabeth Opperman, daughter of Jason and Kimber Opperman, 8/15; Rev. Riggert

Transferred Out:
Paige Saunders to Faith Lutheran Church, Early, IA, 8/20
Katie Sextro to Grace Lutheran Church, Storm Lake, IA, 8/25

Marriage:
Matt Paulsen and Sarah Gruhn; 8/8; Rev. Riggert

Funeral:
Lawrence "Bob" Thomas Henkelman; Died 3/21; Funeral 8/22; Rev. Conner

Manilla Baptism:
William Patrick Lueth, son of Marissa and Charlie Lueth, 8/2, Rev. Johnson

In Our Prayers

Nancy Grimm, Arlene Mohr, Dewayne Buhr, Ron Schilling, Connie Sorbe (Annette Hilsabeck's mother), Nancy Walters, Janice Monson, 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), Patty Meeves (Laurene's daughter in law), Jean Kusel, Carolyn Werner, Jeanne Gruhn, Darlis Vauble (Betty Maasen's daughter)