C☺ntentment in a C🦠VID W🌎rld[1]

Contentment. It's different than optimism. As we discussed last month, optimism tries to see the glass as half-full, but sometimes, especially in a COVID world, the glass simply isn't half-full. Sometimes the glass is empty. Tracing Paul's words in Philippians, we began a journey in search of contentment no matter our circumstances.

We heard Paul confidently say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Before anything else was true in Paul's world – or ours! – to live is Christ and to die is gain. Sorrow, suffering, and grief may fracture our world, but they cannot force Christ from us or us from Christ. The same goes for COVID. It may frustrate us, steal from us, even take our life, but it cannot change this reality: to live is Christ and to die is gain.

We also marveled at the blazing sun of Philippians, Paul's rich theological poem, as he extolled the self-emptying of Jesus even as he placed Jesus on an equal plain with Yahweh. And he called us to have the mind of Christ – not self-promotion, but self-denial, not self-advancement, but self-emptying, in emulating Our Savior, in living His life after Him, in living a cross-shaped, cruciform life.

This is transformative stuff. It not only transforms our future because we have the promise of conquering death and reigning with Christ over His renewed creation, but it calls us now to emulate Jesus, to live cruciform lives, cross-formed lives. And it shows us that our world is upside down and all the striving toward the top, all the self-promotion, all the me-firstness, has really been a descent toward hell.

So contentment isn't found through self-promotion, but through self-emptying, through emulating our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This month we continue our journey with Paul toward contentment. Two relevant sections will claim our attention in Philippians 4. We'll take them each in turn. Paul writes,

> Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you (4:8-9)

As you know, there are no shortage of things about which to complain. Nobody struggles to come up with a list: annoying boss, obnoxious neighbors, cheating classmates, corrupt politicians, unfair policies, the weather, whatever. We could go on all day.

But Paul is calling followers of Jesus to focus their energies elsewhere. And I want you to notice that Paul is calling us not merely to think about these things, but to practice them.

We've called them *holy habits*. Here Paul is talking about discipling the mind. So, it's not just choosing not to complain; it's choosing to think about and dwell on the true, the honorable, the just, the pure, the lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise. Dwell on these things. Look for these things.

This is going to take work. Finding contentment is going to take some work on your part.

[1] Adapted from a series on contentment from Morning Prayer 8/19 – 8/25.

Complaining is the easy path. It's the downhill slope. You just have to take the car out of park and let go. Contentment, however, is going to take work.

So what do we do? What do we do when we slip that car out of park and it starts rolling down the complaining hill? First, hit the brakes. Put your hand over your mouth if you have to. Physically stop it. Stop your mouth. We have to stop the "Ain't it Bad" soundtrack. We've sung its songs so many times we know the words by heart.

We need different words. We need a new song. Now, I'm not saying that we deny hard situations. I'm not saying we pretend things are happy all the time. We're talking about what you choose to dwell on, what you choose to focus on, what thoughts you're allowing to take residence in your brain and what words you're allowing to come out of your mouth.

You may need to do a thought audit and a word audit where you take stock of the thoughts running free in your mind and the words flowing freely out of your mouth. The point is we need to work on what we're giving residence in our minds and what we're allowing to come out of our mouths. We need to develop new habits. We'll never find contentment if we keep the "Ain't it Bad" soundtrack on loop. We need to play the "Isn't God Good" soundtrack. We really have to work to focus on Him.

And we may need to practice singing this soundtrack out loud. The Apostles' Creed is a great place to start. Say it out loud. Every day. God has created you. He has redeemed you. He has sanctified you. He will raise you. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are involved in working these good things *for you*. Hearing it out loud is important and goes a long, long way toward contentment.

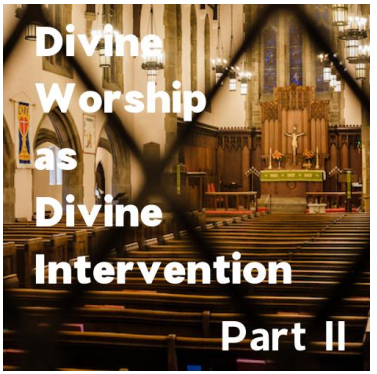
The reality is that you're never going to run out of stuff to complain about, but here's the thing: nothing on your list, nothing is going to change one thing in the Apostles' Creed. Nothing in your "Ain't it Bad" soundtrack can change one thing in the "Isn't God Good" creed. And we need to be reminded of that every day.

This is part of developing holy habits. We're fighting back against the "Ain't it Bad" soundtrack with a new song, with a better song, with God's song – and the Creed helps us sing that song because the Creed summarizes God's work for us.

And then what does Paul say? *The God of peace will be with you.* Astonishing. Developing these holy habits brings us into a deep fellowship with God and that's where we'll find true and lasting contentment.

We'll hit pause on our journey for now and pick it up again next month as we learn from Paul's words in Philippians 4:11-13 how to define/conceptualize our lives so as to know contentment no matter our circumstances.

Let's pray:
Heavenly Father, we confess with shame how quickly complaints echo from our mouths. We know the "Ain't in Bad" soundtrack by heart and we sing it with gusto. Forgive us. Help us, first, to stop singing this song and then, second, to begin developing the holy habits that will help us to sing the "Isn't God good" song. Thank You for the creeds that summarize Your work for us as recorded in Scripture. Help us to confess these words out loud, to practice them, to hear them, to celebrate them. And, in so doing, may we discover deeper fellowship with You, a deeper appreciate for You, and a true and lasting contentment in You. We are bold to pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen. – Pastor Conner



Introit

I've never experienced having backstage passes, but I know of people who've had the experience of meeting a popular band because they had passes at the concert.

The Introit – literally, "entrance" in Latin – is a backstage pass into the presence of God-Father, Son, and Spirit. Having received forgiveness just before, we arrive to meet the Band.

You might recall a Bible story where a prophet named Isaiah was in God's throne room. But Isaiah feared being in God's presence (imagine being in a rocket ship heading towards the sun – and how you'd feel). An angel, however, provided the means for atonement for Isaiah's sin by touching his lips with a burning coal, thereby absolving Isaiah.

Having been absolved by the promise of Jesus in the pastor, we receive permission to enter God's presence, and our response is praise.

Kyrie

46 And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. **47** And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, **have mercy on me**!" **48** And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, **have mercy on me**!" (Mark 10)

The natural question after we sing the Introit and enter God's presence is: "Well, now what?" What do you say now that you've got an audience with God? You actually have lots of options. To push the going-backstage-at-a-concert imagery, you could demand an autograph from God; looking out for your needs and desires.

Bartimaeus wanted healing, no doubt from his blindness when he cries out to Jesus. But look at what he calls Jesus: Son of David. Bartimaeus identifies Jesus as the King, and he bowed before Jesus as a peasant. Notice, he doesn't actually ask for his sight to be recovered. Bartimaeus just begs for mercy, but he left it up to his King to rule according to Jesus' own wishes.

The Kyrie then is a moment where we cry out to God: "Be King over my life." "Rule over my life in a way that fits your plan rather than mine." Yes, Bartimaeus was looking for help, but above all else he wanted Jesus to reign over his life. Do you? Because if you do, then the Kyrie gives you a script to ask God to have ownership and kingship over your life.

Finally, the Kyrie also becomes a moment in which we look not only to our own needs, but we speak on behalf of our neighbors in God's presence for their sake. – Pastor Johnson

NAVIGATING
MEDICARE

Join Sylvia Bandow as she gives firsthand information on Medicare along with insight as to which plans protect you when it comes to nursing home stays.

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

Saturday, November 14
@ 3pm - Trinity Fellowship Hall

A Conversation on Mental Health *Part 2*

During the first week in September, I (Pastor Conner) addressed the question of mental health in our morning prayer sessions. Last month I included a lightly edited text from those sessions. We continue the conversation this month utilizing those morning devotions. You can view them on Zion's Facebook page by searching for the teachings/prayers from September 1 – 3 or by going to Zion's website (www.zionmanning.com) and clicking on "Worship/Study/Pray" and selecting "Morning Prayers."[2]

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Last month we started a conversation on mental health. In brief, here's the key insight we shared:

> **What you think, affects what you feel, affects what you do.**

What you believe about reality affects the way you feel, which affects the choices you make. We also talked about some of the negative and untrue thoughts we sometimes give access to our minds:

- I'm stupid.
- I'm incapable.
- I'm a loser.
- Everybody hates me.

We pointed out that these are identity statements, which aren't true. So, we talked about getting them out into the open, about saying them out loud, and then speaking God's Word out loud into the situation:

> *Christ died for my sins. Period. Christ rose for my life. Period. He must think pretty highly of me to do that. And I are baptized in Christ. I am a child of the living God. Jesus is my Lord. Jesus is my Savior.*

These are the identity statements we need to hear out loud over and over and over again.

> *I am loved by God. I am forgiven by Christ. I are not defined by my failures or limited by my successes. I am defined by my baptism into Christ. This is who I am.*

But, what if the foundational thoughts are true? What if these are the things we're thinking about:

- I have been abused.
- I have suffered real injustice.
- I have experienced real loss.

What if these are the thoughts that are parked in our minds? And what if they're true? What do we do then?

[2] During those sessions, I recommended William Backus' book *Telling Yourself the Truth*. I continue to recommend it as an excellent source for learning to stop listening to yourself (specifically, the negative and destructive thoughts that try to take up residence in your mind) and to begin speaking the truth to yourself (specifically what God says about you).

Grieve. Mourn. Lament.

This is the right response to injustice and loss. Sometimes we get angry and that's understandable, but anger is tricky and requires its own article.[3] So grieve, mourn, and lament. And take your pain to the Lord.

And when you do, know this: God gives you the words! He not only gives you the permission to bring your pain to Him, He gives you the words. We find these words in the psalms of lament. Consider a couple:

> My heart is in anguish within me;
> the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
> Fear and trembling come upon me,
> and horror overwhelms me.
> And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
> I would fly away and be at rest… Psalm 55:4-6

> How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
> How long will you hide your face from me?
> Psalm 13:1

When you pray these psalms, you're going to find something. Not only do they help you express what you're thinking and feeling on the inside, but they almost always end up focusing on the steadfast love of the Lord. Here's how Psalm 13 ends:

> But I have trusted in your *steadfast love*[4];
> my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
> I will sing to the LORD,
> because he has dealt bountifully with me.
> Psalm 13:5-6

The steadfast love of the Lord is a huge theological concept in Scripture. God Himself speaks of it in His self-revelation to Moses at Mt. Sinai (see Exodus 34). This steadfast love of the Lord is the unchanging reality of God's nature. Yes, God may chide. He may inflict suffering for His purposes. He may bring hardship into our lives – and we may never know why.

In fact, God is under no obligation to give us an explanation for our loss or our suffering. We always remain the creature. This may sound harsh, but it's an important part of rightly fearing the Lord. God owes us nothing. Nothing.

God owes us nothing, but He gives us everything.

But, He gives us everything! God owes us nothing, but He gives us everything. Even if God may choose to bring hardship into our lives, we frame it within His steadfast love. Because He's a God of steadfast love, we can trust Him even when hard things happen, even when we suffer, even when God Himself brings hard things into our life.

In His steadfast love He gives us His Son – His Son! He gives us His Kingdom. He gives us hope. He gives us grace, mercy, and forgiveness. And He loves us. And yet, I know that deep down there's this burning question in your heart – because it's in mine, too: "Then why does He wound us?! Why would He bring hard things into our lives? What kind of love is that?"

[3] We addressed the topic of anger during morning prayer on the following dates: 9/9, 9/10, & 9/11.

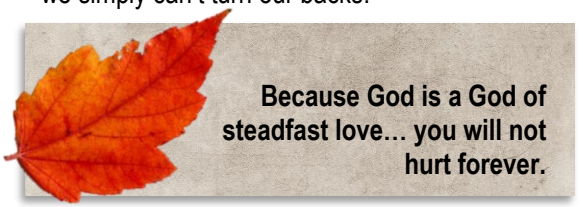
[4] We addressed this psalm in its entirety during morning prayer on 9/8.

I'm reminded of William Cowper's famous poem, "God Moves in A Mysterious Way":

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
But trust Him for His grace
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain
God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain

I know it can be tempting to turn your back on God when you're hurting, but that does nothing to alleviate the pain and everything to remove the hope of healing and wholeness, which we only have in Jesus. Because God is a God of steadfast love, a steadfast love that we see clearly in the cross and empty tomb of Jesus, because God has an always-and-forever, never-giving-up, love-you-to-the-cross-into-the-grave-and-out kind of love, you will not hurt forever. You will be made whole in the resurrection. And that's something on which we simply can't turn our backs.



I'm reminded of something Pastor Johnson highlighted from Jesus' Beatitudes (see Matthew 5) during his September 1st morning devotion: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." God is going to comfort you in the renewal of all things. You need to hear this out loud. That's why God established His Church – so we could hear this out loud. The Church is the out-loud-Word-hearers.

Further, you may need to talk to somebody, to a mature Christian. You need to get the hurt out into the open, to put it into words. But even there, you need to pay attention to what you're saying. You might find yourself saying, "I'm disappointed with God." That's understandable. But what kind of statement is that? It's a feeling. What's the thought? The thought is probably something like this: "God let me down." That's a difficult thought, isn't it? And, yet, it's probably one many of us have battled. Because it's so important, we'll address it next month.

We need to stop for this month so we can process what we've covered and so that we can pray. So if the thoughts parked in your mind are true – you've been wounded in some real way – mourning, grieving, and lamenting are the right response. And Scripture not only gives you permission, but it gives you the words. Pray them. And then see how they take you to the steadfast love of the Lord in Jesus.

Prayer:
Lord God, sometimes we hurt. We are wronged. We lose people and relationships close to us. And so we grieve. We mourn. We lament. Help us, Lord. Turn us to Your Word where You put our grief into words. Give our grief voice so that we can bring it out into the open. And provide mature Christian friends who will listen, pray, encourage, and support us in our sorrows. Then, Lord, turn us to Your steadfast love, Your always-and-forever, never-giving-up, love-you-to-the-cross, into-the-grave-and-out love. So, in the midst of our grief, give us hope. In the midst of our mourning, enable us to marvel at Your mercies. You owe us nothing, but You give us everything: forgiveness, grace, life, salvation, the Kingdom, and the promise of renewal, reunion, and resurrection. We give You all glory, thanks, and praise in the Name of Jesus, Amen. – Pastor Conner

Sunday Night High School Youth Fellowship
Sundays @ 6pm
new location: Trinity-Manilla - starting Nov 8

Running Commentary

2 John verse 7

"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist."

John calls his Christian recipients to take truth seriously – especially truth related to the incarnation of Jesus – literally *in* + *carnare* (*flesh* in Latin) = incarnation.

But why is Jesus' incarnation so significant? There are lots of ways to answer that question, but Jesus' incarnation matters in part because God in the flesh allows Jesus to enter, sabotage, and destroy the enemy camp. By entering the world in our form, Jesus snuck past Death and the Devil's security checkpoint. So that the accusing Devil no longer has a leg to stand on when he accuses humans for their sin and faithlessness. The Father can respond to the Devil's accusations with, "Yes, I know their faults, but I know of one true Man who was faithful and He's ruined your case."

Thank you for all the morning warriors serving breakfast for Trinity's Sunday School 😊

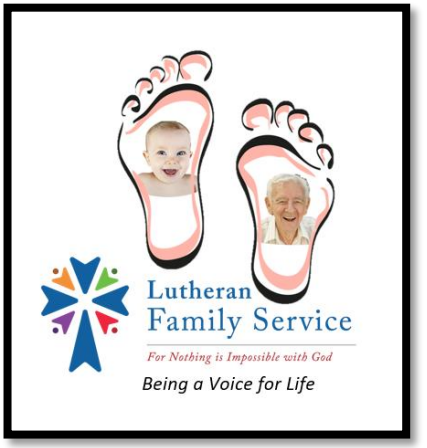
Whose UR

Lutheran Family Service

For Nothing is Impossible with God

Deaconess Bethany Kuhlmann (Lutheran Family Service) is coming to Zion to speak to teens on depression and suicide as she offers an encouraging, hope-filled message rooted in Jesus. All teens invited (member or non).

Sunday, November 15 @ 6:30 p.m.



Rev. Jim Lamb (Lutheran Family Service) is coming to Zion to speak to adults about being a loving voice for life in the public square. All are invited (member or non).

Preschool Praises for October 2020

October is always a fun and very busy month! The first week we talked about apples and had our first experience with cutting with scissors. Fine motor skills are important for this age group to develop and it is amazing how much skill (and explanation!) goes into using scissors. We learned that A is for apple and cut apples in half to look at their parts then make an apple stamp picture with them. We talked about the 6th day of creation when God made animals and people and Pastor elaborated on the amazing fact that God made everything from the little worm to the great big bull!

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

The second week was Fire Prevention and Safety week. We focused on such important topics as stop, drop, and roll, don't hide-go outside, and crawl under smoke. We also worked on the letter F for fire and fall. The Manning Fire Department came and spoke to us about fire safety and showed us how a Firefighter looks before and after putting on his life-saving gear. They may look a little scary, but they are really just a person under all those clothes and they want to help. Then, they gave us fire truck rides! You can imagine how excited the children were! To top it off, the fire department also gave the children each an activity pack. We wrote them a nice card (more like a poster!) from each class. Again, we thank all those who serve on the Fire Department for their service and sacrifice!

The Pancake Breakfast went wonderfully and we had a record turnout even if it was unconventional! The children did their best on the songs and sounded wonderful.Thank you to the preschool parents for their volunteer work that day - you were essential to its success!

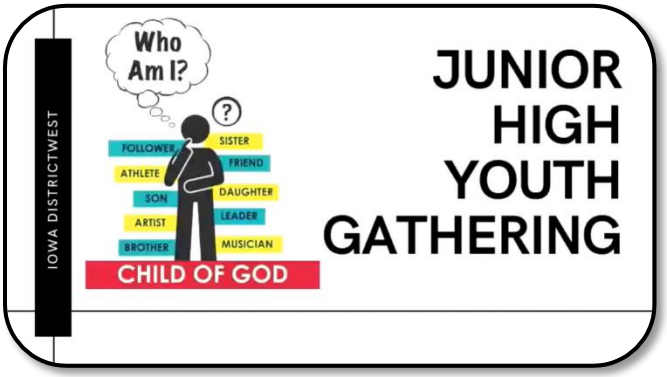
The third week was all about Fall colors and the letter L. The children gathered different colors of fall from outside (leaves, pine cones, pumpkins, flowers, etc.) and we charted them under either red, green, orange, yellow or brown then counted which category had the most. These charts can be seen in the preschool hallway. We also tried a new art project where we made a leaf rubbing on a paper with a crayon for the letter L. We also worked on sorting by color and shape. Jesus Time focused on Adam and Eve and how they were created by God differently than other creatures. Pastor spoke of the fall and how sin entered the world.

The fourth week was all about pumpkins and patterns. The fall into sin was our focus for Jesus Time and the children were fascinated with how the devil disguised himself and tricked Adam and Eve, but we distinguished that Adam and Eve made their own choice to listen and disobey God. Pastor spoke about Noah and the Ark and God's love for us.

The last week of October we had Parent Teacher Conferences on Tuesday and Friday. I had been doing assessments on each child for the previous 4 weeks and enjoyed being able to share the results with the parents. It is amazing how much they have picked up on so far in the school year!

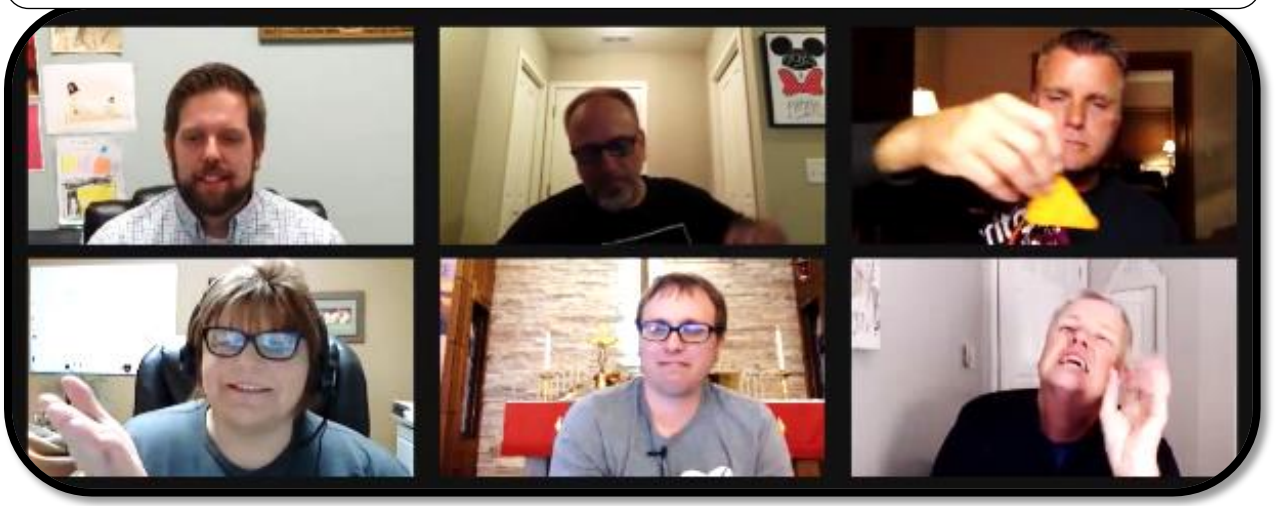
It was a super busy month and we all had a great time thanks to many people who make it all possible!

Blessings,
Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Nemitz



Unable to meet in Des Moines, Iowa District West's Jr. High Youth Gathering virtually showed up at churches and homes across western Iowa. Jill Arp led a group of about 20 middle schoolers to Trinity-Manilla to watch the Gathering. Deaconess and Pastor Johnson were a part of the Gathering. The speaker highlighted how we are connected to Christ in baptism and how that changes us. After the Gathering, Dane and Brody Blom led the kids in a big game of hide-and-seek in Trinity's basement.

Event organizers: (top from left): Rev. Tom Schlund, DCE Tim Knightlinger, singer Dean, (bottom from the left): Assistant to the President for Education, Youth, and Family Life Ronda Mohr, Rev. Andrew Johnson, singer Swen



What a joy it was share God's Word with the 3rd graders of Zion on Sunday, October 18th! On the 4th, children and parents met together to highlight several key verses in Scripture and then parents had the opportunity to write a personal note in the front. And then on behalf of you (Zion), I (Pastor Conner) gave them a marvelous new Bible. Thank you, Zion (and Trinity!) for loving children!

On Wednesday, October 21st, Zion, in partnership with Trinity, welcomed Missionary Gary Thies from Mission Central. Below Gary demonstrates the darkness in which many people who do not know Jesus live. The bottom left is a black magic mask. In the middle Gary leads Brian Lamp down the aisle to demonstrate the dragon head that many people believe wards of evil spirits. On the right Gary shows attire (with the help of Easton Hass, Lily Doyel, and Camden Morris) that would commonly be worn in certain African people groups.

I Am A Survivor!

October is traditionally breast cancer awareness month which traditionally recognizes the brave men and women that have overcome their battle with cancer. They are truly a **Survivor!** However, there are many people in the world that are survivors. We may all be a survivor in our own personal world.

Anyone who survives a highly distressing experience will never be the same again. Some remain emotionally wounded for life. Many survivors recover fairly well. This may either be on their own or with the help of family/friends or professional help. A few go beyond recovery by growing to be a better person than they were before.

While no two journeys are the same, survivors tend to have two things in common – they integrate the traumatic experience into their public identity and make the experience a defining part of their life story, and they talk or write about it in a way that has an inspiring effect on others.

That journey has several phases a person may go through. This process may take many months or even years to navigate.

Reliving the fears and memories – the effort to suppress the painful memories and feelings is not working. You try to keep your feelings a secret avoid situations that may stir up emotions thus pushing you to feel more isolated and lonely.

Taking control – this may mean something different for each person. You may find yourself feeling moments of relief. You decide that for your own well-being you will try to forgive, but are very clear that this does not mean condoning, approving or excusing what happened. There is a sense of feeling "free".

Speaking with wisdom, not pain - you will find that you have both negative and positive feelings about what you went through. The opposite of the painful memories is finding a positive meaning in what you have been through, find a positive life purpose. You will notice that you have more self-confidence and better judgement than before. Your personal relationships improve.

Becoming an inspiring role model for others – it may be the opportunity to offer strength and insights to others who are struggling with their own pain, anguish, traumas, and crisis. Your presence may be helpful to others who see you as a role model and as proof that a person can heal and be happy again.

If you, or someone you know may be struggling, it may be helpful to encourage them to talk to someone, whether that be their medical provider, mental health professional, friend, family, or clergy. You just may be the difference that leads them to freedom.

Janet Brus, RN
Psychiatric Medical Care
Manning Regional Healthcare Center
Program Director – Senior Life Solutions

Amigos en Cristo

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

November 2020

"LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME": On Sunday, October 4 we celebrated three children in our Amigos en Cristo who are attending Zion Lutheran School in Denison. The picture (right) highlights the presentation of scholarships our congregation gave. I presented it to the parents during our bilingual children's message. We are so blessed to be in partnership with Zion Lutheran School that offers to the Denison community a Pre-School through 8th grade. Over the years many of our Hispanic children from Amigos en Cristo have attended Zion School. For example Azucena Baquiero attended Zion all through grade school. She is now a mom and her son Liam is now in the Zion Pre-School. We are happy to support these children so that the Christian faith will continue to be taught in all our families.

We are committed to our children and as a part of our mission last month we also participated in the annual Walk for Life, see page 2. Children are our mission, to bring them to the waters of Baptism and then to teach them the Christian faith.

On Sunday October 11 at Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church we held our first Voters' meeting since January. We reviewed our past months' activities. With Covid-19 we have missed many worship services and gatherings, yet with the live broadcasts we have continued to worship together. Still we have many families unable to attend. We began our public services in person again in June and also our Bible Studies on Sunday and Wednesday. By God's grace during the pandemic we have seen growth and positive change. Two of our inactive families have returned and we have visitors. The highlight of our Voters' meeting was our Call process in which we are partnering with Iowa District West. Please pray for our congregation service Hispanic immigrants.

PLEASE PRAY: + For calling a bilingual pastor to serve Amigos en Cristo in Denison and Grace Hispanic in Storm Lake. + For our partnership with Iowa District West with the help from Rev. Haney and the District leadership. + For our new families and visitors that God would bless them as they join our church family. + For families in Storm Lake unable to worship publically with us that they would be able to soon return to be with us. + For Eliseo who is gravely ill that the Lord may grant him faith and healing. + 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 two missions in Sioux City and Des Moines.

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

Fellowship Club Notes

The Zion Fellowship Club will meet on Tuesday, November 10 (Martin Luther's Birthday). The group will transition to a MORNING ASSEMBLY TIME (coffee and pastries at 9:30; Bible study and business and 10). We will meet safely and social distance. Any interested members of Zion are welcome! It will be good to gather again. Pastor Riggert will continue to provide pastoral leadership for the group.

Orphan Grain Train Clothing Collection

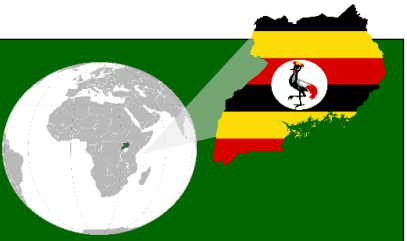
The Orphan Grain Train mission has been a Fellowship Club project. Clothing items (clean and gently used as well as new – especially underwear) are appreciated. Clothing can be brought to the fellowship hall storage/quilting area from November 15 through the 29. The items will be delivered to the Ida Grove warehouse in early December. Clothing can be items from all seasons and include men, women, and children's clothing. Shoe donations may be shoes with heals not higher than an inch. Orphan Grain train ships these items around the world to impoverished and disaster impacted areas. Share this special opportunity with your community friends and neighbors.

Camp Okoboji Notes

The Carrol Circuit has sponsored a Camp cabin refurbishing project. The Camp is updating many of the older cabins totally remodeling the cabins with new bathrooms, air-conditioning and other comforts. Thanks to the generous donation of several circuit congregations (St. Paul, Carroll, and Zion, Arcadia) as well a generous memorial gifts and family donations, the $25,000 project was completed!

As with many activities, the COIVD adjustments impacted summer programming at our Camp. Family cabins were rented and many families enjoyed the beautiful and safe setting of the lakeside Camp. Camp Okoboji continues to live out their vision: "Refreshing Body and Spirit." Consider a personal and family time of refreshment at Camp in any season of the year. Zion is blessed to have representation on the Camp Okoboji Board as Andrew Puck serves as a board member. Camp Okoboji welcomes our prayers and financial support.

Fall/Winter 2020



Introducing Rev. Mark and Megan Mantey
Serving in Uganda

Dear Pr. Conner and the faithful of Zion,

Greetings in Christ from Uganda! Megan and I pray that all of you are keeping well. Thank you for your prayer and support of the Lord's work here. We're grateful to be able to serve with you in this way through teaching and project management.

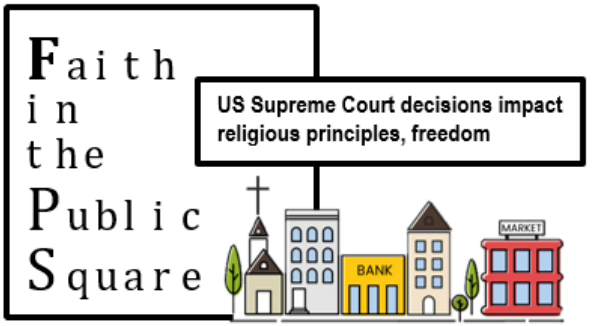
Uganda is still on somewhat of a lockdown because of COVID. However, there is more freedom of movement now than earlier in the year, churches and some schools are opening for in-person service. In this difficult time the Lutheran Church of Uganda, LCU, continues to share God's word and train pastors. Recently, the LCU was able to resume training for their 4th year seminary class which was to graduate this past June. The LCU utilized three training centers across the country so that the students didn't have to travel as far. At these centers, seminarians received intensive instruction and the opportunity to apply their knowledge in a hands on way. This included practice teaching, writing sermons, and leading liturgy for weddings, funerals, and celebrations. We're thankful God continues to provide avenues for the LCU to train up their workers.

Thank you again for your prayer and support. We are grateful to be your missionaries as we walk alongside the LCU together.

In Christ,
Mark and Megan

Mark Mantey
Project Manager – Uganda
LCMS International Mission
The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
+256 787 025762
mark.mantey@lcms.org

Students practicing different ways to teach children



Part 1

By Cheryl Magness[5]

Recent rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court, some supportive of religious freedom and some not, are drawing the attention of churches and other faith-based nonprofits, including The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Synod leaders have been closely following the rulings and their potential impact on Christians' free exercise of their religion.

Bostock v. Clayton County

On June 15, in a 6-3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Title VII's prohibition of employment discrimination on the basis of "race, color, religion, sex, or national origin" — part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — also applies to discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." Justice Brett Kavanaugh dissented, asserting that the Court went beyond its proper role of interpreting the law and, in changing a definition to include meanings the U.S. Congress has rejected multiple times, rewrote the law. This is a "transgression of the Constitution's separation of powers," Kavanaugh wrote.

Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas also dissented, stating, "There is only one word for what the Court has done today: legislation."

The Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz, executive director of the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL), called the ruling "outrageous" in its relegation of "Christian citizens to second-class status in their own country." "[The church] is always accused of imposing our view on people, and it's exactly the opposite," Seltz said, adding that "the fundamental truths of biological differences … have just been made illegal" if they are held to, by an organization, as the single correct view.

The Rev. Jonathan Lange, editor of the Synod's *Free to Be Faithful* newsletter, noted that the ruling could have widespread implications not only for the church but for the culture: "Among the questions left unanswered are whether men's access to women's dressing rooms and sports leagues will be mandated … [whether] female students and women escaping from domestic violence will be forced to share dorm rooms and living quarters with men," and whether doctors might be sued for refusing to operate on or remove healthy sex organs.

June Medical Services LLC v. Russo

On June 29, in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional a Louisiana law requiring that medical personnel who perform abortions at clinics have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital.

Justice Stephen Breyer wrote the majority opinion, which said that the Louisiana law was almost identical to a Texas law that was ruled unconstitutional in 2016. Although Chief Justice John Roberts had dissented with the 2016 decision, he concurred with the 2020 one, writing, "The legal doctrine of *stare decisis* requires us,

[5] This article was published by the official newspaper of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, *The Reporter*. It's available here: blogs.lcms.org/2020/faith-in-the-public-square-us-supreme-court-decisions-impact-religious-principles-freedom/

absent special circumstances, to treat like cases alike. The Louisiana law imposes a burden on access to abortion just as severe as that imposed by the Texas law, for the same reasons. Therefore Louisiana's law cannot stand under our precedents."

March for Life President Jeanne Mancini said the organization was "appalled" by the decision.

"The legislation at issue in *June Medical Services v. Russo* was designed to safeguard women's health and safety, which the abortion business in Louisiana egregiously sidelined for the sake of profit. No abortion facility should receive a free pass to provide substandard care."

Deaconess Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry, said, "As Christians, we feel profound disappointment in the *June v. Russo* ruling. It is clear that we, the people who serve in LCMS Life Ministry, have much to do. We pray. We live out our vocations in the family and as citizens in society. We love and serve our neighbors with tangible acts of mercy.

"We pray the words of Psalm 121, 'I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.' He provides the help we need and never disappoints."

Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue

On June 30, in a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court upheld a tax credit for private schools in Montana. The Montana Supreme Court had struck down the program, arguing that it violated the state's ban on state aid to religious schools.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion, which said, "A state need not subsidize private education, but once it decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools because they are religious."

The ruling calls into question the constitutionality of many current state restrictions on using public funds for religious schools. Many of these restrictions can be traced to the 19th century, when U.S. Representative James Blaine of Maine proposed an amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting any state funds raised for public schools to be "under the control of any religious sect" or "divided between religious sects or denominations."

The Blaine Amendment failed ratification, but many states put similar "Blaine" provisions into their state constitutions. The full impact of the *Espinoza* decision will not be known for years, but it could open up additional funding paths for religious schools and widen the range of educational choices to which parents have access by making it more difficult for states to discriminate against religious schools in matters of funding.

Sue Nahmensen, CEO of the St. Louis-based Lutheran Elementary School Association (LESA), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization, described the *Espinoza* ruling as a "victory for families who deserve the right to choose the best educational system for their children, and for the educators in faith-based schools who are committed to preparing children for whatever their futures may hold — academically, emotionally and spiritually. … [LESA] believes this ruling will have a positive impact on educational opportunities for children and families in our community."

Dr. Rebecca Schmidt, director of LCMS School Ministry, agreed, describing the ruling as "a momentous decision … [which] opens the doors for future children to hear the Gospel message."

To be continued next month…

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)

TRIZION TriZion Youth Group: Sundays at 6:00 p.m. Trinity Manilla Basement

Christmas Program Practice at Zion:
2nd -8th: 11/29, 12/6 (1:00-3:00), 12/12 (10:30-11:30)
Pre-K-1st: 11/28, 12/5 (9:00 – 10:00)

November 1 — **All Saints' Day at Zion**
Remembering those who have gone before us in the faith

November 7 — **Chicken & Biscuit Dinner at Trinity**
5:00-7:00 p.m.

November 19 — **Thursday afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)**

November 15 — **Whose UR (for teens) / Being a Voice for Life in the Public Square (for adults) at Zion**
Session at 6:30 p.m.
All invited

November 25 — **Joint Thanksgiving Eve Service at Zion**
7:00 p.m.
In-person and streamed on Zion's Facebook page

December 2, 9, 16 — **Midweek Advent Services**
5:45 p.m. worship at Zion
5:30 p.m. supper / 6:30 worship at Trinity

December 13 — **Children's Christmas Programs (6:30pm, musicians begin @ 6)**

November Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1 Joy Umland
2 Derek Hodne
Dawn Lorenzen (T)
Dillon Mohr
3 Taylor Beckendorf
Duane Boell (T)
Doug Grage (T)
Wade Janssen
4 Caleb Alexander
Kori Beckendorf
Mason Benton
Lueka Feller
Charles Hickman
Carol Kahl
5 Joe Riesberg
6 Nicholas Birks (T)
7 Samantha Doyel
Fred Gruhn
Levi Lapel
8 Ken Grimm
Travis Mohr
Alexander Thelen
9 Rick Lohrmann
Kenneth Stripling
10 Jean Kusel
Jeanette Lerssen
11 Kysen Folk (T)
Piper Mundt
Debbie Musfeldt
Tammy Winter
12. Levi Kirsch (T)
Dawson Mundt
Kyle Vetter (T)
13. Jacob Dreier
Jordan Edgington
Rodney Frank
Max Renze
14. Bridget Gore
Steve Renze
15. Jesse Johnson
16. Sam Musfeldt
Rachel Nulle
Paula Vogel
17. Macie Doyel
Shelly Gruhn
Sandra Vahl
18. Beverly Grundmeier
19. Martin Bornhoft (T)
Ryan Doyel
Mark Kucik
Garrett Renze
Vera Vollstedt (T)
20. Becky Eischeid
Barbara Gore
Cynthia Leslie
21. Margaret Backhaus
Dustin Bruch
Daniel Mohr
22. Tyler Heaton
Matthew Rosener
Thomas Walters
24. Garrett Blackford
Allen Ehlers
Kelly Page
25. Luann Langel
Amber Neumann
26. Nancy Baack
Amy Borkowski
Nicholas Diersen
Mark Schroeder (T)
27. Sandy Grage (T)
Sheila Simonsen (T)
Ryan Willison
28. Diane Genzen
29. Daniel Behrens
Larry Farley (T)
30. Alberta Dreier

Anniversaries

11. Ken & Rhonda Grimm
14. Elissa & Joe Riesberg
16. Allen & Becky Ehlers
19. Brett & Diana Eddy
20. Timothy & Amanda Rosener
24. Harold & Marjorie Jurgensen (T)
John & Nancy Opperman
26. Ken & Becky Eischeid
Stacie & Nels Nelson
29. David & Kelli Page

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

Official Acts

Baptism:
Cobie & Caelix Jahn, children of Clark & Chelsea Jahn, 10/4 Pastor Andrew Johnson
Braelle Michelle Diersen, daughter of Blake Diersen & Jasmin Pizano, 10/3, Pastor Jonathan Conner

In Our Prayers

Nancy Grimm, Arlene Mohr, Dewayne Buhr, Ron Schilling, Connie Sorbe (Annette Hilsabeck's mother), Nancy Walters, 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), Carolyn Werner, Jeanne Gruhn, Luke England (Ben's brother), Bary Kienast, Leonard Damman, Gale Vinke