Death, I hate you.
God, I don't understand You.
Jesus, I need You.

An open letter to a grieving people.[1]

Dear fellow grievers,

This morning (12/18/20) my heart, like yours, was crushed by incomprehensible news: Max Sanford, a child, a teen, a son, a brother, a friend, a student, a teammate, and so very, very much more to so many people, died. An auto accident. I stare stunned at these words. They're so blunt, so cold, so terrible. How can it be real? I, like you, can see him in my mind, strong, kind, compassionate, empathetic, smiling.

How can he be dead? How could death take him? How could it strike us, our community, our families, again? Why does death keep wrecking our lives, tearing our loved ones from us? Tears are our food once again (Psalm 42:3). I am utterly wearied by death. I feel completely powerless, impotent, angry and defeated. Truth is, I hate it.

Death, I hate you! You steal. You destroy. You confound. You wound. Scripture is right, you are our enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26)!

But what am I doing talking to death? Death doesn't care. Death isn't a person. So, I turn to God, but I know full well that death couldn't do its deed if God didn't let it.

So, God, why do You let death persist? Why do You let it harass us seemingly unchecked? Scripture says not a sparrow falls to the ground apart from You (Matthew 10:29). This has not happened apart from You. So why, Lord?! Why?! I don't understand. We don't understand. God, sometimes we don't understand You. We pray. We give. We worship. And this?

But God is silent. He does not answer *why*. I suppose, as God, He doesn't have to. And I know, as God, His goodness is not limited to my lifetime. He doesn't have to resolve all my hurts in my brief years to be good, because my life doesn't end at death. But His silence is still difficult.

But I am not the first, we are not the first, to hear this silence.

The psalmists experienced it:

> Why, O LORD, do you stand far away?
> Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble
> (Psalm 10:1)?

[1] I posted this letter (as well as a video of me reading it) on Zion's Facebook page to help our community as we struggled (and continue to struggle!) to process the sudden and tragic death of IKM-Manning freshman, Max Sanford. I share it here for those who did not see/read it and for those who battle fresh and/or prolonged grief. We grieve together even as we hobble in hope.

> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning (Psalm 22:1)?

God, I simply don't understand. I don't understand You. But I, but we, have no help besides You. The psalmists knew this, too: Whom have we in Heaven but you (Ps. 73:25)? Peter confessed it: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life… (John 6:68). There is no other help in the face of death. What mortal among us can stop it?

Turning our backs on You, Lord, in anger or despair (a temptation that intensifies in times of tragedy and loss) accomplishes nothing. It does nothing to heal our wounds and everything to cut us off from the only hope we have of ever being free from death, of ever seeing death die and life restored, of ever seeing our loved ones healthy and alive again, of ever being happy and whole again.

So, Jesus, I need you, we need you! We are so utterly broken, defeated, confused, confounded, and crushed. Our dreams lie shattered in shards of despair. By the working of the Spirit through Your Word, bring the reality of Your incarnation into our hearts. Reveal the depth and hope and beauty of its meaning to us. As we consider it, help us to see and understand that You must love us. You must. Jesus, Your incarnation, is God's love coming in person among us.

Friends, despite our suffering and sorrow, in ways often impossible to understand, God must love us!

We do not and will not understand why we suffer or why death is allowed to continue menacing us, but we do see *who*. We see who has taken on flesh to redeem us. We see who has known our sorrows, our losses and crosses. We see who has shed God's tears with and for us. And we see who will heal us and make us whole and happy again in the Day of His coming: Jesus. It's Jesus and only Jesus. He is our hope. He is our only. He is our all. Jesus.

Maybe *why* was never for us to know or even within our ability to understand. And maybe *why* isn't really what we long for. Maybe what we're longing for is eternal healing and happiness. Maybe we just want to know God cares and will make everything better someday.

And that's the promise we have in Jesus! So surely knowing *who* is greater. Surely knowing Jesus is greater.

So, please, Jesus, help us. Be near us now. We need You. Our grief is crushing. Our wound is deep. Hold Your incarnation, Your promises, Your crucifixion, death, and resurrection, Your approaching return, Your final and full defeat of death, Your resurrecting and reuniting of the dead, and the renewal of all things, hold these before our eyes. Place these realities in our hearts. Plant hope in these realities deep into our spirits that we may hobble together in hope and stagger together in faith until You return to restore happiness into the deep down places of our being. We need you Jesus. Amen. – Pastor Conner

The notes below are from members and non-members expressing gratitude for Zion's ministry. The mission and ministry of Zion wouldn't happen without your participation and support. Thank you!

Pastor Conner and Staff,
Merry Christmas, may it be a blessed one for each of you! Thank you so much for your continued online ministry! A true blessing for many. – Non-member

Dear Zion Lutheran Church,
We are sending this gift in gratitude for the clear, truthful, confident and encouraging online teaching of your pastor, Jonathan Conner. Our Lord has richly blessed us in these troubled times by the clarity of scripture and our historic confessions (and hymnody) applied to our daily circumstances.

We pray daily for Pr. Conner and other faithful pastors. Especially we pray that the Lord of the Church would continue to feed His sheep through these faithful under-shepherds' teaching and leading, so all Christians may stand firm in true faith to the Last Day.

Yours in Christ,
Non-members

Dear Sunday School Classes,*
Thank you very much for this delicious meal you are giving me. You have a great Christian attitude of giving and sharing with others. Always continue to be good witnesses for Jesus. He's your Lord and Savior and loves you so much! Thank you again! Blessings to all of you.
Your friend in Christ,
- **Member**

Dear Zion Youth Group,*
Thank you for remembering me again this year. May our Lord bless you all many, many times. Merry Christmas.
- **Member**

* *On Sunday, December 20, Zion's 7th -8th grade Sunday school class delivered meals to several home-limited members. See page 8 for pictures!*

The Devotional Life Expanded: Adding Action to Contemplation

When someone talks about their devotional life what comes to mind? A Bible, Portals of Prayer, maybe an online resource, possibly a hymnal? You probably also imagine some sort of contemplation, reflection, possibly a conversation, and a prayer.

This is certainly one piece, one facet if you will, of the devotional life. In fact, it's one we would do well do deepen, learning to reflect on the profound truths of Scripture and the mysteries of the faith: the tabernacling of God among us in the incarnation of Christ; the loving, communal, communicative nature of the Triune God; the imaging of Christ's marriage to the Church in earthly marriages; the great price of redemption in the shedding of Jesus' blood, the reconstituting and firming up of the body in the resurrection, reigning with Christ over a renewed creation; and on and on.

St. Paul said as much in his letter to the Philippian Church:

> Finally, brothers, 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 (Philippians 4:8).

So, deep and reflective contemplation is a key piece of our devotional life as Christ confessing people.

Over the next few paragraphs, though, I will suggest that our understanding of our devotional life needs to be expanded.[2] More specifically, I want to help us add *action* to our contemplation. In fact, St. Paul did precisely this in the very next sentence of his letter to the Philippians!

> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—*practice* these things, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:9).

In other words, *contemplate* AND *practice*. *Reflect* AND *do*. The AND is essential. Our devotional life is to be characterized by both. We are not pitting one against the other (contemplation against practicing, thinking against doing) or providing ourselves an excuse for neglecting the reflecting on the great drama and doctrine of Scripture. We are expanding our understanding of the devotional life to help us see our devotion to Christ and His mission more holistically. We're adding action/devotion to our beliefs.

So, in the Church we make many bold claims about what we believe. Consider a few:

- Life is sacred from the womb to the tomb.
- God created marriage as the exclusive, lifelong, one-flesh, pro-creational union between a man and a woman to be a living

[2] I am indebted to Dr. David Schmitt, homiletics (preaching) professor at Concordia Seminary St. Louis, for his insights on the devotional life, especially his article "Devotion and Discipleship in a Discontented Age."

image of Christ's marriage to His bride, the Church.
- God owns everything; we are the trustees of His property.
- Children are to be brought up in the fear and instruction of the Lord.
- Governing authorities have a derived authority from God to be used to check evil and commend good.
- God gave humanity dominion over creation to steward it for His glory and the blessing of our neighbor.
- Jesus Christ is Lord. He will return in power and glory to judge the earth and establish His everlasting kingdom.

We believe these things and we boldly confess them. But are we devoted to them? Are we taking any action to defend, promote, strengthen, and further these beliefs, to translate them into a lived reality for the glory of God and the flourishing of humanity? This is the piece we need to add to our understanding of our devotional life, adding courageous action to our bold confession.

This is why a clear and bold confession (learned through hearing the Word preached and taught corporately with the gathered congregation and through reflecting on it individually) is necessary, even foundational to an active devotional life. Our actions must be anchored in God's truth. Our doing must be fueled by God's teaching because it's all too easy to devote ourselves to things that are not extolled in Scripture.

What are you devoted to?

Consider what people regularly devote their lives to, what they pour energy and time and money into. Dare to consider your own life. What are you devoted to? What are you pouring energy into, investing dollars in, dedicating time to? What draws you in and drives you forward? Don't rush by these questions. We're all devoted to something. So, what are *you* devoted to?

What teaching of God is your devotion anchored to?

And the more important, pressing question: what teaching of God is your devotion anchored to? This is where the drama and doctrine of Scripture translates into action, where contemplation drives action and action motivates contemplation.

As you ask the question, you may make some surprising discoveries. You may find that you are devoted to some things that have no connection to God's Word and do nothing to further His Kingdom, nothing to awaken anyone's desire for God, and nothing to promote the beliefs we boldly confess.[3] This will be a painful discovery because it will mean the time for plucking has come (see Jesus' words in Matthew 5:27-29 on plucking and casting away things leading us into sin and away from God). The idol must go.

But you may discover that you are devoted to things that are deeply important to God. You may discover a new dimension to your devotional life (which is what we're aiming for!) as you see action after action anchored in the beautiful things of God. Your devotion to creation care is anchored in

[3] It's important to emphasize that we are not talking about hobbies, we're discussing devotion. What are you *devoted* to?

God's declaration that His creation is good, even very good. Your devotion to your children is anchored in God's creation and blessing of the family and His exhortation to communicate the faith to the next generation. Your devotion to the care of God's house is anchored in Your love for what He gives in that house (grace and salvation!).

And you may discover new opportunities to expand your devotional life. Do you care for the disadvantaged (mirroring Christ's compassion)? Volunteer at a food pantry, work to improve access to affordable housing, get involved with vocational training, invest in educational programs. Are you devoted to marriage (seeing it as a great good of God's creation)? Support the work of marriage advocates and counselors (such as Lutheran Family Service), invest in quality resources that can be shared with couples, promote or sponsor marriage retreats.

Do you love God's good creation? Advocate for wise conservation practices, support the work of organizations focused on creation care, make your corner of creation beautiful.

These may all be a meaningful part of your devotional life, especially if you intentionally anchor them in the teachings of Scripture. And then you'll start to experience an exciting synergy as your devotional actions drive you deeper into God's Word and your contemplation on God's Word drives you forward into God's world.

And this will help you see your devotional life holistically, as contemplation AND action, reflection AND doing. Want to talk more about expanding your devotional life? Let's visit! – Pastor Conner

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

Zion Lutheran Preschool of Manning is currently accepting applications for two positions for the 2021-2022 school year: a Preschool Director/Lead Teacher and a Preschool Associate Teacher. These energetic servant leaders will have the opportunity to interact compassionately and creatively with children and families in the name of Jesus.

Position descriptions and applications are available at Zion Lutheran Church, 1204 Center Street, Manning, Iowa 51455 (712-655-2352).

Preschool Director/Lead Teacher:
This position involves administration of the preschool as well as teaching the 3 and 4 year-old classes. Applicants must meet standards developed by the Department of Human Services. The position involves 29 hours per week during the school calendar year. Salary will be based on experience.

Preschool Associate Teacher/ParaEducator:
This position involves assisting the Lead Teacher with classroom operations in the 3 and 4 year-old classes and 25 hours per week during the school calendar year. Salary will be based on experience.

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C **And with thy spirit.**

Hidden in the word *salutation* is the word *salute*. Soldiers exchange salutes; typically subordinates salute superiors until the superior officer ends the salute, at which point the subordinate soldier lowers their salute.

While there is no ranking system in the Church – that is, the pastor is not superior to everyone else who does not happen to be a pastor – notice that that it's opposite of how saluting works within the military. The leader in a worship setting, that is the pastor, salutes first by extending the Lord's presence and peace.

The process of the leader going first is representative of how Jesus, the Son of God – Ultimate Person of the Universe, saluted us, His followers, by giving His whole life for us first.

On top of that, because of the Confession and Absolution that has preceded this moment, "a spiritual tie between pastor and people" has been established "that the Lord alone brings."[4] The forgiveness is not from the pastor personally, but he is the straw through which people slurp up God's gifts. But a unique and special life-giving experience has occurred, just like a doctor utilizing medicine for the sake of their patient; while the medicine stirred the healing process, the doctor was the instrument through which the patient received healing – and that's special!

Worship expert Timothy Maschke explains further that the Christian Salutation replaces the old Hebrew greeting of peace (shalom) with the "Peacegiver Himself." Rather than just wishing peace, we can grant peace from the Prince of Peace, Jesus, to one another. – Pastor Johnson

[4] Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church – Timothy Maschke, 147

Running Commentary

2 John verse 9

"Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."

Notice, it's not about good vibes for Christians. Christians root themselves in the "teaching of Christ." One of my 100-year-old members wrote, "I've learned it is very important to attend church regularly to hear God's word; to attend Bible class and even to learn special Bible verses." You would think that a 100-year-old would "get it." Know all the answers; be able to skip Bible class. But just as a branch becomes dead once it's disconnected from the vine, a person disconnected from the teaching and preaching of Christ will suffocate and, according to John, lose the Father and the Son in the process.

Warm hearts delivering warm meals

On behalf of the approximately 20 households who received delivered meals from Zion's 7th-8th grade Sunday school on Sunday, December 20, thank you!

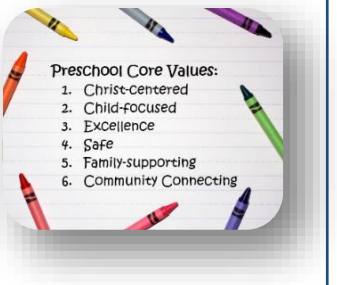
And a big thanks to our parent drivers, Tim Keinast and Jen Morris for organizing the event, and Deb Knueven for preparing the meals!

Preschool Praises for December 2020

We pray that you all had a wonderful Christmas and were able to enjoy time with family one way or another! December was a fun-filled month in preparation of Christmas.

The first week we spoke about winter and hibernation as we read *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. The children loved helping me make the actions and sounds to go along with the story! They practiced their cutting skills and sorting to sort different clothing items into summer vs. winter categories. They also helped me with a present for their parents by posing with some Christmas lights as I took their picture. Jesus Time was about the announcement to Mary by the angel Gabriel that she would be having God's son. It is amazing how God chose an ordinary young woman to carry his son. Pastor told the children about Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and how Jacob tricked his dad into giving him the blessing instead of his brother Esau who would have rightfully gotten it. Esau was so mad that Jacob was afraid for his life and ran away. On the way to his uncle's house he had a dream of angels walking up and down a staircase between heaven and earth and God made a promise to Jacob - He always keeps his promises!

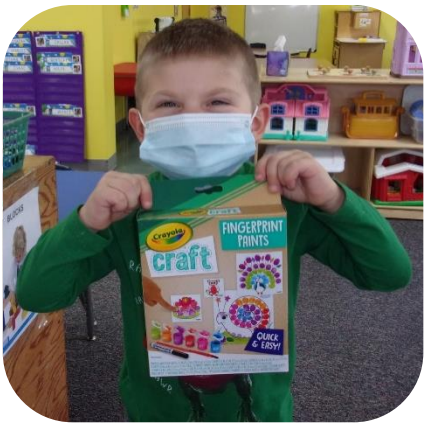
ZION Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

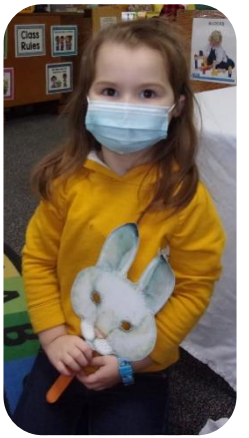


The second week we read and acted out the book *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. The children loved getting to climb into the giant mitten (table covered with a sheet) and then bursting out when the bear sneezed! We practiced their fine motor skills and letter recognition by tracing lines and writing their names. They also got to roll out cinnamon dough and use cookie cutters to make their ornaments. They dried for a few days and then were ready to be painted and strung up on our Christmas tree! Jesus Time was about Joseph and the angel's message to him to wed Mary and take care of her and Jesus once he is born. How amazing to be the earthly father to God's son! Pastor told the children about when the Angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of His son, Jesus! At first Mary was confused because she didn't have a husband, so how could she have a baby? But Gabriel told her that the Holy Spirit was going to make it so that Mary would become pregnant - without an earthly father. Mary was amazed but responded humbly saying," Behold,I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.``

The third week was about Christmas and the reason we celebrate it - Jesus! We talked about candy canes and how they remind us of Jesus. The children did a wonderful job singing for the Facebook video I made and we are so proud of them and all the hard work they did to learn the songs! The children learned that J is for Jesus and made cards for their parents as a present. The last day the children got to frost and decorate their own sugar cookies to eat for snack and then we had a gift exchange where each child brought a gift for a friend. We talked about the birth of Jesus in the stable and the shepherds receiving the news from angels! Pastor spoke to the children even more about how Jesus, the Son of God, was born in a stinky stable and didn't have a nice warm bed to lay in, but a feeding trough for animals! How amazing it is that God came to us in such a humble way and all to save us from our own sin!

Continued on page 11 (pictures on page 10).


craft
FINGERPRINT PAINTS
QUICK & EASY!


Class Rules

As many of you have heard, Janice Nemitz is retiring at the end of this school year after being an integral part of Zion Preschool for 8 years. She helped the preschool get through many challenging times including the unexpected passing of Deb Fink. We thank her for her service to our school, to the children and to God as a partner in our ministry and wish her a very happy retirement! I will also be leaving the preschool at the end of the school year after 5 years of being the director and teacher. It was with a heavy heart that I made the choice to lighten my load so that I can focus more on my family and pet grooming business. I will greatly miss the ministry work of the preschool, the children and their families. I thank you all for your support these last 5 years and pray that you will continue your support for the future teacher and assistant!

The preschool is now accepting applications for Director/ Lead Teacher and Associate Teacher. If you or someone you know has a love for Jesus, education and children please consider joining the Zion Preschool team! Position descriptions and applications are available in the church office.

Again, thank you for all of your support and happy New Year!

Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz

Remember the Preschool Endowment

Food Pantry Manning

Many thanks to our food pantry volunteers! To join the team of volunteers, contact Rhonda Grimm or Sonia Nulle.

If you need food or know someone who does, call New Opportunities in Carroll (ask for RoAnne Kofron): 712-792-9266 ext. 721. Appointments are on Saturday mornings between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.

Darlene Vollstedt, Kay Otto, and Diane Genzen apply expiration date labels on food items.

Education in the Luther Education Building

It is typical here to remove your shoes when entering a house, or a room in a building. My children often remark that they know where I am in our building by where they find my shoes. "Dad's inside; his shoes are sitting there outside the door!"

So when a scene like the one to the right greets us walking past the building's chapel, we know that we have a number of guests who are inside. On this instance (below), it was the second of an eight-session class being taught by the Rev. Dr. Joseph Lu of our partner church in Taiwan, the China Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Dr. Lu is a wonderful partner who lives and works in northern Taiwan, but comes down here to Chiayi once a week to teach his "Introduction to Lutheran Theology" class for people in this part of the country. He chose our facility because it was suited to the purpose, and because he treasures the connection we have between CELC and LCMS and wanted to highlight that fellowship.

This particular class session was dealing with liturgy and worship, and the importance of gathering for corporate worship on Sundays. So he started this class in our Luther Building chapel: he was using the chapel and the layout as a chance to demonstrate why Christians gather corporately, which is primarily to receive from the Lord in His Word and Sacraments. What a joy to be of service to our neighbors in hosting this class, and to have people recognize the utility of what you have allowed us to build here.

It's good to see our facility being used for its intended purpose, even in these days of pandemic, lockdown, and travel restriction. Your LCMS missionaries are generally prohibited from travel these days, not by rules, but by closed borders. All countries in Asia are still closed to tourist travel, but we're busy working in the countries where the Lord has placed us through you, His church. Thank you for the great blessing of being your servants to take the Lord's Word to the people of Asia in general, and of Taiwan in particular.

We are enjoying the Season of Advent here in this place, and the lower temperatures and humidity that come with this time of year. We are gathering for weekly Advent Evening Prayer here in our chapel, which is an opportunity to gather with the teachers of Concordia Middle School, as well as continuing to be an example to our community. God grant us all a joyful Advent, as we celebrate His coming in the past, in the present, and in the future as He has promised.

SERVING THE LORD

ALL OVER ASIA

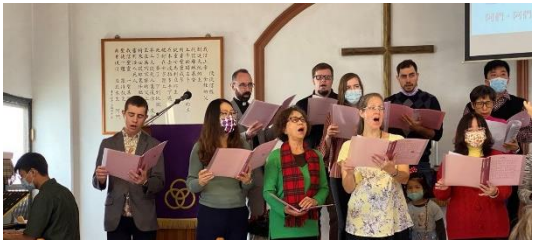
NEWS FROM THE FERRY FAMILY

Advent/Christmas 2020

The big news for the Ferry Family is that we are one member larger! After several painful miscarriages, the Ferry family is excited to announce that we have a new member. Cheryl is currently about five months along, and is due around Easter 2021. The six older Ferry kids are already picking out names and guessing whether they have a new brother or sister! Caleb isn't holding his breath for a fellow brother!

Cheryl's been feeling very good so far, and we plan to deliver here in Chiayi at a local women and children clinic. What a blessing to have good friends here in town, who can help guide us through this experience and ensure that our questions are answered. If all works out well, we are hoping to bring the whole family (with the new little one) back for visits in the USA this coming summer of 2021.

The whole family rejoices at the relationships we are blessed to have in this incredible place called Taiwan. It's been a joy lately to get better acquainted with a young man who grew up in southern Taiwan, and has recently returned to Chiayi after completing college. He's a regular fixture at our local congregation, but is a first-generation Christian: his parents still do not believe in Jesus, and are not excited about him being one, either. So he receives no support from them in his Christian identity.

He gathers with us at least once each week for family devotions and conversation: he helps us with our Chinese, and we bring him into our family. It's a blessing for all of us together. Thank you for allowing us to be of service in this way!

……

Christmas is overall a non-event here in Taiwan, so it's a great opportunity for us as Christians to tell people why we sing, why we celebrate, and why we give gifts. Thank you for your trust, for your partnership, and for your ongoing generosity with your resources and your prayers.

We pray these 12 Days of Christmas are filled with the peace and joy of knowing Christ Jesus has come as promised, in order to live, die, and rise again for you. He has given you the gifts of life and salvation, by the forgiveness of your sins. No matter where the Lord has placed you in your vocations, this is your message to share with those around you. Thank you for allowing us to serve and share in this incredible place.

Yours very gratefully in Christ Jesus,
The Ferry Family
Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, Cassandra, Chloe, Charlotte, and C_____

Zion & Trinity partners with parents to pass down the Christian faith...

LERT meeting 1

Lutheran Early Response Team

Who: open to anyone

When: Feb 1 @ 6:30pm

Where: Trinity-Manilla

Make your Mondays matter

- Our LERT team will focus on disaster response locally, regionally, and, longterm, nationally too. Of course, not everyday is an emergency (thankfully). So we will meet once/month to plan and then engage in helpful projects for residents in Irwin, Aspinwall, Manilla, and Manning. If you're looking for an opportunity to serve with your kid to show them the significance of giving for the sake others, this is a perfect opportunity. If you need more information contact Pastor Johnson @ 660-216-8680 or johnsonan1445@gmail.com

Start the Year Off Right

Have you ever heard the saying "It's okay to look back; just don't stare"? When we think about our past, we have to wonder how we ever got through some of the tough times. It seems easier to remember those tough times instead of the joyous time. I think that is what most people are thinking in regards to the year 2020.

However, it is important to take stock of where you have been and appreciate all of the accomplishments you have made. Here are some questions to ask you to reflect:

1. What went well for me last year?
2. What accomplishments did I have?
3. How did I improve my life?
4. How did I improve my relationships?
5. What did I remove from my life that is now making me happier?
6. What do I wish I had taken more time for?

Ask these questions about all of the important areas of your life, including family, relationships, financial, career, home, etc. These questions will help you to start the New Year off right and set better goals for the next year.

It's important to finish what you started, whatever that might be. Do you have any projects, errands, or general to-do items that you did not do last year? Doing these things will clear your mind of those items and help you to feel that you can take on more. Keeping projects around just weigh on our minds. Some people spend hours thinking about something that will only take 10 minutes to take care of. Cross those things off your list and give yourself a fresh start.

While making plans for the New Year, you must be realistic. While dreaming is fabulous and highly recommended, if you want to accomplish some improvements in your life, you must know that it is achievable. For instance, as a child, you always wanted to become President of the United States. How realistic is that considering the financial commitment and time it would take to campaign? I'm not saying it is impossible. But we must be realistic.

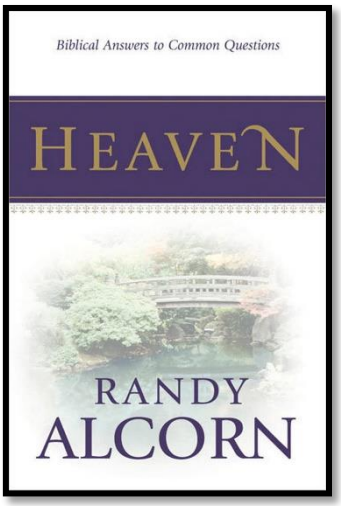
With that said, focus on what you really want. What kind of lifestyle do you really want? Do you picture yourself relaxing with a good book? Then why aren't you doing that now? If you want to travel, what is stopping you? How can you arrange your priorities to accomplish this goal?

Finally, put yourself at the top of the list. Taking care of yourself and striving to reach your own goals will make you a better spouse, friend, child, and parent. We have a far greater impact on those around us than anything we might say. Taking care of your own health and well-being means you will be around a lot longer for your loved ones.

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

RESOURCES

Zion Cares for You!



What will Heaven be like? What will we look like? Will there be animals there? What will we do? Will we remember what happened on earth? These questions and many more are answered in the above booklet *Heaven: Biblical Answers to Common Questions*. It, and many more resources, are available for free in Zion's Resource Center. Take one and share one!

Christian Care and Counseling at Zion!

Zion is excited to share the news: Lutheran Family Service is now providing Christian care and counseling at Zion through Zion's own Amy Hull! See the promotional piece for more!

Meet Your Lutheran Family Service, Christian Counselor!

Amy K. Hull, LISW

Amy is a dedicated Licensed Independent Social Worker providing her 19 years of mental health and marriage counseling expertise to the Manning, IA area. She is trained in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, EMDR, DBT, Marriage Counseling, CISM debriefings and PCIT to help promote change and navigate difficult circumstances that life and relationships bring.

Clients appreciate Amy's ability to help them feel at-ease and confident in finding solutions during their difficult personal circumstance. Her Christian perspective offers a safe place to process difficult issues, and to incorporate faith into the healing process.

Areas of specialty include but not limited to:

- Adults and Adolescents 12+
- Couples and Marriage
- Anxiety and Depression
- Anger and Stress
- Grief and Loss
- Elderly and Life Transitions
- Bipolar and Mood Disorders

Enhanced areas of **training**:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Motivational Interviewing
- Person-Centered Therapy
- EMDR Therapy
- Solution-Focused Therapy
- Pre-marital Counseling
- Marriage Counseling

Most insurance are accepted, and a sliding fee scale is available. People of all walks of life and faith are served through counseling services.

Refer to or contact Amy today:

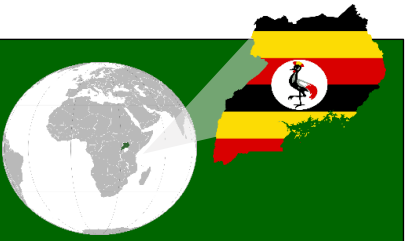
- 515.573.3138
- ahull@lutheranfaimilyservice.org
- www.LutheranFamilyService.org

Lutheran Family Service
For Nothing is Impossible with God

Lutheran Family Service walks with those experiencing difficult times through mental health counseling, marriage counseling, pregnancy counseling, and adoption services. Learn more at www.LutheranFamilyService.org.

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

Winter



Introducing Rev. Mark and Megan Mantey
Serving in Uganda

Dear Pr. Conner and the Saints of Zion,

Greetings in Christ! Megan and I pray that everyone there is having a blessed Advent. Thank you for your continued prayer and support of the Lord's work in Uganda. Megan and I would not be able to serve alongside the Lutheran Church of Uganda, LCU, without your partnership.

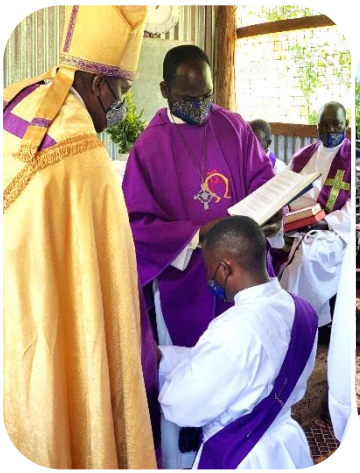
As you know, the COVID pandemic has affected everyone. In Uganda, we have been through many levels of lockdown. Thankfully, in the last 45 days, worship and some in-person education has been reopened. In this difficult time the LCU continues to share God's word and train pastors.

Due to loosening regulations on distancing, a new semester began last month at the Lutheran Theological College Uganda for first and second year students. The LCU's plan is to complete the new semester with intensive study and then start the next semester sometime early in 2021. This would align with the course schedule that has been used in years past. We're thankful God continues to provide avenues for the LCU to train up their workers.

Thank you again for your prayer and support. All of you are a blessing to us and the people of Uganda.

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
http://www.lcms.org



Vicars commissioned for service

Zion's Congregational Servants

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

Board of Elders:
Head Elder: Paul Christensen
Mike Gore, Eric Ramsey,
Dan Stribe, Bob Genzen
Tim Kienast, Nate Blackford

Board of Deacons:
Head Deacon: Larry Mahnke
Ben Booth, Randy Dreher,
Jason Kienast, Chris Greving,
Richard Zinke, Neil Hass

Trustees:
Head Trustee: Kyle Arp
Isaac Grabill,Tyler Bruch
Sam Musfeldt, Nate Jensen

Board of Missions:
Chair: Jean Hargens,
Warren Puck, Lynn Kruse,
Bev Grundmeier
Casie Eischied,

Board of Education:
Chair: Joni Kienast
Shelly Gruhn (Sunday school superintendent)
Robin Heaton (Assistant)
Kathy Vollstedt, Casie Eischeid,
Courtney Eischeid, Jessie Blackford

Preschool Board
Chair: Janet Smith
Jamie England, Courtney Grabill,
Kari Ranniger, Rachel Stoberl

Safety and Security Team
Chair: Jen Morris
Shelly Gruhn, Kyle Arp,
David Bohlmann,
Gary Witt, Chris Greving

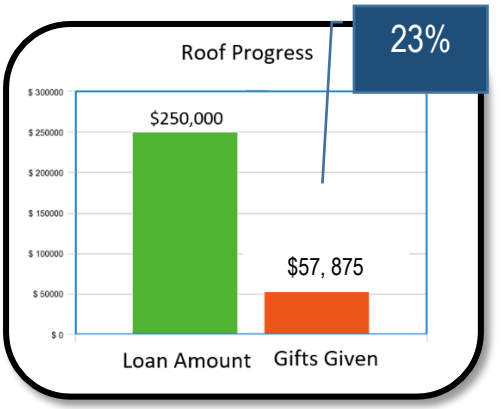
Ladies Guild:
Chair: Audrey Roe

Altar Guild:
Chair: Monica Christensen

Choir:
Director: Dr. Tom Ulrickson

Children's Choirs:
Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp

Please consider making a special gift to the roof or to other ongoing and upcoming mission and ministry expenses at Zion, including technology and facility needs. Ask in the office for a detailed list of giving opportunities. Thank you for your partnership!



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

	January 9	Trinity Voters' Meeting (after worship)
Installation	January 10	Zion Elected officers installed during Divine Service
	January 21	Thursday afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)
CELEBRATION OF GENERATIONS	January 24	Celebration of Generations Sunday at Zion (Life Sunday)
	January 25	Book Club at Trinity (6:00 p.m.)
DISCIPLING EVENT	January 27	Confirmation Discipling Event (Peacemaking as a Christian) (6:00 p.m. meal / 6:30 p.m. session)
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	January 28	Tear out basement carpet at Trinity (6:00 p.m.)

RED LETTER CHALLENGE
COMING TO TRINITY LENT 2021

January Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

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

Anniversaries

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

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

Official Acts

Baptisms:
Keely Genelle Long, daughter of Matthew & Brooke (nee: Kienast) Long; December 5, 2020; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Funerals:
Lois Peters; Died December 8 2020; Funeral December 12, 2020; Pastor Jonathan Conner

In Our Prayers

Carolyn Werner, Jeanne Gruhn, Nancy Grimm, Dewayne Buhr, Ron Schilling, Connie Sorbe (Annette Hilsabeck's mother), Ron Brus, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Natalie Mason (Bruce and Mary Grimm's daughter), Leonard Damman, Margaret Backhaus, John Sonnichsen (Bobby Doyel's Brother in law), Bev Grundmeier, 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)