Mental Health Habits (What You Should be Doing if You Want to be Mentally Well)

Do you want to be well?

This is, perhaps, one of life's most important questions. Answering in the affirmative doesn't mean you will automatically become well; answering in the affirmative means you understand you have agency in your well-being. You have the ability to contribute to your wellbeing. There are things you can (and should) do that will help you be mentally, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually well, and things you probably need to stop doing so that you can be mentally well.

Understanding your agency doesn't deny the reality of events beyond your control. Life will still be pockmarked by freak accidents, surprise diagnoses, and unforeseen events, but appreciating your agency will help you see what you do have control over and what you can do to aim for wellness. Further, it will keep you from adopting a victim mentality that denies personal agency and prevents you from taking action toward improvement and wellness. You need to appreciate that you have agency. While you cannot control your world, you can control your response to it. And this is where we must take action if we want to be well.

Last month we began to explore the book of Proverbs and we made a simple, but critical, point: If you want to be mentally well, do this:

1. Read the book of Proverbs.
2. Do what it says.
3. Repeat.

Did you start?

Do you want to be well?

Wellbeing (whether we're talking about physical, emotional, relational, mental, or spiritual wellbeing) takes work. It takes practice. It requires doing certain things. You don't just get lucky. Physically well people have worked at it. People with strong relationships have worked for them. Spiritually mature people have put in years of practice. John Mark Comer writes in his book *Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus, Become like Him, Do as He Did*,

> Nobody wakes up one morning around age fifty and thinks, *Wow, would you look at that? I became a saint. Weird.* Or *Hmm, it seems I've been living the Sermon on the Mount. I'm increasingly free of all worry, care, judgmentalism, lust, and anger; money no longer has a hold on my heart; I'm no longer run by fear and the need to look good to other people; I feel free; I've been pervaded by love, even love for my enemies. What a nice coincidence* (80-81).

Being well takes work. So, do you want to be well? Are you willing to do the things necessary to be well? Are you willing to do hard things to be well?

I think most of us understand the sort of hard things a person needs to do to be physically well. Physical wellbeing requires discipline in diet, sleep, and exercise. It requires moderation in sweets, intentionality in vegetables and portion sizes, and a large-scale rejection of the ultra-processed foods and sugars that constitute much of American food. It requires going to bed (consistently) at a reasonable time and making time to be physically active. Sadly, most Americans don't choose to be physically well. Because it's hard.

Mentally wellbeing isn't qualitatively different. It too requires hard work. But it's work that you can do, if you want to. So, do you want to be well? Proverbs is a great place to start. As we observed last month,

> Proverbs seats us before a brilliant teacher offering insights on relationships, wealth, spirituality, sex, and so much more. We are invited, even exhorted, to learn from this wise teacher, to think deeply on the instruction given and intentionally to apply it.

Many of you appreciated the wisdom and common sense Charlie Kirk winsomely and wisely shared. Charlie spoke at hundreds of campuses across our country and thousands gathered to hear him. We have a teacher wiser than Charlie in Scripture. Are you willing to learn from him? Let us again turn to our teacher to learn and to practice his wisdom.

The wise teacher says:

> Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
>
> Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise;
>
> when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent. Proverbs 17:27-28

These proverbs are about restraint. There is wisdom in knowing, as the preacher in Ecclesiastes puts it, that there is "a time to keep silence, and a time to speak…" (Ecclesiastes 3:7). The fool does not know these times. Instead, as the wise teacher in Proverbs observes,

> A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. Proverbs 18:2

This is a particular problem in our age. We are a people quick to express our opinion and slow to employ or even desire wisdom. This is made worse by social media. It may be more accurate to call it *opinion media*. While having an opinion is perfectly legitimate, publicly expressing it without first understanding a subject is foolish. Understanding takes time. Understanding requires wisdom, and wisdom does not move at the pace of social media. Wisdom requires reading, thinking, and considering, what the poets have called "the quiet eye," or what we might call "cognitive patience." Social media assassinates cognitive patience. Social media stokes emotions, promotes reactivism, and encourages thinking with your blood pressure. Or, to return to our proverb, social media takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing its opinion.

And if the data on social media and mental distress and instability, anxiety, and relational struggles are even half accurate, we should be ready to do what it takes to work for wellness. There may be a (very limited) place for social media in our lives, but if we want to be well, it must be domesticated and tamed so that we can practice and benefit from understanding and wisdom, understanding and wisdom that are

anchored in a deep reverence and love for God's Word/Truth. The question is: Do you want to be well? If so, are you willing to work for it?

Are you willing to read the Proverbs and do them? Are you willing to meditate on them and practice them? Are you willing to sit with them and walk in them? It won't be easy and it won't be fast. The Proverbs will challenge your opinions. The Proverbs will prescribe life changes. But, do you want to be well? If you do, read the Proverbs, do what they say, and repeat the process.

The wise teacher says:

> If one gives an answer before he hears,
> it is his folly and shame. Proverbs 18:13
>
> The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer,
> but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. Proverbs 15:28
>
> The one who states his case first seems right,
> until the other comes and examines him. Proverbs 18:17

Here the wise teacher exhorts us to listen. Before our mouths speak, our ears need to hear the whole matter. To be a bit more direct, our minds need to focus on understanding what someone is saying instead of immediately planning our response. This may require asking several clarifying and engaging questions before we make a judgment.

Husbands must not cut off their wives to render their opinion; they need to hear all their words (and, yes, there may be many words). Wives feel loved when they feel heard. Parents must not render hasty judgment in disputes among their children; they need to hear all sides of the matter. Children can acknowledge their part in a conflict when their parents have heard their side.

Citizens must not hastily demonize politicians; they need to hear the full matter. Perhaps the politicians voted against something for valid reasons. Perhaps the source that demonized the politicians cherry-picked its information. And perhaps the source chose its cherry-picked information less to inform you of some truth and more to manipulate your blood pressure and your emotion-driven response.

This is especially true on social media! Very rarely can the truth of a matter be encapsulated in a 90 second reel. And very rarely can we adequately understand a matter after reading or watching one post. Wisdom demands that we think before we speak, that we consider before we answer. This may mean that we speak or post less (refer back to our earlier proverbs on restraint!), but pondering how to answer takes time. Are you willing to take the time to understand and to answer well?

Wisdom requires discretion. Discretion requires listening. And these things take time. This should go without saying, but people and relationships characterized by listening and patience tend to be healthier and happier. So, do you want to be well?

1. Read the book of Proverbs.
2. Do what it says.
3. Repeat.

- Pastor Conner

Beating the Summer Heat!

By DCE Kathryn *(and Defend Young Minds Staff)*

July is upon us and with it finding fun ways to entertain the grandkids and children in the heat of summer can prove to be a challenge. While we may fill our schedule with swim team, softball, camping trips and backyard smores other's may turn to indoor activities in the cool of the AC. Family game night, movie nights and more! With that in mind I wanted to pass on an article about online safety I think many families should share and read. It was produced by Defend Young Minds. I have highlighted their work before in books about screen safety, how to protect your kids from pornography and online predators. This latest article from them talks about safety concerns on popular online video gaming such as Roblox and Fortnite. Please read and share with families whose kids may be enjoying these games simply so that parents are aware and equipped with knowledge of who might have access to their child online. This article also gives some excellent retro video gaming ideas that take the online aspect off the table and thus shuts the door to allowing strangers access to your kids while gaming.

Retro Gaming: 5 Smart Reasons to Ditch Roblox and Fortnite

The risks of online gaming, including **predators, porn, and gaming addiction,** grow by the day! These dangers are no match for a child's developing brain. Their "brakes" are just not fully in place. And many online games are designed to exploit that.

Honestly, one of the best pieces of advice we've ever received came from a seasoned mom whose child had been groomed and sexually assaulted. She advised:

> "You'll never regret saying no. But you'll always regret allowing them into a space where harm occurred."

That advice has such weight because the dangers of online gaming are real, and real children are the victims every single day. Here's a quick look at the risks.

The biggest dangers of online gaming for kids

Online games aren't just games anymore. They're *platforms*—and with that come risks every parent should know:

- **Predators in gaming platforms**: Online games are one of the top places predators target kids. Multiple cases of real kids being groomed and exploited began inside popular titles like Roblox and Fortnite.
- **Pornography in games like Roblox:** Even "kid-friendly" platforms can contain sexually explicit content. It's easily found in:
    - explicit avatars
    - roleplay scenarios
    - links sent by other players that lead to pornographic sites or lure kids to off-platform chats
    - sexually explicit ads
- **Addictive game design and lawsuits:** Streaks, in-game purchases, and *persuasive design* keep kids hooked. Several lawsuits now argue that Roblox and other platforms exploit children's psychology for profit.

- **Isolation disguised as connection**: "Multiplayer" usually means kids playing separately, each on their own device.

Games are no longer self-contained experiences—*they're gateways.*

Taken together, these risks make online gaming a minefield for kids. And the wise words once again echo in our ears:

"You'll never regret saying no."

But as parents, we *do* want to say yes sometimes. We want our kids to have fun, relax, and play with friends.

So what's the solution?
Retro gaming!

Retro gaming: A refreshingly simple alternative to online gaming

Retro gaming is making a comeback, and it might be the best parenting hack you haven't tried yet. We're talking about old-school consoles: **NES, Nintendo Wii, GameCube, Sega Genesis, PS2, Super Nintendo**, and more.

If that list makes you want to unplug every device in your house—good news. You can still say *yes* to video games without saying yes to all that risk. Here's what we love about retro gaming.

1. **No online access = no strangers:** Most older systems weren't built for internet play. That means no chat, no DMs, and no risk of random strangers finding your child through a game. **That alone cuts out the biggest safety issue in modern gaming: *If that list makes you want to unplug every device in your house—good news. You can still say yes to video games without saying yes to all that risk. Here's what we love about retro gaming..***

2. **Built for togetherness:** Retro games were made for multiple players to play on one screen, *in the same room*. No extra console. No bringing your own TV. Just hand someone a controller, and you're in.

3. **No porn, no mods, no transactions:** You don't have to worry about your 10-year-old stumbling into adult content. There are no "skins" to buy or gambling-style loot boxes. And no subscriptions! Just the game, as it was originally designed.

4. **You can play too:** If you grew up playing *Mario Kart*, *Donkey Kong Country*, or *Sonic the Hedgehog*, you already know the controls. **Playing with your kids builds connection.** It's a great way to be present.

5. **No addicting algorithm or streaks:** These games don't try to hook your kids into daily logins or addictive upgrades. They were built to be fun, not forever.

Where to start
If retro gaming sounds like the safer "yes" you've been looking for, here are a few great entry points:

- **Nintendo Wii (2006)** – A family favorite for movement-based games like *Wii Sports*, *Mario Kart Wii*, and *Just Dance*. (Note: the later **Wii U** looks similar but added more online features—stick with the original Wii if you want to avoid internet risks.)

- **Super Nintendo / NES Classic Editions** – These mini plug-and-play reissues come preloaded with dozens of classic games and hook easily to modern TVs.

- **Original NES / Super Nintendo** – If you'd rather go authentic, the originals still work great with cartridges (widely available used). There were over 700 NES games, and 1,700 Super Nintendo games officially released, so there's no shortage of variety.

- **PlayStation 2** – Still the best-selling console of all time, with a massive library of multiplayer and family-friendly games. Plus, it plays original PlayStation discs too.

- **Nintendo GameCube** – Known for all-time classics like *Mario Kart: Double Dash!!*, *Super Smash Bros. Melee,* and *Mario Party.*

- **Sega Genesis (or Genesis Mini)** – A nostalgic choice for side-scrollers and 16-bit adventures.

You can often find affordable bundles on **eBay, Facebook Marketplace, Bookmans, garage sales, or local GameStop stores.** I recently saw a 20 game bundle on Ebay for $170. That's only $8.50 per game. Pretty mind blowing considering $70 is the average price for today's video games.

Pro Tip: *Don't forget to pick up an extra controller (or two)! Retro games are at their best when the whole family can join in.*

Beyond the savings and simplicity, **the real win is peace of mind**. And that brings us back to the bigger picture.

A safer yes

Not every child who plays online games will be harmed. But it only takes one moment—one message, one predator—to change everything. And almost every parent who has lived through it says the same heartbreaking words:

> "I thought it was safe. I never thought it would happen to us."

Retro gaming isn't just about nostalgia. It's about protection. It's about fun without the fear. And in today's digital world, that's a rare gift. You'll never regret saying no to danger. But you *will* be glad when you discover a safer way to say yes.

Written by
Defend Young Minds Staff

Resources:

There's still time to join the Same Page Summer Bible Reading Challenge:
You can still join us this summer as we read through the New Testament together in our Summer Reading Challenge. Pick up a copy of the plan in the fellowship hall at Zion. Questions? dcekathryn@gamil.com

Preschool Praises for June

I hope you are having a wonderful start to your summer!
This is the time of the year when preparations take place that help ensure a smooth start to the new school year in the fall. There are many projects on the to-do list including deep cleaning the outside play area, organizing the snack and toy storage areas, making sure our craft supplies are replenished, and preparing lesson plans. Some of our toys and learning supplies have gotten worn out, are missing parts, or have broken, which is to be expected after being played with routinely by 3-year-olds! If you are interested in helping replace some of those items you can view and purchase items off of our Amazon Wish List (https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2XRWPSJ2H96C8?ref_=wl_share). I have also been researching and exploring new resources to add our Bible center in the classroom. Some of those items are included on the Amazon Wish List as well.

Currently we have 22 kids signed up to join us in the fall. We have 2 openings in our afternoon class. Please reach out if you are interested in one of those spots.

Gwen Eischeid, Zion Lutheran Preschool's new Associate Teacher

We have exciting news- the Associate Teacher position has been filled! Gwen Eischeid has accepted the position and I am thrilled to have her be a part of our program. I asked her to share a little about herself and this is what she said:

> "I grew up in Atlantic and am excited to move to Templeton this August! After high school I did some schooling with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and an internship at my church. I love being outside, baking, and spending quality time with loved ones. I'm looking forward to working with the students at the preschool!"

I'm very happy to say that our morning volunteer, Marlene Borkowski (Mrs. B) will be returning to help in the classroom again this year! Our kids love having her in the classroom and are often asking her to read stories and play with them. We are looking for a volunteer for our afternoon class. If you think you or someone you know may be interested please feel free to reach out with any questions you have or for more information.

On a personal note, I am incredibly excited to step into my new role as Director and Lead Teacher here at Zion Lutheran Preschool. I look forward to serving our families and students in this new capacity. My role as the Associate Teacher for the past 4 years has helped make this transition run smoothly.

Thank you for your continued support of our program, we truly couldn't be here without you!

Miss Melanie Enenbach

MIRACULOUS MISSION

JESUS SAVES THE WORLD

Trinity Lutheran Church – Manilla
Vacation Bible School
August 2nd - 5th
5:30-8PM

Register today at
www.myvbs.org/ trinity-manilla2026
or Scan here!

May 29th - Trinity mourns the loss of Vera Vollstedt who died on May 29th and the funeral service was held June 4th

June **13th** - Trinity had 3 new members join us in adult confirmation during our service.

JUNE 2026 @TRINITY

Keeping in step with the Spirit (Pt. 2): Joy

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." – Gal. 5:22-23

We move on from examining love from last month so that we may consider the second fruit of the Spirit; joy.

Much like "love", the word "joy" is also confused and misunderstood (though not as much as "love").

"Joy" is more often confused with "Happiness" which ranges in definition from that of a short burst such as the crack of a joke and laughter to that of a feeling of fulfillment in life. Joy is often used to define happiness as a small portion of what it means to be "happy".

However, Scripture clearly places more emphasis on "Joy" as it receives the second position within the list of the fruits of the Spirit.

"Joy" is derived from the Greek word *chara* which has this range of meaning: "Cheerfulness, having calm delight, gladness, joyfulness, being exceedingly bountiful".

However, these all fall short if we do not first recognize where true joy comes from.

True joy enters into our hearts through the recognition of God's grace for us. In this way, joy is supernatural coming to us from God Himself.

Let me explain this.

Jesus teaches in John 15:1-11 when He says, "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches… apart from Me you can do nothing."

It is important to see that the connection to the vine is so crucial.

Jesus is the vine and He calls us the branches who can do nothing apart from abiding (which means "living/remaining/staying") in Him.

And when you remain connected to the vine which is Christ, you will be like a branch receiving the nutrition from the root and from the stem.

If you are no longer abiding in Him, this means you are no longer living the faith, remaining in the Word, or even staying in the places where Jesus, the Vine, may be found such as the weekly worship service, then you will not receive what you need to grow. Instead, you will begin to wither, you will break off from the vine, and, like sticks in the yard, you will be gathered and thrown into the fire.

Indeed, a stick on the ground is helpless on its own to grow anew, and so it is either thrown out or burned. This is what those who are not connected to the vine will receive if they do not turn and believe and are once more grafted into the tree as new and living branches.

Jesus teaches in this way saying, "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

This is all about what joy is. It comes from receiving the nourishment of a branch from the vine. Joy comes when fruit is produced and we prove to be disciples of Jesus.

Joy flows from the love of the God for us that we, by the death and resurrection of Jesus and by the perfect plan and purpose of God are now called His children.

This means that joy is something which cannot be taken from us.

Joy cannot be taken from us because it comes from a place this world cannot reach, and joy would continue to be out of reach for us if the Son of God Himself, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, had not brought this joy to us.

Christ was sent from the Father, took on our flesh, suffered, died, rose, ascended, and sent His Spirit at Pentecost.

Now, by faith, He joins us to Himself, the vine. From which vine, life flows into the branches. His joy becoming our joy.

Many gifts flow from this fountain which are like lesser joys or may the mist coming off of the spring of water welling us to eternal life.

These lesser joys in this life include: food, friendship, laughter, music, having good work to do, spending time with your children, having a loving marriage, enjoying community and fellowship with others, and things like these. They are gifts misting our faces from the fountain which is Christ Jesus.

If we attempt to make these lesser gifts the fountain and source of our joys, then they will be crushed under the weight of our expectations.
And those crushed joys will let us down.

Only God can bear the weight of our expectations for joy.

Joy is the answer to the deep longing within you of an unsatisfied desire which you so often feel and cannot attain.

Joy is not childish or unserious.

It is not an escape from reality.

Joy is reality healed.

Joy is like a secret that others cannot quite wrap their minds around.

It is the secret response of a Christian struggling through grief or suffering or life circumstances which would break most.

It is the safeguard of a heart connected like a branch to the vine of Jesus.

This same Jesus, **"**who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross…" shows us the way in which we should take up our cross with joy and follow Him.

The suffering of Jesus was real, but the joy was greater.

The joy before Him outweighed the shame, pain, mockery, nails, blood, and even death.

And this is the joy which Jesus is telling His disciples about in the parable of the vine and the branches when He says, "I have spoken these things that My joy may be in you."

Jesus doesn't simply tell us this story so that we may have simple joy, nor that we may feel better, nor that our circumstances may always improve, but His response is that His kind of joy may be in you.

His kind of joy is that which keeps the Christian standing firm even when the world would try to tear them down.

His kind of joy is that which cannot be broken by weather patterns, natural disaster, bank accounts, public approval, bodily health, political stability, or the behavior and influences of others.

Christian joy is rooted in Christ Himself.

And if you are in Christ, then your life has been grafted into something that death cannot kill.

This is why Paul and Silas would sing in prison. This is why the martyr, Stephen, prayed for those who were about to stone him. This is why the apostles rejoiced after being beaten.

They were not pretending the pain didn't hurt. They were not calling the evil they had received "good".

They had simply been joined to a life that suffering and death could not conquer.

And so, we are also joined to this life of joy in Christ.

Though often, we think joy can only come when life settles down, once the kids grow up and are easier to handle, once work slows down, once money is less tight, once this storm of life passes by.

But, when Jesus had spoken those words of vine and branches, He was speaking to them in the upper room on the same night in which He was betrayed and the day before He was to be crucified.

He knew the suffering and hardships before Himself, but, in the midst of this, He gives us Himself that we might be made partakers of the joys of heaven.

We also tend to cling to those lesser joys and make them the ultimate fountain of joy. But those things also begin to sour because the branch cannot draw life from the fruit. The branch must draw life from the vine, which is Christ.

And this leads us to acknowledge that we also forget to abide in Christ. We want joy without remaining in Him. We want fruit without the vine. However, the command of Jesus is simple and clear, "Abide in Me."

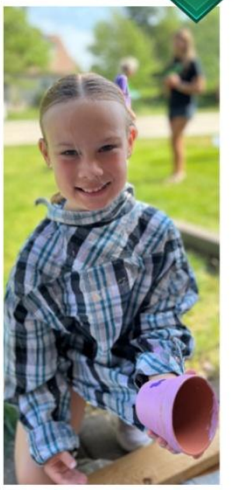
Remain in His Word. Return to prayer. Hear His promises. Receive His body and blood. Confess your sins. Let His Word prune away what is death in you and strengthen what is weak.

The second fruit of the Spirit is not the shallow joy of distraction. It is not the thin joy of smiling through the pain.

The fruit of the Spirit is the lasting joy of heaven.

This joy can endure the storm because it is grafted into the One who has already passed through death and came out the other side.
– Pastor Staehr

Zion Lutheran VBS 2026



VBS Volunteers/Workers 2026

!AMIGOS EN CRISTO and GRACIA!

News from ***Las Iglesias Evangélicas Luteranas***

Amigos en Cristo in Denison and Gracia in Storm Lake

Pastor Pedro Lopez

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! During this Pentecost season, I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk of faith. We give thanks to the Lord for the many ways He continues to bless our ministry.

At St. John in Storm Lake, we continue supporting the Swaddling Clothes program on the second Saturday of each month. By doing this, we have the opportunity to invite families to our Sunday worship service at Grace. Home Bible studies with families continue—it is such a blessing to share time together in God's Word. We continue working with a family that we met during our ESL class in Deloit. I was honored to be asked to take part in her Quinceañera, where I shared the Word of God with her, her family, and friends—about 100 people.

We are excited to share that we will join St. Paul Lutheran Church and the sister churches in Council Bluffs in their effort to reach out to the Hispanic community. St. Paul's Church has opened their Learning Center location for us to use for Hispanic ministry. We met with the pastors and a group of future volunteers on Wednesday, May 13. We are super excited about this new outreach and will keep you updated on dates.

At St. Paul Carroll ESL, the last day of class was June 9th. We thank our teacher volunteers who work hard to teach our students. One of our teachers had the wonderful idea of teaching while volunteering to do some yard work at the church. We had two new students, Angelo and Clemencia, who were faithful in attending class. We have advertised the basic guitar lessons but have not had anyone join. Our Saturday evenings of praise, prayer, and Bible study remain a meaningful time together, and we continue to enjoy our monthly fellowship gatherings as well.

Thank you for continuing to remember our Hispanic ministries and the communities we serve in your prayers. Your faithful support is a great encouragement, and we give thanks to the Lord for each of you. I also ask for prayer on our new plan to work at Council Bluffs - for the new contacts we are meeting so that the Lord brings them in close relationship with him. And, as always, your continued prayers for my wife and me, that the Lord would graciously guide, strengthen, and equip us for the work He has entrusted to us.

Bendiciones, Pastor Pedro Lopez

Rev. Pedro Lopez, Asst. to the President
Missionary at Large, pedro@iowadistrictwest.org,
571-606-7600

Harrison elected to sixth term as LCMS president

This article is from The Reporter, *the official newspaper of the LCMS (see reporter.lcms.org)*

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, having received more than 50% of the votes cast in the third ballot for the election of the president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), is the president-elect for the 2026–2029 triennium. It will be his sixth term in office.

The election for the position of Synod president began last fall with an online nominating process, conducted by YesElections, that concluded Feb. 18, or five months prior to the start of the Synod convention, with a report to the secretary of the Synod.

The resulting candidates for the office of president were the five ordained ministers who received the highest number of votes in the nominations process and who consented to serve if elected. The voting began, according to Bylaw 3.12.2.4, starting June 6 (six weeks prior to the convention) via Internet balloting provided by YesElections.

The 5,478 pastoral and lay voters validly registered by the congregations and parishes of the Synod (Bylaw 3.12.2.3) before the deadline (electronic registration by March 8) or their substitutes (as validly submitted before May 29) served as the voters for this election. Of those, a total of 5,038 votes were cast in the third round of voting, constituting a vote percentage of 92.0% of the electorate. (The voter percentage was 85.4% in the first round and 88.4% in the second round.)

The results of the third ballot tallied and reported to the secretary of the Synod by YesElections are as follows:

- Harrison was voted president-elect with 2,524 votes (50.1%);
- The Rev. Dr. Joel D. Biermann received 2,414 votes (47.9%); and
- The Rev. Benjamin T. Ball received 100 votes (2.0%).

Harrison responded to the news of his election:

> First, thank you to the candidates who were willing to be subjected to this grueling process of public scrutiny, and especially to Dr. Biermann. I had prepared a concession speech thanking Joel for standing, noting how blessed we are in the LCMS to have such a capable theologian as our new president, and vowing my support. Thanks, too, to First Vice-President Lange, Brady Finnern and Ben Ball. Any one of them would be a blessing.
>
> Thank you for this amazing opportunity to serve a final term. Please forgive me my many faults and sins. I plead for your prayers for fidelity to the Gospel of Christ's blood-bought forgiveness, and prayers that I may serve all of you as Christ would have me do in these final three years.
>
> "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Heb. 13:20–21)

For more information about the election or candidates, see lcms.org/convention/elections. The 69th Regular Convention of the LCMS will take place July 18–23 at the Phoenix Convention Center under theme "Christ Is Risen Indeed."

Get equipped to be a voice for life.

Celebrate Life!

Learning Session:
Iowa Senator Jason Schultz
Life and the Governing Authorities

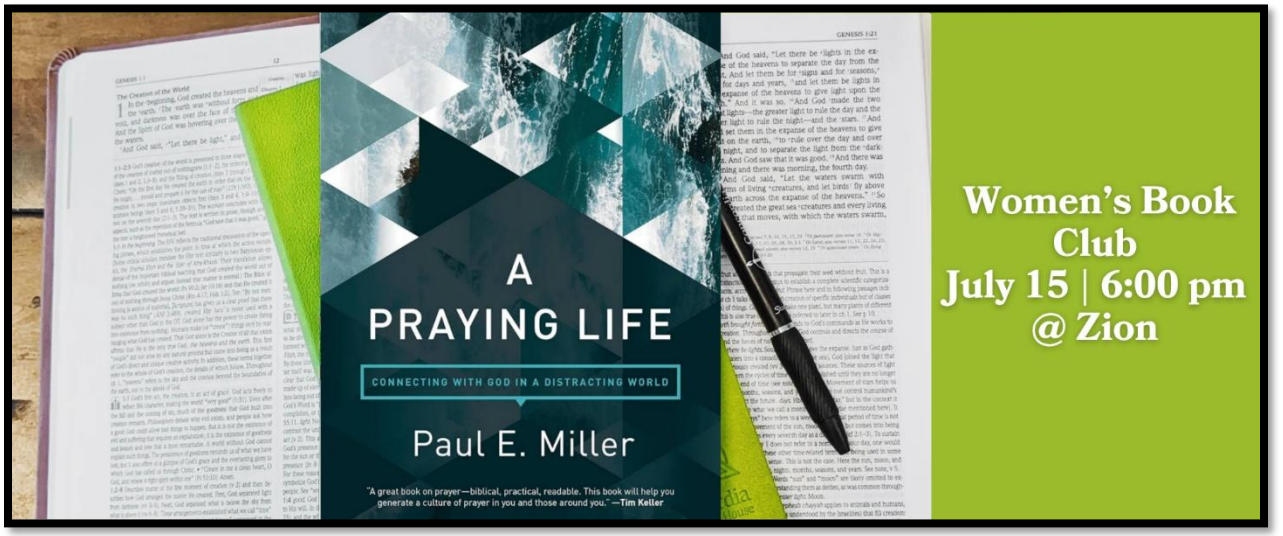
Thurs. July 9 @ 6:30 p.m.
Manning Library

HYMNS OF THE SEASON

Three Hymns (30 Mins.)
Season: **Season after Pentecost**
Tuesday, July 7
@ 6:30 p.m. @ Zion

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

Sing and celebrate the hymns of the season!
An informal, family devotion setting. All invited!



Ladies Guild Minutes for June

The June 10, 2026, mtg. was held, with Pastor Conner reading from Proverbs 18, followed by discussion. Nancy called the mtg. to order in the name of the triune God with the league pledge read. Birthdays and Anniversaries were read. Secretary reports were read and approved. Correspondence read. Mite box prayer read with the mite box passed. Financials were available for review. Audrey Roe read from the 100 Bible, which is what made America. Exodus35.21.

Old Business: June convention donations. Paula V. made a motion to do four $25.00 donations, seconded by Linda V. Passed with all in favor. Karen wrote the checks for Linnet to take to the convention. Joni K. is requesting cookies and workers for the cookie walk at Kindersfest. Audrey talked about the use of Thrivent cards. If you have two cards for one order, she has to call them directly to get that to go through with the store you are ordering from.

New Business: Mike Bruch's family gave a donation to the kitchen for those who donated bars for the lunch at the Huasbarn. Blood drive being held at Sacred Heart Church on June 19th.

11 members present. Mtg. adjourned. Lunch served by Cynthia Genzen. Next mtg: July 8th

HISTORIC TRINITY SUMMER SERIES

6:30 pm

"EXHAUSTED? REST."

June 25th	"A Look into Anxiety"
July 23rd	"True Rest in Christ"
August 27th	"The Gift of Limitations"

THANK YOU!

We cannot thank everyone enough who helped make VBS a huge success! 231 kids registered and our biggest day hosted 220 kids in person with 92 volunteers helping teach all about the life of David and our Good Shepherd & Savior Jesus Christ! Thank you to everyone who helped before, during and after VBS. We could not have done this without you, and because of you well over 200 children heard the Good News that is only found in Christ Jesus! You have made eternal impacts and shared the love of Christ! Thank you so very much!!

-VBS Co-directors Kimber, Shannon & DCE Kathryn

Roof Loan (20 year note)
Beginning balance: $350,000

Special gifts to the roof are welcome!

The sooner we pay it off, the more resources we have to invest in the mission and ministry.

CFO Update

Balance of loan at the end of May is $217,700

CFO update:
Thru May Budget income total is $196,003.29
Thru May Budget expences total is $193,090.60
Total overage thur May is $2,912.69
This overage comes from the fact that Council has held back not sending payment to LFS, Camp Okoboji, and Zion preschool.

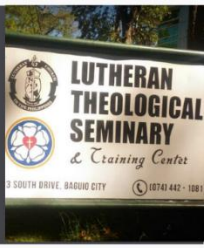
Estimated monthly budget income needed $41,670 five month total should be at or above $208,350. May income helped get us closer to the monthly cash flow needs.

The council decided at the June meeting to do some repairs to the water leak issue at the front of the Nave. The repairs consist of replacing some flashing around the circular portion and the parapet wall at the front of the Nave. It was discovered that this flashing wasn't replaced at the time of the installation of the Decra shingled roof. The council is very hopefull that this should fix the current leaking issue. The good news is that a total roof replacement of the Nave portion will not be needed at this time. To pay for these repairs it was deciced to use some of the extra cash reserves that has been built up from coming in under budget needs for the last several years. By using these extra cash funds a portion of the coushion and cash flow can become extra tight in the coming months. As I stated in last month's comments the council is still looking into cost of replacing windows in the education wing. We will keep you informed of those costs in the coming months. This continues to be challenging discussions because our budget income shortage. I pray and engorage your support on all these nessary building repairs.

REV. DR. WALTER & ROBYN STEELE

STEELES IN MISSION

MAY/JUNE
2026



PREACHING CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE WORK

The two topics I was asked to present concern faithful preaching of the Word of God. Too often, preaching either fails to teach what the Scriptures are saying, or the message focuses on us rather than on Christ.

To address this, my first presentation was "Preaching the Redemptive Words and Works of Christ." It is essential that the redemption Christ has accomplished by his cross and resurrection be made clear. This is the task given to the preacher. The second essay was related, dealing with properly preaching Law and Gospel, not only to bring hearers to faith, but also to properly instruct them in good works, without confusing Law and Gospel.

In Christ,
Walter

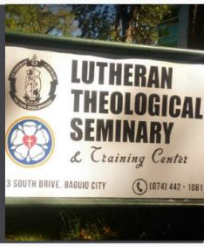
One of the unique aspects of life in The Philippines is the Jeepney. These vehicles, used for public transportation, provide a costeffective way for the average Filipino to get around. After the end of World War II, the US Military left behind jeeps. The industrious Filipinos saw an opportunity. They used the chassis, stretched them out, and created these vehicles. Being lovers of color, they decorated them in various patterns, Thus the Jeepney was born. These are one of the things that makes this country unique. They are truly a symbol of these people whom the Lord has called us to serve.

THE FAMOUS JEEPNEY

REV. DR. WALTER & ROBYN STEELE

STEELES IN MISSION

MAY/JUNE
2026



Church Relations Conference

The mission work here in the Asia Region is quite varied. During a break in the classes at The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Baguio, I traveled to South Korea to present two essays to the leadership and clergy of the Lutheran Church of Korea. The three-day event included discussions with the president and other leaders of the church body as well as two days of presentations to the pastors.

This conference was planned by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Church Relations staff, headed by Dr. Jonathan Shaw and Rev. Michael Frese. The goal of our time together was to assist the Korean Church in strengthening their Confessional Lutheran identity, so they can faithfully preach the Gospel of the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. The fruit of this will be strong congregations which boldly proclaim the truth.

Our mission work is multiplied when the various departments of our Synod collaborate to accomplish the work the Lord has given his Church to do. Thank you for being a part of this. This is your mission as well.

In Christ,
Walter
Walter.Steele@LCMS.org

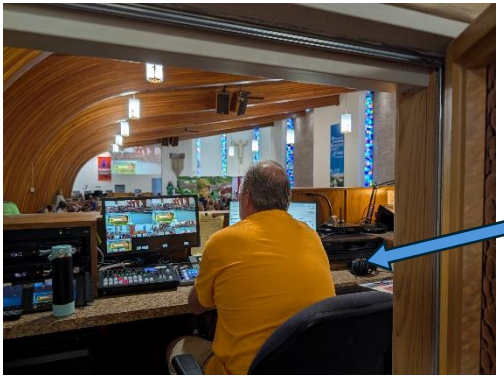
Snapshots of Zion

Children enjoy Zion's cookie walk at Kinderfest.

Lucas and Andrea S., with daughter Kayla, celebrate their son Chase's Baptism.

Zion members carry the Celebrate Life banner and walk in the Kinderfest parade.

Children stream into Zion at VBS.

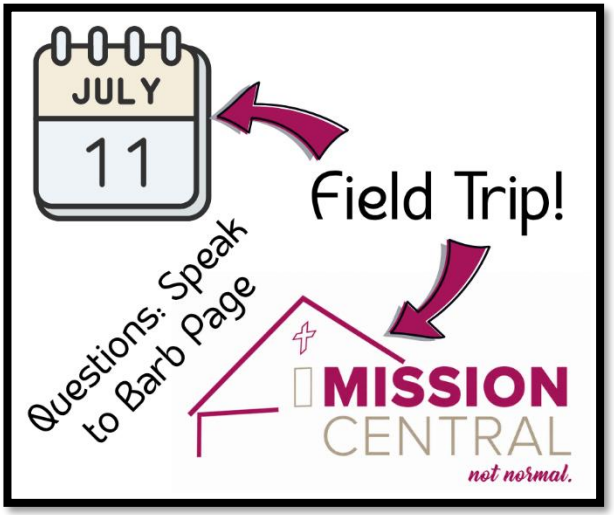


Bob G. deftly manages the audio/visual booth for Zion during VBS.

Upcoming Events @ ZION & TRINITY

Please Note! All times and events are subject to change

	Bible Study	**Sunday mornings @ Zion following worship (Digging into the Word: The Gospel According to Matthew)**
	July 7	**Hymns of the Season at Zion (6:30 p.m.)**
	July 9	**Celebrate Life Meeting (6:30 p.m.) at Manning Library**
	July 15	**Women's Book Club at Zion at Zion (6:00 p.m.)**
	July 16	**Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)**
	July 23	**Historic Trinity Summer Service (6:30 p.m.)**



July Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Nathan Jensen
   Keely Loing
2. Becki Ehlers
   Brenna Hodne
   Jessica Soll
3. Landry Wiig
4. Mallory Weitl
5. Chelsea Page
6. Janet Smith
7. Lisa Drier
   Taylor Potthoff
   Hunter Smith
8. Jaidee Porter
   Matthew Weitl
9. Brynli Blackwell
   Reid Neumann
11. Olivia Beck
    Jax Greving
    Jason Kienast
    Jessica Kurth
    Hallie Steckelberg (T)
    Jordan Weller
12. Trisha Hugeback
    Casey Karsten (T)
    Elsie Kienast
    Scott Rosener
    Clark Tibben
13. Arlene Bald
    Jason Ferry (T)
    Kara Havick
    Dereck Hilsabeck
    Emma Martin (T)
14. Stephanie Ahrenholtz
    Gregory Conner
    Bary Kienast
    Duane Monson
15. Ben Lorenzen
    Jesse Weitl
16. Dean Genzen
    Beckett Lorenzen
    Lucy Riesselman
17. Brock Jensen
    Dacia Stoeckel
18. Joni Kienast
    Andrea Morrison (T)
19. Bob Genzen
    Brad Otto
    Rebecca Salter
20. Morgan Bruck
21. Louise Bruhn
    Kaylee Martin
    Kenny Steckelburg (T)
22. James Karsten
    Axsel Olson (T)
    Christopher Smith
    Alle Stoeckel
23. Denise Christensen
    Jill Saunders
24. Sophie Alexander
25. Nick Woebke (T)
26. Grant Lahr (T)
    Susan Schilling
27. Kevin Brus
28. Bricy Lorenzen (T)
    Adam Vollstedt
30. Doug Havick
    Kathy Lage
    Karsyn Lorenzen
    Howard Roe
    Natasha Schultes
31. Markus Neumann
    Lyle Ranniger

Anniversaries

1. Randy & Crystal Dreher
3. Warren & Sue Puck
4. Nate & Jessie Blackford
5. Dennis & Michaela Chapman
8. Brian & Kathy Lage
9. Dan & Cheryl Kerkoff
12. Craig & Debbie Musfeldt
14. Scott & Lauren Opperman
16. Doug & Kate Greving
    Todd & Shelly Gruhn
18. Scott & Beth Stribe
24. Gale & Linda Vinke
25. Patrick & Teresa Houghteling
    Pastor Robert & Diane Riggert
27. Nick & Kristin Woebke (T)
29. Pastor Jonathan & Rebecca Conner
    Eric & Jodi Ramsey
31. Steve & Holly Borkowski
    Chris & Mary Greving

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

Official Acts

Baptism:
Chase Alan Schwery, son of Lucas & Andrea (Nulle) Schwery, June 21, 2026, Pastor Jonathan Conner

Funeral:
Ronald James Soll; Died June 18, 2026; Funeral June 23, 2026; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Marriage:
Robert Nathaniel Fisher and Carah Rose Drees; June 27, 2026; Pastor Robert Riggert

In Our Prayers

Gene Mahnke, Gary & Joyce Schroeder, Martin Wanninger, Darlene Vollstedt, Mary Olson (Shelly Gruhn's mom), Carol French, Jim Asmus, Athena Bess, Kaui Meyer, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Sherri Steffes, Judy Reinke (Ernie's sister-in-law), Karen Vollstedt, Stacey Rolenz, Ashley Myers (daughters of Shelly Helmich), Robert Behrens (Dad of Dan Behrens), Jana Stock (Jessica Schellhorn's sister), Sara Jackson