

Looking Up | Reaching Out



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Campus Ministry

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A young couple visited Zion and gradually became regular in worship. After a few months we sat down for a visit and they told me they were new to town, looking for a place to get married, and felt comfortable worshipping at Zion. They remarked about how friendly the people were to them and that convinced them this was where they wanted to join. During our premarital counseling sessions, we talked about their faith life. The young man told me he had never been baptized. His parents had never taken him to church, even though they had grown up in the Church. When I asked “why,” he said they told him “they wanted him to be able make his own choice when he was an adult.” Whatever their reasons really were, he shared how painful this was as he realized how much he had missed. He said that now that he had learned so much about God’s love for him, he didn’t understand why his Mom and Dad felt it wasn’t important enough to share with their son. He said, “over these past several years I have learned how much I have missed.” By saying faith was not important enough to share, his parents had made a decision for him, that he resented and harbored much pain over. Even sitting on a fence is making a choice, and that choice is to pretend that there is nothing on either side of the fence. For anyone to have heard the Good News, and allow their own convenience or schedules to keep others from hearing that same Good News is a delicate dance step to justify. I agree that faith in Christ is a choice and shouldn’t be forced on anyone, but just as we tell our kids not to touch a hot stove or play in the street, it only makes sense to let them know that God’s love is part of their lives. If we don’t take the time to share Christ, who will? We live in a culture where more and more young people have not grown up with an awareness of a loving God, and a healthy relationship with other Christians. This young man was baptized and we spent a lot of time working on his need to forgive his parents. Even more rewarding was the day when he started bringing them to worship. (What do you think about that?) Blessings! Pastor Seeber

WHAT ARE WE LEARNING THESE DAYS?

First of all, we are not in control of as much as we thought, or would like. Fear comes easily and peace can be difficult when we are confronted with situations without clear understanding. At times such as this, it is even more important to lean on what we do know and who we can trust. That would be a loving and creative God. Unlike the panic caused by the temptations of Satan, God brings peace even when there is upheaval and confusion all around us. It is difficult to admit that we are not God, but once we do, faith makes us even stronger.

Secondly, life has changed. Just as Vietnam, the assassinations of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, a Moon landing, and 9/11 will never be forgotten and have changed our culture in significant ways, so will this present upheaval caused by COVID 19. Already, all of us have adopted new habits. Those which are based on faith, good time management, hygiene, and health will be helpful. The habits born out of fear and cynicism will not breed anything useful. Even when life changes, God does not. God is faithful and true to his promises and the peace that passes any understanding is a gift that is different than anything the world can offer. Life has changed. Faith has not!

Thirdly, our life as a congregation will be different, but only you will be a part of determining what that will mean. We are all formed by the situations of our lives and you must decide how our recent traumatic upheavals and fears will shape you. Will you be formed by the fears of life, or reformed by the ever creative love of a God of grace? The only certainty in life is death, and that is what has been the greatest fear over the past month. We will celebrate Easter soon after you read this, and wherever or however that celebration occurs, let its Good News be the Good News of how you live each day!

We have been experimenting with more use

of technology to support our spiritual growth and keep the Zion family united even as we are separated. To that end, please make certain that we have updated cell phone numbers and email addresses so that we can better and more quickly reach out with information and support.

“Like” us on Facebook, so you receive the information and feeds which we send out, which might include live-streams or recorded devotions and worship. Become familiar with our website (zionkazoo.org) and check it regularly for the resources it contains and the announcements and schedules we share.

Finances are always an issue, and just a few weeks with everyone gone has created a big challenge in paying bills and supporting our ministry. We know that you will all get us back on track quickly, but your immediate help (even by mail) will keep us from having to talk too much about this.

“Excel in Giving” is the automated giving program that our Michigan Lutheran Churches offer. The Church Extension Fund helps support the maintenance costs, and you can enroll through the church office or online (we can send you the details) so that your weekly or monthly offerings can be directly deducted from your checking or debit accounts or charged to your credit card. This is a safe system and provides a steady rhythm of support to our ministry. Call the office or our Bookkeeper, Monica, for more details or explanation.

Finally, pray without ceasing. Worship when you are able. Read scripture and the many devotionals available. Care for those whom you can help. When we are together again, I am certain none of us will ever take the warmth of a joyful and loving Christian community for granted. We can't wait for everyone to be back and our ministry to keep growing. Blessings and peace!

COME HOME for EASTER!

This year's Easter will be very different than any other. But in the most important way, it will be the same! A congregation is the earthly home preparing us for a heavenly home. Zion is where we get a taste of God's home cooking and welcoming love. Like our regular home, it is where the family hangs out.

You are always welcome at Zion! We mean it! And we must be as welcoming to others as we enjoy being welcomed ourselves. That means to give and receive. To forgive and be forgiven. It is no different than how a family seeks such actions to flavor home life.

Last month we talked about seeing Zion as our home base. A HOME for people of faith. It is where we baptize, marry, bury, and live out our lives as a faith family. It is a home big enough for an extended family, and friends of all shapes and sizes. We pray together, we eat together, we fellowship together, we grow in faith together. This is a family place!

Our goal is that everyone will feel welcomed at Zion, and that together we will learn to better welcome everyone else, as well!

Come HOME FOR EASTER! Yes, YOU! (And it will be great if the restrictions are over by then!) For this is one of those special days when nothing matters but family. The family Christ has made gathers on this most important day to celebrate new life!

There is no more joyful moment in our lives than the day we celebrate how death has been destroyed and all of God's children have been cleared to be welcomed home. And even if we celebrate Easter differently this year, that still is what this day is about!

Just as families can be taken for granted, the same can happen in a place like Zion. It is tempting, at times, to just go through the motions or forget the gift of a "faith home." It

takes work to make a real home, and we need your help in shaping Zion!

This year we have been forced away. But sometimes people wander away. Feelings can be hurt. Disappointments can change one's perspective. And absence can distort memories or leave a dull ache. Just like happens in "the real world." None of us are perfect and all of us have hurt others and been hurt. And that is why Jesus came to change what we cannot!

Easter is all about forgiveness, new life, and the gift of peace. What better word is there to express that love than "WELCOME?" The Church "home" is the best place for each of us to be changed by the forgiving and reconciling love of Jesus. This is where we come for healing for hope and for peace — especially when we are feeling none of that in our lives. And it is the place to be when everything is coming up roses, for this is where we remember to thank God for all that we don't deserve but are given by grace.

That is why HOME matters, and the spiritual food that is served here, and the forgiving love that is shared, and the fellowship of this family are all gifts of God's love. He gathers us together and is with us when we are together or away from each other.

This Easter, we want to go out of our way to make sure everyone knows that Easter is the "welcome home" that trumps any human frailty or fear. Easter is more than colored eggs and chocolate bunnies. This is the day when Jesus climbed out of the place of death and opened his arms to all of us with the invitation to "come home!"

COME HOME FOR EASTER! The singing, the prayers, the meal of communion, and the fellowship will be made even more joyful if much of our family comes home. And remember, there is always room for more! Come celebrate God's "Welcome Home!"

Catechism Review — Lord's Prayer (part 3) "Your Kingdom Come"

When Abby was three, she controlled a vast kingdom. With crayons she would draw the way she saw her world. She named stuffed animals and decided whether they would sit close to her or were banished to the closet! She controlled conversations with dolls, and decided if our family room would be a classroom or a magic kingdom. She truly was master of her kingdom.

As we pray "your kingdom come," we aren't thinking about 3 year olds, but maybe we should be! Innocently, they reveal what we think we can hide. We seek to control many kingdoms (health and wealth, vocation and recreation, even family and friends. Our goal is to control life, and when we fail, we complain about how "unfair" life is. In truth, this is our attempt to control God. To define God by what we want, need, or deserve. This is our effort to bring God into the borders of our "earthly kingdom."

Luther said, *"of course! The kingdom of God comes of itself, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us also."* Jesus teaches us to pray by saying, *"Dear Father, may YOUR kingdom be the one I want to live in!"* (That is crucial because we want "our "kingdom to become God's.) Listen closely to the words -- *"Dear Father in heaven, may YOUR kingdom come TO ME!"*

God has created a kingdom of faith, hope, and love. In these words we ask God to help us see it and live in it, and quit trying to make His kingdom look like ours. These simple words remind that we are talking to God about his world, his plan, and our role in it. They remind that God is beyond our control – He will be God and He will do "God-stuff," whether we understand how or not. God will be God whether we vote for him to be so or not. When we know the playing field, the rules,

and decide to join in, we are ready to enjoy life and celebrate God's love.

Our first family dog, Nike, is still sorely missed. One of her unique qualities was that she knew the boundaries of our yard. I don't know how she did it, because we never had a fence, but she knew where her "kingdom" ended and the next ones began. Because she knew where she lived, there wasn't a need for any fence or chain – and she was free to live within the freedom of that kingdom that we shared.

Part of growing up is figuring out who is in charge of the kingdom, and temper tantrums of little children are all about testing those waters. (And what a painful struggle that can be! No matter how long or intense, there always comes a point when the initial reason for the tantrum is forgotten, but the child has invested so much energy that the chain reaction can't be stopped. A parent can out scream and out yell and threaten, but the tantrum will only grow more out of control.

But, when Mom or Dad can finally distract their little angel from such devilish behavior, and get close enough to wipe a tear and give the hug of love, the moment is blessed with the element of "grace." And when love again is the focus, a smile will usually shine from behind the clouds of tears. In that moment, whether stated or not, a child's true feelings are, "thanks for helping me stop the madness, because I had no clue how to make the crying end." Love does that.

Jesus teaches us the same thing with this prayer! The simple words "YOUR Kingdom" distract us from the selfish fears and dreams of making or losing the worlds of our imagination and desires. "Your kingdom" stops us in our tracks, and whatever we ask for or thank for next, our tantrum is over and God's love colors and interprets whatever we say or hear next. May we learn from this prayer and pray to live in this love. His kingdom it is!

Worship Help for Parents and Children

While there is a tendency to look for "new" ways to worship, our liturgy always brings us to a familiar pattern and place that has served Christians well and lifts up the "basics." This month we focus on:

"Prayers and Hymns"

For Dads and Moms and other adults:

PRAYERS are a special time of communion with God. Prayer is literally a "surrender" to God. The **Prayer of the Day** is based on the readings for each Sunday, and introduces us to the theme of "today's worship." The **Prayer of the Church** is our opportunity to join with Christians everywhere in sharing joys and sorrows with God. This is our response to the Sermon, and reminds that God listens to all of his children and cares about all of our needs. The **Offering Prayer** is said after we bring our gifts to God, and prepares us for God's healing touch in His gifts of bread and wine. The **Lord's Prayer** is Jesus' gift to teach us how to pray. By saying the same words He did, we are tied closely to his love!

Silent Prayer is always a personal time for you to open your hearts, and join in communion with the God who loves you so much. In the front of the hymnal, you can find the Prayer of the Day AND individual prayers for special needs, situations, or times when you need guidance in "how" to pray.

Hymns are prayers set to music! An index in the back of the hymnal lists them by themes as well as title or tune. Hymns allow us to express the emotions of faith, and teach us about faith, as many texts are mini-sermons based on scripture. Be bold in your praying and your singing, as these are gifts that connect you with God and God with you! Hymns are chosen to fit the seasons of the church year or the theme of worship. The **Opening Hymn** is usually a hymn of praise or celebration. The **Sermon Hymn** is based on the message for the day. All **Hymns** offer a chance to reflect. The **Closing Hymn** is the "tune we carry" into daily ministry.

For Parents with younger children:

Think about what children sing! Whether nursery rhymes or made up songs, they allow a chance for expression. They are a teaching tool to learn patterns and remember words. They are a familiar place in which our kids are secure (because they have "been there before.") The more children sing a song, the easier time they will have in remembering it, because of the melody that carries those words. (How else did we ever learn the alphabet?) Hymns and prayers teach the "alphabet of grace!" Let the children sing!

These words imprint a message in our hearts, and the music flavors how we live. Prayers and hymns help kids to touch and be touched by God. When your children are happy or sad they sing different songs. Help them to identify happy and sad songs in worship. (Why is Christmas a happy day, and why is Ash Wednesday a sad day?) Kids instinctively can tell by the feel of the music what the mood of the day is — just as you can tell by their songs what kind of day they had in school. The more familiar hymns become, the more comfortable they will be in faith. Singing is just as much about teaching as it is expression. If you sing, they will sing. If you sit quietly, they will be quiet.

Set an example in how and when you pray and sing. Why not buy a hymnal to keep at home? Read a hymn text as a prayer, or sing a prayer just for fun! What a gift this can be to your children. Too easily we are tempted to gravitate to songs with catchy tunes, but the words are what carry the message!

Our prayers and hymns in worship are teaching tools to help your children as they live in the world. These are gifts that will carry them through life and help them to remember they are never alone. And remember, if hymns and prayers are full of love and faith, you can never be "off key." What a gift this can be for our kids!

Pastor Tim

Calendar

Women's Ministry Simulcast on April 25th

(to be determined based on Coronavirus impact)

Wednesday, May 6th, 5pm—7:30pm

Faith Conversations in the Home (workshop)

Join us for dinner and discussion on how to better have faith type conversations at home.

Childcare is provided as long as there is a need! Sign up should be on the kiosk right after Easter.

Be Consistent

I am amazed every time Eliza prays before bed or before a meal. She will make up prayers as well as change the words accordingly to her "go to." I'm also in awe when she stands on the pew holding her hymnal and belts out a song..."God is good, he made the animals, he keeps them safe" or something like that. Already at the age of 2 she loves God and is showing that through her actions. I never feel like I do "enough" teaching at home but just being consistent in the little things such as prayer, attending worship, attending Sunday School, reading Bible stories, etc are major influences in her behavior. I urge you, families, BE CONSISTENT in your own faith life. Your kids are watching and will imitate your behaviors. If you're not feeling good about this, it might be time to reprioritize. We'll be talking a lot about this stuff at the workshop on May 6th!

Family Life

Family Ministry News

April, 2020 WORSHIP LEADERS and APRIL 2020 CALENDAR

These documents have intentionally been left out of this month's Harbinger due to the "stay" order announced effective at Midnight on March 23rd.

Upon resuming normal operations, these schedules will be updated and made available.

Note: Any dates appearing in this publication are what's known, currently and may be altered based on changes due to COVID-19 requirements.

"Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut your doors behind you. Take cover, for in a little while the fury will be over."

Isaiah 26:20



Youth News

High School:

Keep watching Remind and Snap Chat Group for updates

Middle School Youth:

Normal class plans to resume on April 15th unless otherwise notified!

Confirmation

(This is the current plan)

- Stole making for 8th grade parents is on Wednesday, April 22nd at 6:15pm.
- Banquet for 8th graders and family: April 25th at 6:15pm.
- Ceremony in 10:30am service on April 26th.
- Pizza Party for all students on 29th at 6pm.

Echoes

God IS at work through people in our congregation...here is their story:

How many old computers do you have stowed away in the basement? How about old TVs, radios, or cell phones? Companies create electronics to be disposable but not in an environmentally friendly way.

Last month a group of Middle School and High School youth went up to Grand Rapids to volunteer at an organization called CompRenew. There we learned about the overwhelming amount of e-waste in the world. In our two hours there we dissected about 80 computers and sorted all the parts. CompRenew then takes those parts and sells them as scrap or rehabs them for refurb jobs. Some of that money gets pumped into the local community. CompRenew also is a workstart program helping give people experience and skills to take into the work force. Our youth did just a tiny little bit to help the environment but made a big impact!

Even without uttering a word we are telling people about Jesus! What are you "saying?"

Book Review. "Eventide." Kent Haruf. Alfred Knopf. 2004.

I first read Haruf because of his titles. They grabbed my attention, but his writing held me captive. He did not begin writing until age 40, and died too young but his books are powerful in their simplicity. This book opens with the memory of a familiar hymn text. "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide..." And it is so appropriate for a story about two elderly brothers, who suddenly find themselves all alone in the evening of life.

Haruf writes of life in a fictional Colorado farm town called Holt. And he writes about lives that are very ordinary. He is the son of a Methodist minister, but his novels are not overtly religious. Yet they have the feel of people who are guided by something more powerful than themselves. There is a simple spiritual force at work, to which all of us can relate and aspire.

Maybe that is the attraction, as his characters harken back to a less hectic time and place where people were more attuned to a simple life and a simple faith. In our busy-ness, over-dependence on technology, and internet driven culture, we are overwhelmed by noise and flashy lights that can distract and divert attention from the real issues of daily living. Life is complicated no matter what, and we do best when we deal with life rather than allow anything to distract us from what is real.

In a 2004 interview on New York Public Radio, Haruf commented that he "resented and rejected the idea there was nothing religious in his books, and not just because he considered the effort to write well a religion itself." He went on to say, "Many of my characters, knock on doors seeking solace, seeking sanctuary, and they get it frequently, and that to me is a religious act."

This book is a sequel to "Plainsong," and if you haven't read that book already, I suggest you

read it before you read "Eventide." Otherwise you will miss some of the people and issues that are at play in this wonderful book. The storyline follows the lives of the McPherson brothers, who are two elderly ranchers now facing life alone, as the young girl they adopted and raised is ready to move on to life in college with her infant daughter.

This is a story of two lives that were honest, well-lived, and enriched by the willingness of two old men to share their roof and their love with someone who had no one to care for her or care about her. And then, as the story begins, she is ready to spread her wings and fly and the old farmhouse will become very quiet again. There is nothing complex in that plot or the dialog of this book, but reminds us that even the most simple moments and actions of life can have profound meaning and consequence.

The only thing constant in life is change, and the only thing important in life is how we live and function in the midst of change and what vision or purpose for each of us guides how we live. As the narrative of this book guides us we watch simple people dealing with such issues and it forces the reader to slow down and consider similar potential and possibility in our own lives.

Here is the opening to the book: *They came up from the horse barn in the slanted light of early morning. (Harold and Raymond) Old men approaching an old house at the end of summer ... they scraped their boots on the saw blade sunken in the dirt and walked up the plank steps onto the screened porch and entered the kitchen where the nineteen year old girl Victoria Roubideaux sat at the table feeding oatmeal to her little daughter. When they began to dish up their plates the girl made them sit down. "There's no use in you waiting on us," Raymond said. "I want to," she said. I'll be gone tomorrow."*

Read these two books! Pastor Seeber

OUTDOOR BEAUTIFICATION SCHEDULE FOR 2020

You are invited to join us as we care for and maintain the church grounds. Our clean up days will be WEDNESDAY starting at 8:30 a.m., and finishing around 11:30 a.m. Break time and refreshments occur from 10:00 to 10:30. If you are interested, contact Jim Mayer at 375-8342 or just show up on the days listed below. On the scheduled date, if the weather is not cooperating, the work day will be canceled. You will be called if your name is on the roster list.

SPRING WORK DATES

APRIL 8 (Easter is April 12th), APRIL 29, MAY 13, MAY 20, MAY 27

SUMMER WORK DATES

JUNE 10, JULY 8, AUGUST 12

FALL WORK DATES

SEPTEMBER 9, OCTOBER 14, OCTOBER 28-----

THE FINAL FALL LEAF CLEAN UP DATE WILL BE SELECTED ONCE ALL THE LEAVES ARE DOWN.

IF THIS SCHEDULE NEEDS TO BE MODIFIED IN ANY WAY, AND THERE IS ENOUGH TIME, ANY CHANGES WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS. IF YOU ARE ON THE ROSTER



We are collecting health care items for **Ministry with Community**

Many items may be purchased at the Dollar Store for \$1
A GREAT way to make your \$\$\$\$ help many people!

The following items are needed:

- *bath size towels (new or gently used)
- *washcloths (new or gently used)
- *bars of soap/shower gel – travel or regular size
- *shampoo/conditioner – travel or regular size
- *body lotion – travel or regular size
- *toothbrushes
- *toothpaste – travel or regular size
- *deodorant
- *lip balm
- *wide tooth or sturdy toothed combs
- *fingernail clippers
- *disposable razors / shaving cream
- *anything else you desire

When the church re-opens, you may place your contributions in the bins located in the hallway. If you have any questions, please contact Jayne Mayer at 375-8342. Thank you for helping others as Jesus shows us His love every day in our many blessings.



4/1	Marvin Rutgers
4/2	David Alsvig, Brynley Bauer, Dorothy Decker, Natalie Linebaugh, Michael Nutsch
4/3	Mark Lundquist, Dan Seng
4/4	Janice Davidson, Janis Dinda, Bill Ferris, Charlotte Flamm
4/5	Andrew Newman, Carol Segerdahl, Neil Segerdahl, Beverly Snow
4/6	Alice Ferris, David Mayer
4/7	Michael Nuyen, Janet Woodford
4/8	Kim DuBois, Rebecca Morgan,
4/9	Michele Proos, Savannah Waterlander
4/10	Charles Krill
4/12	Alison Carlson, Garr Gast, Marilyn Lawrence, Kenneth Mutz
4/13	Robert Folck, Anthony Huberty, Sharon Oisten, Bill Squires, Michael Tucker
4/14	Nicholas Cosgrove, Julie Griesbach, Sarah Kamphuis, Rhonda Newman
4/15	Michael Bussey, Sarah Fitzgerald, Connie Graff
4/16	Jill Hamilton
4/18	Helen Reinkensmeyer, Joseph Zerbel
4/19	Noah Bentz, Anthony Cullimore
4/20	Donald Daenzer, Megan DuBois, Alma Rutgers, Nathan Varga
4/21	Norah Kamphuis, Austin Simmons
4/22	Lillian Klein, Sarah VandenBerg
4/25	Susan Longjohn
4/26	Avery Eastman, Steve Weber
4/27	Christine Brege, Madeline Brennan, Eric Carlson, Vincent Westra, Larry Zerbel
4/28	Corryn Adams, Lydia Holzerland, Dain Soppelsa, Helen Wise
4/29	William Krill, Annabelle Wolfe
4/30	Elaine Biddle, Hannah Carlson, Bradd Schultz, Margaret Soppelsa

Parish Report

Deaths

Eleanor Durock	3/01/2020
Joyce Zastrow	3/12/2020

Confirmation

Claire Marie Alsvig
Nevina Beck
Megan Jean Brennan
Isabvella Ruth Frazier
Alyson Grace Hampshire
Maren Elise Hampshire
Riley Marie Ketchum
Alexander Carl Kiessling
Rudy Linebaugh



Zion Women's Book Group

April 27th at 7:00—Outliers by M. Gladwell

May 18th at 7:00—Before We Were Yours by
Lisa Windgate

June 22nd at 7:00—The Book Woman of
Troublesome Creek by K. M. Richardson

July 27th at 7:00— Piano Lessons by Noah
Adams

Contact Yvonne Wordell with questions at
269-321-7984.

KALAMAZOO LOAVES & FISHES

The wish list item for **April is Canned Tuna**.
When able to return to church, please put
your donations in the gray tubs under the
church office window.

Thank you!



Monthly Publication of

Zion Lutheran Church

April

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NON-PROFIT
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

IMPORTANT INFO

April 2020 Harbinger will not be available in printed form due to current COVID-19 concerns. For those Zion has email addresses, an electronic version will be sent and will also be available on Zion's website.

Check ZION's Website: www.zionkazoo.org for special updates and on our Facebook page

ZION provides updates to WWMT and WKZO