



Harbinger

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I sat in the waiting area for the appointment I was scheduled for. And instead of simply scrolling on my phone, I looked around the nicely appointed room. There was a fireplace with a very attractive wooden mantel surrounding it. It was then that I noticed a stack of books sitting on the mantle with a handwritten sign attached to them. “Free books,” it said.

There was only one hardback book in the stack, I pulled it out from the others, turned it over to the front, and read the title, “The Man from Ida Grove.” “No way!” I exclaimed in a much-too-loud voice for the place where I was standing. At one time, I was the man from Ida Grove.

Assistant Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ida Grove, Iowa, was my first call out of seminary back in 1999. For someone who had grown up as a city boy in Fort Wayne, that drive to a small town in northwest Iowa was like moving to the middle of nowhere. For 10 years prior to moving, Laura and I had owned a house just south of downtown and right off the main route police and first responders would take to get to the nearby hospital.

We were accustomed to sirens blaring at all hours, which made those first nights in Ida Grove a bit unsettling. At night we’d hear nothing. I mean nothing but the wind in the trees. It took a while to get adjusted to that. We did, of course, and we quickly came to appreciate the beauty of northwest Iowa with its countless shades of green covering its rolling hills.

We had similar silence when we made the move from northwest Iowa to northwest Ohio. Again, we were surrounded by farmland and various hog confinements. The smell (when the wind was just right) was louder than the sound!

Since arriving in Kalamazoo, we are back to hearing sirens at all hours. And after 24 years of rural ministry, yeah, it took a couple of weeks to adjust. But we have. As Laura said to me the other day, “this feels like home.” I’m grateful for that. I’m thankful to God that He has blessed us during this transition to Michigan. Thankful for you all, for your support, your prayers, and your constant encouragement. You have been a blessing to me and my family!

But back to this book I found. “The Man from Ida Grove” tells the story of a man who had been born into poverty and family dysfunction and how he overcame the odds and eventually, by the grace of God, became a United States Senator from Iowa. I had heard that story when I lived in Ida Grove, but I had never seen the book. I had to move to Kalamazoo for that! Which makes absolutely no sense, until we remember that the Lord has a tremendous sense of humor.

In Proverbs 17 it says: **A cheerful heart is good medicine...** Remember my friends, joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. There is joy to be found in the Lord who knew that literally the only person in Kalamazoo who had previously lived in Ida Grove would be walking into that office that day. I know that He was laughing as much as I was when I saw that book on the mantle.

Yes, we have a God of joy. As we enter this New Year, let us see the joy that is ours in Jesus. And let us laugh the laughter of the Redeemed!

Zion Lutheran Church
2122 Bronson Blvd.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Telephone: 269-382-2360
Email: zion@zionkazoo.org
www.zionkazoo.org

Christmas and Epiphany

In the first centuries of the Church, Easter was celebrated as the primary festival of Christianity. Christmas was not generally celebrated by the Church until the third century after Christ's birth. In the early Church, birthdays were not as important as burial days, for that is when a Christian entered into heaven.

The miracle of Jesus' birth is crucial to our lives of faith, but it is Easter that changed everything. This was so momentous it changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. For us, this is the first day of the week, and the first day of all life!

Easter was the biggest holy day (holiday) for the early Church but the nativity, or birth, of Jesus gradually became an important celebration as well. After Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the faith of the kingdom, he chose December 25th as the birthdate of Jesus. He took the Roman festival (Saturnalia) which had celebrated a gradual ending of the darkness of winter, and instead made it a celebration of the true Light of the World. Christmas is short for the Christ Mass, or worship of the Christ child.

The twelve days of Christmas begin with a celebration of Jesus' birth and conclude with the Epiphany on January 6, and the remembrance of the visit of wise men from the East. Sundays during this time are part of the Christmas season, and the altar color is White. You might notice that our altar paraments for Christmas are different than the white of Easter.

December 26th is a day in which the Church remembers Saint Stephen, the first martyr of the early Christian Church (see Acts 6:8-7:2.) Most interesting is that Saul, who held the cloaks of those stoning Stephen, became Paul after his conversion. When December 26 falls on a Sunday, the altar color could be red, which is the color associated with martyred saints.

December 28 is the Festival of the Holy Innocents (see Matt 2:13-18.) When the Wise Men inquired of Herod where the new king was born, he became jealous. He wound up murdering as many young boys under the age of two as he could, hopeful of erasing any threats to his throne.

During this time, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus, a difficult story to consider, and yet a

reminder of the threat that Jesus is to those dependent on earthly power. (Even today!)

The irony of that journey is that when Jesus, Mary, and Joseph returned from Egypt they likely followed the same path as the Israelites whose exile in Egypt ended in the same. Promised Land!

January 1 is the day on which the Church has remembered the naming of Jesus. In the Jewish tradition, it was on the eighth day that a son was circumcised (as a sign of the covenant) and named. Mary and Joseph named their miracle baby, Jesus.

Many of have seen "Xmas" instead of Christmas (prompting calls to keep Christ in Christmas.) But the first Greek letter of Christ is "chi." which is written in English as "x." Mass is the word for the worship service. And so from the time of the middle ages the Church has used Xmas as a way of writing Christ Mass, or the day of worshipping the Christ. So, if you know the Greek origin, Xmas DOES keep Christ in Christmas.

Of greater concern is how we keep Christ in Christmas each and every day of the year!

The season of Christmas runs until January 6th, which is called Epiphany. Epiphany means revealed, (as any light will do.) Epiphany commemorates the visit of the wise men from the East to see the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:1-12.) This has traditionally been called the Christmas of the Gentiles and is celebrated in the Eastern Church as a greater day of celebration than December 25th, for on this day Christ was revealed to the entire world! In the early Church, Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost were the major festivals!

Epiphany uses green as its color, for life and growth and the spreading of the Gospel throughout the world. Epiphany continues until just before Lent. The Sunday of the Transfiguration concludes the Epiphany season. Ash Wednesday and Lent follow during the next week. So, now you know!

A blessed Christmas and Epiphany season to you and all whom you love! And when the trees come down, keep the joy of this season as the reason for each and every day of your life. What a gift has been given!

- tws

Catechism Review: The Lord's Prayer (part 1)

"Our Father!"

Jesus told his disciples that when they prayed they should pray "like this," and the words we call the Lord's Prayer are what followed. Matthew and Luke record this prayer, but the wording is slightly different. We are used to the prayer as recorded in Matthew's Gospel.

The Lord's Prayer is not the perfect prayer but guidance for how to pray. The first words, "Our Father" get us started! Like the beginning to a letter, we begin by addressing who it is we are speaking to.

Some resist the idea of God as Father, rather than parent or mother. But Jesus taught prayer in a culture where the father was the leader of the clan. He was protector, provider, and final word at home. Mother's were equally important but they were not the father.

At the same time, those who listened to Jesus had grown up with the idea that God was distant and to be feared for his awesome power. Jesus encouraged his follower to begin with a word that emphasized a personal and loving, rather than a distant and fearful relationship. He encouraged us to be comfortable in this conversation rather than engage in a ritual with a distant stranger.

It only made sense that Israel had a healthy fear of God. Think about times when God drew near: Like the supernatural plagues against Egypt. Or fire blazing from the sky to ignite an altar for Elijah. Or thunder and lightning pounding the top of Sinai when Moses went face to face with God. God brought a flood that covered the earth, and fire and brimstone that incinerated Sodom.

When the altar of the Lord was put in a temple, it was hidden behind a curtain, because God seemed so holy no one dared get too close. Their belief was that if anyone came to close to God they would perish.

With that background, what must disciples have thought when Jesus said to address God as Father? The Aramaic word we translate father is abba. It corresponds to our word daddy. It is a personal word. A family word. A word of trust, dependence, and strength. Abba denotes a relationship of closeness, love, protection, and family completeness. God is close by! He cares,

listens, and will be there tomorrow. And this heavenly father is ours!

Luther wrote the Small Catechism as a simple text for parents to teach their children the faith of the Church. About the beginning of the Lord's Prayer, Luther wrote: "God would by these words tenderly invite us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may with all boldness and confidence as Him as dear children ask their dear father." What grace! An all-powerful God of creation tenderly invites each to approach him as a loving parent, trusting he will listen (even when he is disappointed.) Israelites knew even when father was working in the fields or hunting for dinner his concern was for his family. He would come home. He would provide. He would always be father.

A father's love is a father's love. And when we seek closeness to God in prayer, we begin with one word, "Abba -- Father!" In doing so we know we are safe. That we are loved. That we are heard. That love draws us near!

"My father!" What a prayer! What a statement of faith! Although God is King of the universe He comes to close to us – especially as we talk and listen in prayer. Jesus used this word to teach that prayer isn't about a theological masterpiece but a time to be close to the heavenly Father who loves us so much!

Anyone can talk to God like a father. Just talk. And listen! If there is love, honesty, and trust there is prayer. Prayer is a relationship not a magic formula. It is to be a conversation rather than a ritual.

"My father! Our father! Abba! Daddy!" What comfort and what hope! There have been times when I feared anyone who had a terrible earthly father might be put off, and yet how neat for someone who is fatherless to know God will fill that role! What a gift God offers! Prayer begins by remembering this tender gift of love.

Despite his awesome power God's love wraps us in his arms, no matter where we go or what we do! "Dear Father! Our Father!"

What comfort. What strength. What peace!

Worship Help for Parents and Children

While we always are looking for something new, our liturgy always brings familiar patterns that are a continued blessing to the Church everywhere.

This month we focus on: “**Prayers and Hymns**”

For Dads and Moms and other adults:

Prayers are a special connection 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 each time of worship.

The **Prayer of the Church** literally us with Christians everywhere in sharing joys and sorrows with God. This is our response to the Sermon, reminding us that God listens and cares about all of our needs.

The **Offering Prayer** is said as a blessing of the gifts we offer to God, and prepares 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! It is not a magic prayer but one of the oldest of all prayers.

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! With or without music, the words proclaim, ask, and remind. 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. While the Closing Hymn carries us

into our daily lives of faith and servant love. The **Sermon Hymn** is based on the message for the day. All the hymns in worship help us to praise God, reflect on his words, and fill us with the gift to God’s guidance, love, and peace.

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 know by the feel of 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 children are in their faith. Singing is as much about teaching as expressing. Your singing is an invitation to your kids to join in.

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 our children as they live in the world which often sings a different song. Prayers and hymns are gifts children will carry 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!
-tws

Book Review: *Liturgy of the Ordinary.* Tish Harrison Warren. Intervarsity Press. 2016

The word liturgy, as we have been reminded so often, literally means the work of the people. A triumph of the Reformation was to free worship from the private domain of the clergy and include people of the congregation to participate in a more active role in worship. No longer merely spectators, lay people became participants.

Tish Warren uses the familiar understanding of liturgy in formal worship to help us with the faithful words and actions of our daily worship as God's people. We are summoned around word and sacrament and sent into daily living as changed people. Her focus on liturgy as a practical, means of daily worship is the inspiration of this very readable book.

The formal liturgy allows all of us to voice our praise and prayers together. And, as we are reminded so often, worship is not only for the moment we are together in church. It prepares each of us for our daily worship, which is to serve and love as God has loved us. God's house is bigger than any building we construct, and his body on earth is his Church. We are the hands and feet of Jesus in his world today.

Warren begins with our understandings of the basics of liturgy, which uses scripture, prayer, and symbolic actions. She then introduces the idea of using the ordinary repetitive moments of life in a similar fashion to lead to see the potential for those to become sacred moments that prepare us for daily worship in God's world.

Just as we use candles, bread and wine, colors and songs that are ordinary and make them special, she suggests taking moments that are repetitive parts of daily life, such as brushing teeth, checking email, waiting in traffic and suggests them as examples of moments to more intentionally remember God.

The foreword states, "*Tish dismantles the most stubborn of Christian heresies: the idea that there is any part of our lives that is secular, untouched by and disconnected from the sacred work of worship and prayer... There is a tendency to speak of the sanctuary as somehow of more important to God than the workplace or the home, and those specially ordained to its work as*

somehow closer to God than those who work in the convenience store or the office complex. [p. 9]

Our patterns, our prayers, our living all offer different opportunities to feel and share the love of God, to celebrate, to ask forgiveness, and most of all to witness that God is the core of our entire live and being.

Tish takes simple, everyday moments and suggests how they might help us establish patterns of keeping God close through such ordinary actions as making the bed or calling a friends. If worship is our time to give God glory and remember his love, why should it not be part of every moment of our lives and not confined to a single hour, once a week?

We conclude our format worship in the sanctuary with the words to go in peace and serve the Lord. What a reminder worship is not a formal, once a week obligation, but a daily adventure in which we walks with God and God walks with us. We are summoned to be sent, We worship together as practice for our daily worship.

Our props for liturgy in worship are songs, prayers, readings, explanations, physical actions, such as embracing, laughter and tears, a meal, and a blessing. Our liturgy on Sundays (or whenever we gather as one, prepare us for what comes next (which we call living.)

The title of this book summarizes her creative approach to helping us keep close to God and open to being his light in the world around us.

This book would be ideal for personal devotional use or for small groups discussion. To help in such a setting, the last part of the book includes discussion questions and suggestions for action for each of the chapters of the book. This is a book that can be read over and over again.

Tish Warren is a writer who now has a regular column in the New York Times, commenting on both faith and public life. She is an Anglican priest, serving with her husband in a congregation in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, where she is writer-in-residence.

— Pastor Seeber

(a copy of the book is in the Zion library)

FRIENDS OF JESUS PRESCHOOL

We are staying very busy in this New Year at Friends of Jesus Preschool. The first half has flown by and been extremely rewarding. I am very pleased with our progress and grateful to the recently hired FOJ staff, Teacher Taylor Sinotte, and Teaching Assistant Kelsey Post. Please join me in welcoming them to the FOJ and Zion family.

By the time you are reading this, registration for Summer Camp 2024 and the 2024-2025 school year will be underway! Summer Camp is offered on a week-by-week basis with full- and part-time spots available. Children ages 3-6 are welcome to join us on our summer camp adventures! More information and the Summer Camp schedule can be found on our website-

www.friendsofjesuspreschool.org.

Registration for the 2024-2025 school year has also begun! Registration packets are available in the preschool office, and we are always happy to schedule a tour!

Our winter snack drive has also begun and will run through the month of January! Snack drive bins are located across the hall from the main office and outside the preschool office. Preschool children receive snacks in the morning and afternoon, and these donations are very helpful and much appreciated. Some of our current needs include applesauce, canned fruit or fruit cups, crackers, granola bars or Nutrigrain bars, and pretzels. Thank you for your support!

Wishing everyone a blessed New Year!

Jen LaPorte, Director



WELCOME FRIENDS OF JESUS STAFF



Hi, I'm Miss Taylor Sinotte! I'm so happy to be a part of Friends of Jesus Preschool! You can find me covered in glue and glitter in the 4's classroom. I have a passion for learning and helping my students grow. I adore preschool and hope to continue teaching after grad school. When I'm not teaching I enjoy being in nature, creating jewelry, and spending time with my



Mrs. Kelsey Post was born in Kalamazoo but raised in Plainwell for most of her life. She is newly married and now lives with her husband and dog Marley. She is a kid at heart and enjoys baking, meditating & spending time with family in her free time. Kelsey loves working in preschool and is thrilled to be a part of FOJ!

CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT:

Thank you to all of you for your love and support and kindness to me as I am navigating life without Melody. During the grieving process, I am learning that there are so many different feelings and emotions that come up every day. I also realize that everyone deals with grief in different ways and that there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

For me, I am finding that, at times, I need to be alone and honestly deal with the feelings as they come, whether it's deep sadness or anger. But I also need to be able share my feelings and emotions with people close to me and find healing comes when I share and talk openly about my feelings and hurts.

There are a couple of Bible passages that I have found are helpful during this time of loss. God tells us that He is near the brokenhearted and Jesus tells us to come to Him when we are weary and burdened and He will give us rest. I can feel God near me in this time and that He is giving me comfort and rest as I sit quietly with Him in reflection, and through the love and kindness of so many friends, family and my church family at Zion.

Another thing that I am finding is hard is whether I am with the students on campus, or at Zion, things just feel different. Before all that happened to Melody, I always thought of myself as upbeat and encouraging, and that my interactions with others by and large reflected a warm and caring spirit. But it's hard to feel that way right now and that is a challenge for me.

My hope in all of this is that as the Lord continues to bring healing and strength to me in the days, weeks, months, and years ahead, I will be able to be more compassionate and sensitive to others in the midst of their pain and struggle. The Bible passage that I think about is that God comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can comfort others with the comfort that we have received from Him.

I have started getting back into a routine the past few weeks, both on campus and at Zion. On Monday and Wednesday evenings, we have events on campus. On Monday evenings, we have our weekly Dinner and Discussion events at Solid Grounds. There are between 8-10 students that take part in our Monday evening event. One of the many ways that God has shown His goodness during this time is the 3 student leaders at Solid Grounds have done a wonderful job of leading and facilitating our discussions and the students have developed a connection with one another, which has lead to great discussions.

On Wednesday evenings, I am a part of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). My role with FCA is to help with the flow of conversation during small group sharing time and also looking ahead to the Spring Semester and hopefully finding volunteer opportunities for the students and me.

On Tuesday and Friday afternoons, I am calling on the shut-in and homebound members of Zion. I have enjoyed this opportunity with our shut-in members.

Jackson and I spent time in Tennessee over Christmas with my family. Thank you again for your love and support during this difficult time.

God's blessings and peace to you all,

Pastor Mark



Family Life

Family Ministry News

Upcoming Schedule

January 7: Sunday School Resumes

**January 10, 17, 24, 31: Midweek Kids from
6:15pm-7:15pm**

January 21: Chili Cook-Off 11:30am

PROVIDING SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

“As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household.” - Martin Luther

This is inscribed in Luther’s Small Catechism which is meant to be an instructional manual of the faith. Churches have provided additional support throughout time to aid in this matter. However, for some, the Church has become the only place of faith instruction. Have you thought of yourself as a spiritual guide for your family? Do you have faith conversations, devotions, or faith based activities at home?

We are in a society that is always on the run, almost requiring busyness. Here’s the beauty of it...you ARE the spiritual guide to your family. You get the opportunity in the car ride to a game, to talk about godly characteristics. You are immersed in a community that doesn’t fully know God’s love for them. You are not only a guide, but a missionary!

So here’s my question (and I’d honestly love feedback).

How can we, the Church, walk along side you and support you in these roles?

Youth News

We will continue to meet as a combined Middle School/High School Youth Group. Any student entering 6th-12th grades is invited to attend unless specifically noted! Friends are also invited!

Confirmation Class (6th-8th)

Wednesdays from 6:15-7:30pm

No Class January 3

Bible Study

Sundays, at 9:15am in the High School Youth Room

Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser

Sunday, January 21 at 11:30am

Echoes

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

RightNow Media is a ministry Zion provides to her members and friends. It is an online library of videos and Bible Studies that vary on topics, books of the Bible, and age groups. There is a whole section for kids as well as training ideas if you are leading a ministry team. The resources seem infinite and are quite the high quality. Zion pays for this to equip her members to be the Church in the community, in their homes, and when away from Zion. I received three stories in the past few months just praising and thanking us for providing this ministry. One tunes into the videos as podcasts while he's working or doing hobby work at home. Another watches for her own spiritual growth and to enhance her worship life. The third story comes from Campus, allowing Bible study to occur while Pastor Mark had to be away. These are only a few testimonies. There have been many more in the close to 2 years we've offered this. In fact, we are up to 90 users! Please check out and take advantage of this great opportunity!

<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/zionkazoo>

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

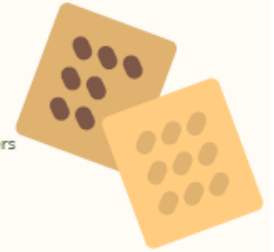
1/2	Anna Griesbach
1/3	David Bierlein
1/5	Lindsey Heineman, Ashlynn Leitz
1/6	Jeanette Meyer, Andrew Wilkins
1/8	Betty Markwart, Daniel Meimers, Ross Nelson, Todd Nuyen, Richard Rakow, Judith Sepanik
1/9	Audrey Dorman,
1/11	Nicki Klein, Linda Rosenthal
1/12	Bob Nutsch, Andy Schirk
1/13	Zander Woodhams
1/14	Laurel Miner, Joey Proos
1/15	Toni Holt, Todd Ream, Terri McDonald, Susie Schierbeek,
1/18	Megan Doorlag
1/19	Adam Hendricks, Christopher McGill, Sullivan Miller
1/20	Pamela Blochard, Al Doorlag, Rosalind Proos
1/21	Owen Adams, Dolores Rink
1/22	Rita Linnenkugel
1/23	Mark Skuratowicz
1/24	James Koning
1/25	Phoebe Miedema, Carol O'Connor
1/26	Laurel Adams, Emma Dorman, Charley Emig, Adeline Powell
1/27	Elijah Field
1/29	Dan Curtiss, Claire Kiessling, Kelsey Klug, Nathan Matheny, Noralyn Pridgeon
1/30	Amy Eastman, John Griesbach, Adalee Wilkins, Patricia Keirn
1/31	Tyler Bowers, Grace Stiegemeyer

FRIENDS OF JESUS PRESCHOOL

SNACK DRIVE

Most Needed Items:

- Applesauce
- Tortillas
- Canned fruit or fruit cups
- Whole wheat, whole grain, or multi-grain crackers
- Nutri-grain bars
- Peanut Butter
- Pretzels
- Animal Crackers
- Ranch Dressing
- Mild Salsa
- Rice Cakes
- Veggie Sticks
- 100% fruit juice



Contact:

Jen LaPorte

jen@zionkazoo.org

269.382.2360



The Snack Drive runs through January. Bins for snack donations are across from the Office and also outside the Preschool Office downstairs.



Promoting a Hunger-Free Community Since 1982

The wish list item for

January is Beef Stew

Donations may be placed in the gray tubs in front of the office



Chili Cook-off

Join us!!!

The next youth fundraiser will be a chili cook off! We hope you'll join us either with a pot of chili, or to come taste! Prizes and fun will be had and each donation helps fund future servant events!

Tickets are \$10/person for tasting (kids under 12 are free). Concessions will be available as well!

Sunday, January 21st at 11:30am



WOMEN'S SEWING GROUP

Zion is blessed to have a sewing group serving Lutheran World Relief, LWR. Not all Missouri Synod churches do. Our group will start sewing again on the 10th of January, weather permitting. We will begin making nighties out of colorful flannel and diapers. It is such a pleasure to make these nighties for the Lord's babies throughout the world. In addition to the nighties, we create quilts along with knitting projects.

You are welcome to come visit us to see how you may contribute your talents and/or consider joining us each Wednesday from 9:00am-Noon.

You will be blessed.

GRATEFUL HEARTS/THANKFUL HANDS

Many hands and lots of enthusiasm made our recent bazaar the greatest success, yet!

Many of our community members joined us. Again, we heard wonderful comments on the beautiful craft and food items! THANK YOU to EVERYONE who made this day possible. No matter what your contribution was, it was appreciated so very much!!

Our contributions keep coming in, and we have exceeded \$10,000! Next month we will provide the grand total and where the money is being distributed.

We are already looking ahead to next year and as you put decorations away or begin early spring cleaning, contributions are welcome all year.

With very grateful hearts,

Jayne and Linda Mayer

Are you looking for a meaningful **NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION**? Please consider getting involved with 1 of Zion's ministries. We are really in need of help with Altar Ministry, Communion Assistants, Lectors, and Kitchen assistants. If none of these fit you, perhaps one of the other ones are of interest. All of the ministries are happy for people to join. Find a complete list of opportunities on the **Ministries Tab** at (<https://zionkazoo.org>)

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

Meeting the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2:00p.m.

Upcoming Readings:

January 16th "Still Life –Louise Penny"

February 20th "Up Home: One Girl's Journey"

March 19th "The Gown—Jennifer Robson"

If you enjoy reading, we welcome you to come and join us.

WORSHIP LEADERS JANUARY 2024				
	January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28
	BAPTISM OF JESUS			
Head Ushers 8:00am	Ted Maxson Richard Rakow	Matt Simmons Alan Sarver	Steve Weber Mark Schoonbeck	Stan Leitz John DuBois
Head Ushers 10:30am	Steve Nuyen Dennis O'Brien	Dan Buchtrup Eric Carlson	Joe Zerbel Garr Gast	Ken Lundquist Dave Borak
Communion Assistants Saturday 5:30pm	Joanne Bowes	Ted Maxson	Kathleen Jordan	Mike Schlack
Communion Assistants 8:00am	Jim Mayer	Matt Simmons	Greg Gerfen	Dave Newman
Communion Assistants 10:30am	Steve Nuyen	Garr Gast	Lorraine Hanna	Ryan Bickel
Acolytes 8:00am				
Acolytes 10:30am				
Cantor	8:00 Dennis O'Brien	8:00 Vicki Holt 10:30 Vicki Holt	8:00 Linda Stieve	8:00 Karen Stokes Chapo 10:30 Karen Stokes Chapo
Lectors 8:00am	Jayne Mayer	Dave Mayer	Donya Mosher	Andrew Niedbala
Lectors 10:30am	Alison Carlson	Erin Hampshire	Alice Tomer	Jill Hamilton
Altar Ministry Saturday 5:30pm	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.
Altar Ministry 8:00am	1. Joe Zerbel 2. Larry Zerbel	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.
Altar Ministry 10:30am	1. Carrie Chapman 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.	1. 1. 2. 2.

Shaded areas indicate ministry teams opportunities.

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day OFFICE CLOSED	2	3 9:00 Sewing Group returns based on weather	4	5	6 8:00 Men's Bible Study 5:30 Worship
7 8:00 Worship 9:15 SS, Bible Study 10:30 Worship	8 6:30 Endowment	9 10:00 P. Brelje Bible St	10 9:00 Sewing 5:15 Dinner 6:15 Midwk Kids 6:15 Bible Study 6:15 Conf Class	11 Noon Finance 7:00p Choir	12	13 8:00 Men's Bible Study 5:30 Worship
14 8:00 Worship 9:15 SS, Bible Study 10:30 Worship	15 ML King Day 6:30 BOD	16 10:00 P. Brelje Bible St 2:00p Women's Book Grp	17 9:00 Sewing 5:15 Dinner 6:15 Midwk Kids 6:15 Bible Study 6:15 Conf Class	18	19	20 8:00 Men's Bible Study 2:00p Prayer Shawl 5:30 Worship
21 8:00 Worship 9:15 SS, Bible Study 10:30 Worship 11:30 Chili Cook-Off	22	23 10:00 P. Brelje Bible St	24 9:00 Sewing 5:15 Dinner 6:15 Midwk Kids 6:15 Bible Study 6:15 Conf Class	25 7:00p Choir	26	27 8:00 Men's Bible Study 5:30 Worship
28 8:00 Worship 9:15 SS, Bible Study 10:30 Worship	29 6-7 FOJ Open House	30 10:00 P. Brelje Bible St	31 9:00 Sewing 5:15 Dinner 6:15 Midwk Kids 6:15 Bible Study 6:15 Conf Class			
		Notes				

Zion Financial Report for November 30, 2023

ZION: October Spending exceeded Giving by \$ (17,875)
 YTD Spending exceeds Giving by \$ (73,462)
 YTD Giving is under by \$ (36,558)
 YTD Spending is under by \$ 13,475

Questions? Please email Rhonda Newman at mewmanopa@sbloglobal.net

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH	Current Month			Year-To-Date		
	Budget	Actual	Over/Under	Budget	Actual	Over/Under
INCOME						
Zion Giving & Misc.	76,236	56,275	-19,961	417,087	380,529	-36,558
EXPENSES						
Church Property	9,350	8,179	1,171	56,100	64,644	-8,544
Education Ministry	650	406	244	8,250	7,842	408
Evangelism/Missions	75	0	75	450	240	210
Finance Ministry	6,396	6,405	-9	38,374	38,386	-12
FOJ Expenses	877	55	822	7,190	1,295	5,895
FOJ Staff	8,609	8,403	206	31,431	23,733	7,698
Missions - General	5,634	4,030	1,604	31,287	31,504	-217
Music Ministry	2,945	2,705	240	14,250	13,021	1,229
Office Operations	1,911	1,999	-88	8,003	10,472	-2,469
Other	542	97	445	1,848	1,275	573
SG Expenses	893	999	-106	5,346	6,497	-1,151
SG Staff	9,448	8,404	1,044	56,888	55,277	1,611
Worship	530	357	173	3,240	2,651	589
Zion Haus	446	695	-249	2,680	2,404	276
Zion Staff	32,504	31,416	1,088	202,129	194,749	7,380
Total Expenses	80,810	74,149	6,661	467,466	453,991	13,475
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	-4,574	-17,875	-13,301	-50,379	-73,462	-23,083

BALANCE SHEET	5/31/2023	11/30/2023	YTD Change
ASSETS			
Cash	120,658	61,520	-59,138
Investments	160,547	163,142	2,595
Due To/From Endowment	-12,713	-20,923	-8,209
Dedicated Funds	-73,123	-76,138	-3,015
TOTAL	195,369	127,602	-67,767
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities	5,850	6,260	411
Unrestricted Funds	189,519	121,341	-68,178
TOTAL	195,369	127,602	-67,767

MORTGAGE LOAN

Balance 11/30/2023 \$433,004
 Monthly Payment \$6,350.00
 Additional Principal \$0.00

Dedicated Accounts with Balances over \$3,000

Youth Ministry \$11,174
 New Staff \$35,734
 Midweek Dinner/Kitchen \$3,253
 Bazaar \$9,642

Monthly Publication of

Zion Lutheran Church

January

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 479
KALAMAZOO, MI

2122 Bronson Boulevard, Kalamazoo, MI 49008

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Epiphany