



Looking Up | Reaching Out

**ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**The Annual Report  
Of  
Mission and Ministry  
2021-2022**

## **The Annual Report of Mission and Ministry 2021-2022**

Zion Lutheran Church – Kalamazoo [www.zionkazoo.org](http://www.zionkazoo.org)

### **SENIOR PASTOR**

There is no way to underestimate the commitment of the congregation and staff to our ministry, which enabled us to navigate the surprises and fears of a global pandemic over the past several years. The understanding of Zion's members that we are all ministers and are blessed to be a blessing allows us to continue despite all of the confusion and setbacks we faced. Thank you for your commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and willingness to support our common mission of nurturing, celebrating, and sharing this faith through our love for God and neighbor. Zion continues to be a special people!

As Senior Pastor, I am called to serve as a servant leader for the people and staff of Zion. My responsibilities include the conduct and scheduling of worship, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, counseling, and articulating our shared vision of ministry so that it continues to be Christ centered, coordinated, and spiritually relevant in our cultural and community reality. I serve as advisor to the Board of Directors, all ministry teams, and am assigned the responsibility of supervising the called and paid staff of Zion.

The impact of the Coronavirus continues to impact our culture and this congregation. We worked in new ways to deal with those changes and have continued to maintain some of our new approaches to ministry that were forced upon us by these new realities. While we were able to resume more face-to-face worship, meetings, and midweek meals, we also realized that many were not ready to join large crowds, and some might never come back. It is too early to tell what all the long-term implications of the last years will be.

We continue to live-stream worship, use Zoom for Bible studies, as well as Facebook and YouTube for devotions and spiritual growth. I continue to write devotions on Mondays and Fridays and have added an online course called "Walk Through the Bible" to assist with our members' personal and group Bible study. This is not a chapter-by-chapter explanation of each book, but an overview of purpose and themes of each to make them easier to read. My hope is this will help everyone with the Sunday readings as well.

My Bible classes on Sunday mornings as well as my Saturday Men's class continue to grow. Every Thursday I record a sermon for our WKZO Sunday program that Zion has sponsored for over seventy years. I also continue to write the special devotional meditations and worship for Advent and Lent. The Harbinger has become a special means of spiritual growth and support, and many have told me that they share portions of it with family and friends.

Summer parking lot worship services were so well received that many have requested to maintain them again this summer at the 10am service. The changes to our Christmas Eve and Easter worship schedules to assist in distancing were continued again this year. We also post our Advent and Lenten midweek worship services on Facebook and YouTube for those who are unable to get out. We maintain weekly emails of announcements to the entire congregation to make communication a priority. We are finding that people are better informed than in the past and are not missing some of the worship opportunities that were the case in the past. Last year I was finally able to publish a book called "Life Crossings; Learning to Look Both Ways." Over the years many have suggested that some of the stories and illustrations that I have utilized in the newsletter and sermons should be shared in this way, and so it finally happened. An interesting side benefit of all of these efforts has been the realization that much of our ministry is reaching beyond the walls of Zion. Congregations have typically judged their success

in ministry by the number of members, worship attendance, and financial giving. We have learned from online comments, phone calls, and mail that Facebook, YouTube, and WKZO, are reaching many people who will never come to Zion, but are being introduced to the Good News, and supported in their faith journey by our efforts. It is good to remember ministry is about planting seeds which grow in places and ways we might never see. We are relearning what it means to be missionaries and allow the Holy Spirit to be the energy that helps such seeds to grow and blossom. One of the benefits of COVID is that our outreach efforts have increased and diversified.

My ministry is blessed by the efforts of our ministry team including Pastor Brelje's ministry to our homebound members, Pastor Couch's assistance in some worship services and contact with our members, and DCE Aaron Grube's ministry with our families, children, and young adults. Our support team of Marta Warren (office,) Michelle Devine (custodial), and Monica Slesinski (bookkeeper) are also a vital and energetic part of our ministry team. We are all thankful for the support, patience, and thanks that all of you have offered to us.

We have begun a call process, which is moving more slowly than all would like, to eventually bring in my replacement. I love what I am doing and am blessed to be a part of Zion's ministry, continue to find myself full of passion for what I do, and feel in many ways I am doing things better than I was able to twenty years ago. Experience is a great teacher! But after forty-six years as a full-time pastor, I realize I cannot do what I am doing now forever. This is a positive transition toward an inevitable reality, facilitated in a responsible, orderly, and loving fashion. When the new Senior Pastor is called, he will be THE pastor of the congregation. I will do all I can to step out of the way so you so he can develop the relationship and support for each other that will be necessary for successful and growing ministry to continue. I am committed to whatever I can do to support ministry in and through Zion in the future.

I do look forward to more free time for creativity to write, travel, share photography, and be a better husband, father, and grandfather, while still being available for new ministry ventures and opportunities that I am called on to share. Zion and this community will always be my home base. I am blessed to be part of this congregational ministry we engage in as we work together in our Gospel focused mission.

Zion's future is exciting and will be blessed as long as we continue to pray for guidance and allow ministry to be shared and allocated by all whom God has blessed to be in our midst. This is a partnership of ministry and together we will continue to accomplish so much more than we could do on our own. God is good and the glory is all his!

Pastor Tim Seeber

### **CAMPUS MINISTRY**

In many ways, the 2021-2022 academic year was a year of new beginnings and starting over. Instead of having a Sunday worship service on campus at Solid Grounds, we decided to make the transition to attending the 10:30AM service at Zion, followed by pizza after service.

As the new academic year began in September 2021, I felt a tugging to try and reach WMU staff workers, especially those who work in maintenance, landscaping and facilities. They are the "forgotten" part of the campus community. We were able to make connections with them through a new campus/community outreach that took place on Tuesday's during the lunch hour.

During the months of September and October, we sold Popeye's chicken sandwiches outside Solid Grounds. The goal of this weekly fundraiser was to raise both funds and awareness of the plight of victims of human trafficking in SW Michigan. The Kalamazoo YWCA runs a shelter for victims of human trafficking. The funds that we received from the sale of the sandwiches went to the Kalamazoo YWCA to support the work of their shelter.

During the weekly fundraiser on Tuesday's during the lunch hour, there were around 10-12 WMU Maintenance, Facility, and Landscaping workers that stopped by to purchase a sandwich and make a donation to the YWCA. This gave me the chance to build friendships with the WMU staff and let them know that I want to support them and be open to serving them in whatever way is most helpful.

This summer, we have had cookouts and luncheons for WMU staff members as a way to continue to build on those friendships and connections that began in the Fall semester.

We have been able to build on our connection with the Kalamazoo YWCA to begin a new outreach program for WMU students to serve in the community. The volunteer coordinator at the YWCA told me that one of their needs is for the children of the women who are victims of domestic violence at their shelter to have positive interaction and care.

So, beginning in late March 2022, around 6 WMU students and I began volunteering on Tuesday evenings at the shelter, spending an hour playing and interacting with the kids at the YWCA shelter. During the summer months, there have been 4 WMU students volunteering. We plan on continuing those endeavors this upcoming academic year, and hope to add more WMU student volunteers.

This past academic year, there were 4 new incoming students that became the new core group of students. They started a Friday night Card & Game night at Solid Grounds, which became our big fellowship event.

God's peace to you all!  
Pastor Mark Couch

### **ASSISTANT to the PASTOR (part time)**

The following are my pastoral activities over the past year as part-time, assistant pastor of Zion Lutheran Church:

1. I make monthly, personal visits and bring Holy Communion to home-bound members of Zion and a few Lutheran non-members. Presently there are 24 home-bound members on whom I call.
2. From September through May I teach a weekly, hour-long, Tuesday morning Bible class attended by 15-20 persons. The class includes some non-members.
3. Tuesdays and Fridays are my regular weekly days to be at Zion and to make calls on members including hospital calls.
4. I serve as preacher and/or liturgist at funeral services as requested by family members or staff members of Zion.
5. Other occasional activities at Zion include preaching, serving as liturgist, teaching Sunday adult classes, new member classes, and aiding Pastor Seeber and other staff members when asked as I can.

My goal for the coming year is to continue to fulfill the above responsibilities and to be of service to the congregation and staff in other ways as I am able. Pastor Larry Brelje

## **DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

I remember when this all started everything became virtual. Watch parties online, Pictionary through Zoom, Online classes! Another three months passed and it switched to take home packets, hybrid learning, and anything outdoors. Three months later yet another change comes. The pressure to adapt and keep innovating has been in full force.

It's exhausting!

But for a Jesus follower, the calling to adapt and innovate is actually pretty common...or at least it was for those first Jesus followers.

Think about it...

Mary and Joseph had to adapt even as Jesus entered this world! No room in the inn?  
Head for the stable! Adapt!

Jesus calling those first disciples? Adapt! Leave everything and come follow me!

The teachings of Jesus – wait a minute, this isn't anything like we thought it was! What are you talking about, Jesus? We have to adapt our thinking?

The many times Jesus healed – One thing I know, I was blind but now I see! Adapt to a new way of living!

The miracles of Jesus – we don't have any food – how do we feed a crowd this large? Adapt...what do you have? 5 loaves, 2 fish? Let's make it work...

Holy Week – this is not the King we expected...adapt...whoops! They didn't adapt.

The farewell tour...I'm not going to always be with you – adapt – but I'll send some help. The Holy Spirit will help you as you share the Good News.

Fast forward another year and the innovating has continued. After a second year of "unconventional" ministry, I don't think I'd ever want to go back.

As difficult, challenging, and overwhelming all this adapting can be, remember it's the way Jesus did ministry. As you continue to reach out to a world that is constantly changing, continue in your efforts of adapting. And remember – the message doesn't change, but the way we share it does. God sent His only Son Jesus into the world for you. He died for you! He came back to life! His new life gives you new life! That's the message!

And you're not alone...the Holy Spirit empowers that adapting. So don't give up and get used to adapting! I think it's the way Jesus would have us follow Him. The goal shouldn't be to "return to the way things were." They were flawed. Isolation exposed them. We haven't been growing! Our job isn't to conform to the adaptation, it is to continue to innovate and adapt! Some great things happened in the past year but they only happened because our traditions were questioned, our routines were disrupted, and we followed where the Holy Spirit led. I'm tired! It's been a terribly long and strenuous two years. THANK YOU to all those on Ministry Teams who have shared the load and answered the Holy Spirit's Call. Get ready to embark on continued new adventures!

-Aaron Grube, DCE

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The mission of the Board of Directors is to have oversight responsibility for strategic planning, the management of resources, the financial soundness of the congregation, the spiritual welfare of the congregation, and the completion of ministry programs.

The terms of Steve Butt (Past President), Todd Schierbeek (VP Property), Helen Fierke and John DuBois (Directors at large) ended in May and we thank them for their service to Zion.

Members of the Board of Directors for the 2022-23 and year their term expires:

President: Garr Gast (2024)	Past President: Dave Alsvig (2023)
President Elect: Joe Zerbel (2025)	Vice President Personnel: Dana Butt (2024)
VP Property: Ron Masek (2025)	VP Finance: Don Klug (2023)
Directors at Large: Adam Brege (2023)	Lynn Gerfen (2023),
Judy Adlam (2024), Fritz Klug (2024)	Sue Bickel (2025), Rita Linnenkugel (2025)

The congregation meets annually to elect leaders and adopt a budget for the coming year. The congregation must come together in a meeting to call full time church workers, engage in debt, or purchase property. All other activities of the congregation are carried on by the Board on behalf of the congregation.

The Covid epidemic provided many difficult and involved meetings to deal first with the mandated shut down, regulations and directives of the state and local health departments and balancing the welfare of congregation and staff with the practical needs of maintaining a vibrant ministry during a time none of us have experienced before.

Much time was spent discussing future ministry, dealing with the unfortunate closure of the preschool, and beginning the process for calling a new senior pastor. The board has been very engaged in all these efforts and the creation of a Call Committee which presents their progress and recommendation to the board. Our first call for a pastor was declined and we are supporting the call committee (who have all agreed to continue in their service) to move forward in the next stage.

The board has also begun to explore the possibility of either a DCE intern or calling another DCE to assist in our ministry with children and young families. This person might also be helpful in either the areas of music or preschool depending on the direction this process leads us into. Much time has and will be spent in also looking at the long-term resources of the congregation and how that best can serve our congregation and community through existing or potentially new ministries.

## **ALTAR MINISTRY**

Altar Ministry is committed to providing service to all church members through preparation of the Lord's Table for the sacrament of Holy Communion, as well as beautification of the sanctuary according to liturgical seasons.

The Covid pandemic created a challenge in the past 12 months due to necessary adaptations to the administration of communion for both indoor and outdoor services. Adaptations have required the following changes: discontinued use of the common cup for wine and utilizing only individual cups; the exclusive use of wafers in individual soufflé cups instead of bread. These changes have resulted in increased time for preparation as well as increased cost. In

addition, more assistance must be provided to pastors and assistants /ushers during outdoor service.

It is our goal to continue to actively recruit and train new members, and adapt as necessary to ensure the needs of the church family can be met.

We thank all of our ministry members who have faithfully risen to meet these new challenges, and pray for their continued service.

Special thanks to the following individuals who helped lead us through this journey: Dee Wentzel, Lynne Gerfen, Larry and Joe Zerbel, Vickie Asaro, and Lucy Maxson.

We welcome anyone interested in more information about this ministry to contact Melissa Noseworthy at 269-345-7304, or Vickie Asaro at 269-629-5426.

Melissa Noseworthy

### **CANTOR/VOCALIST**

No cantoring was done in the past 12 months due to COVID. Singing is a huge spreader event and therefore, was paused during this time. Vocalist who felt safe enough lead hymn singing at the 10:30 service during June, July, and August. Participants include Karen Stokes-Chapo, Alison Carlson, Julie Ream and Wanda Jewett. Occasionally, Greg Gerfen contributed on trumpet and Aaron Grube on drums. Contact Church office or Senior Pastor for more information.

Wanda Jewett

### **CHRISTIAN ART MINISTRY**

The purpose of our ministry is to provide the congregation with another means to experience and express their Christian spirituality. As a ministry team, we are responsible for providing appropriate and meaningful opportunities, by way of displays, classes or workshops, presentations and more to fulfill this purpose. The words "responsible," "appropriate" and "meaningful" are core to the sometimes delicate, diplomatic nature of choosing programming. Our mission statement is "To develop and support the gift of art as a vibrant means of fostering spiritual insight, growth of our faith community while also serving as an outreach within our community."

We are currently working to reinvigorate this ministry which has a gallery located in BLENDS and invite more members to participate in this ministry. The displays we have shared since the beginning of the year, as we gradually opened the building back up included a photographic display of closeups of the stained-glass window, Judy Finnegan's stations of the cross using handmade paper and her creative interpretations, Watanabe prints of Biblical stories using traditional Japanese block print style, and currently Phil Kunze's production of archived photos related to the history of this congregation. We are hopeful of finding more of our members who would enjoy assisting in the efforts to keeping this a vibrant ministry for Zion and the community. Contact the church office if you need further information or would like to be involved.

Pastor Seeber

### **COMMUNICATION MINISTRY**

In September of 2019, a Communication Ministry Team was formed. The goal of this team was basically to update the website and initiate a boost in our social media presence. This Team was a result of the Board of Directors Vision and Planning Retreat that happened a few months earlier. The Communication Team set off on assignments and some other ideas came up, such as livestreaming a worship service. We decided to test this out the Sunday before Christmas of

2019. We learned a lot from that test run...a lot that we didn't even realize we would need to know!

Three months later our recording ability became a necessity. Fritz Klug was an essential part of getting the worship service online and available to everyone. Livestream equipment and plans were put into place and we even went old school with an FM radio transmitter for our parking lot service. Other than staffing/volunteers, we were surprisingly well equipped because of the plans we had started months earlier.

This team did not continue on as much of the responsibilities remained with Fritz and staff. Plans are to reinstitute this ministry team as many of our efforts have remained or switched completely to online. We continue to utilize Facebook and YouTube to showcase ministry opportunities and to celebrate community. We even have the workings of an "online community" as many we reach do not live in Kalamazoo or even the state of Michigan.

Aaron Grube

**ENDOWMENT MINISTRY**

**Mission**

*Ensure the proper stewardship of Endowment for Zion Lutheran Church. The endowment is intended to provide Zion Ministries with financial support for line items not included in the annual operating budget. The Endowment will fund the following activities: Start-up and development of new ministries, scholarships for professional church workers, major building maintenance, and church music programs as specified within the Endowment Regulations.*

**Ministry Highlights & Gifting**

- *Since 1975, the Endowment Fund has disbursed over \$1.2million in grants/scholarships.*
- *Year Ending 2021, the Endowment Fund value was \$1,912,316*
- *For the last 28 years, Endowment Investments have been enabling an annual grant disbursement budget of 6% of the fund's value.*
- *Endowment Fund Major Gifts*
  - *The Helm Music Endowment of \$75,000 was gifted in 1997.*
  - *The Heinz estate bequeathed \$52,100 in 2003.1*
  - *Doris Dinda gifted \$35,000 to Zion's Endowment in 2004.*
  - *Anonymous Gift of \$10,000 was received in 2015.*
  - *Dinda gift of \$52,000 to Helm fund in 2019*
  - *Maier Gift of \$447,439 to Campus Ministry in 2019*

<i>Fund Value</i>	<i>Calendar Year</i>	<i>Grants Paid</i>	<i>Zion Ministries</i>	<i>Property Ministry</i>	<i>Outreach Ministries</i>	<i>Scholarships</i>	<i>Music Ministry</i>
	1975-2015	\$1,134,665	\$318,613	\$364,708	\$216,800	\$178,393	\$56,151
\$ 996,694	2016	36,244	9,636	19,559	2,799	-0-	4,250
\$ 1,070,373	2017	42,060	3,333	12,733	24,744	-0-	1,250
\$ 1,505,893	2018	28,390	1,885	5,190	18,716	0	2,600
\$1,588,855	2019	32,702	6,218	6,639	9,619	0	0
\$1,969,405	2020	35,563	1,200	12,809	5,837	0	2,145
\$1,912,316	2021	40,076	9,503	21,467	2,113	0	2,775
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$1,349,700</b>	<b>\$350,388</b>	<b>\$443,105</b>	<b>\$280,628</b>	<b>\$178,393</b>	<b>\$69,171</b>
		100.0%	26.96%	32.83%	20.79%	13.22%	5.12%



## Goals for 2022

- Continue investment policies that sustain an Endowment Grant Budget of 6%.
- Continue to meet every two months to review grant submissions
- Review fund investment strategy with Professional Investment Manager every four months.
- Encourage congregation to submit grant applications.
- Encourage and support member legacy gifting to grow the Endowment Fund.

## Administration

Applications for grants, church worker and music scholarships can be obtained from the church office.

Endowment grants can be completed for Zion member mission trips, servant events, challenge or matching grants, start-up ministries, mission congregation support, major building maintenance, church music concerts and recitals.

Zion's Endowment can NOT be used for loans or items included in Zion's Annual Budget. Invested principal must be preserved; only earned interest, dividends, and realized investment appreciation can be disbursed for Board approved grants.

Members are encouraged to include the Zion Lutheran Endowment Fund in their wills, estate bequests or memorials, partner in "passing it forward", and become a member of the Zion Lutheran Founders Society.

## 2021 Investment Summary

<b>Transactions</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
Beginning Value January 1st	\$1,902,926	\$1,704,737	\$1,070,373	\$996,694
Add: Contributions/Memorials/Stock Splits	52,859	125,229	52,202	9,718
Add: Campus Ministry	(12,000)	(12,000)	447,439	0
Add: Interest & Dividends	31,216	30,512	28,084	22,381
Less: Wire Transfers – Grant Disbursements	(40,076)	(44,099)	(25,000)	(50,627)
Less: Investment Management Fees	(8,536)	(7,214)	(6,961)	(6,177)
Stock Growth	230,780	53,764	(60,244)	98384
<b>Ending Value December 31st</b>	<b>\$1,982,079</b>	<b>\$1,856,275</b>	<b>\$1,505,893</b>	<b>\$1,070,373</b>

## **2021 Grant Disbursements**

\* Ministry Categories: **Property**; **Zion**; **Outreach**; **Music**

<b>Grants &amp; Scholarships</b>	<b>Cat*</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Balance</b>
WMU Brass (Reform. & All Saints)	M	1875	(175)
Life Issues (Wed. Night Workshop)	Z	0	1,200
Pastoral Care Ministry Development	Z	470	430
FOJ Preschool Director (tabled)	Z	0	0
FOJ Preschool supplies	Z	0	4,820
"Welcome Back" Picnic	O	2,123	1,137
Education Hour Revamp	Z	8,043	957
Campus lunches (Chick-fil-A), Popeyes	C	1,208	542
Zion Haus Roof Replacement & Chimney Fix	P	15,327	1,673
Parking Lot lights	P	6,140	0
WMU Music Students to Assist Grayson	M	900	2,700
Quarterly Campus Funding	C	3,000	9,000
Blessing Bag Service Project	O	0	1,000
Young Adult Volunteering @ National Youth Gathering	Z	990	595
Scholarship Jason Groth	S	0	5,000
Sanctuary LED Lighting Upgrade	P	39,906	39,906
<b>2021 Grant Payments and Balances</b>		<b>\$79,982</b>	<b>\$68,785</b>

*If you have any questions about Zion's Endowment Funds, please contact these Endowment Ministry members: Mark Meyer, Rhonda Newman, Lorraine Hanna, and Pastor Seeber.*

*Dennis O'Brien*

### **FAMILY MINISTRY**

Events were challenging for Family Ministry the past two years – we couldn't get together! Instead, we talked vision and did a lot of evaluation. We landed on "Family Ministry provides opportunities for families at Zion to be more connected to each other, to Zion, and to God." One good result of a discussion on how to do this without being able to meet together ended with a Christmas video and an Easter video – both of which were made by families from Zion! We also had some Advent Bible stories that were created and filmed at home. A 'pen pals' for Sunday School aged kids was encouraged and families were hand delivered 'at home' packets. These packets fostered spiritual conversations at home. They were linked to videos, activities, and Bible stories that parents and kids could work through TOGETHER. Parents were so much more equipped during the pandemic year to do exactly what Martin Luther says to do in the Catechism: Faith conversations in the home...as to be instructed by the head of the house.

Summer of 2020 brought a 'drive-in' VBS to the table. We had three preschool families (not connected to Zion in any other way) in addition to some of our own families. It was different...but it was fun! We also hosted the Congregational Service Project and packed 20,000+ meals for Loaves and Fishes, Mattawan Food Pantry, and 12 Baskets. Over 60 volunteers

helped! It would be one of the only "large gatherings" for another year or so. We also shared some hot chocolate when families were encouraged to drop off their Shoebox for Operation Christmas Child. We donated 40 boxes to Samaritan's Purse before Christmas. Yet again, so many new ways to involve families in growing closer to God, Zion, and each other.

2021 brought about a little more stability as we tried a few fun evenings and events but had a slow return of families. We again had a VBS, this time completely outdoors. Our congregational service project had a good turnout and we made 100 fleece tie blankets for sick and recovering people in hospitals. These blankets had a barcode attached which led recipients to a message from Zion. That message has been viewed so many times, which means a good number of people have received our works of service. We also packed shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child again.

Aaron Grube

### **FINANCE MINISTRY**

With the direction of the Board of Directors, the Finance Ministry Team is responsible for the orderly conduct of the financial business of the congregation, including the implementation of the approved budget, the education and encouragement of the congregation in the stewardship of our financial resources, and management of collected funds. The membership this year included Don Klug (VP of Finance), Joni LaPointe, Kayla Laurin, Stan Leitz and Monica Slesinski.

For the fiscal year ending May 31, 2022, the following was accomplished: 1) the blessing of strong giving income by the congregation resulted in a positive net income for the year and allowed funding to pay down Mortgage Loan; 2) set the 2022/23 budget with a 3.5% increase and a similar increase in expenses; 3) made additional payments on the Mortgage Principal, further reducing the balance from \$729,504 to \$581,556; 4) worked to increase congregational knowledge about Zion Finances.

Goals for the coming year include the following: 1) responsibly managing the income and expenses to assure Zion can continue to implement its chosen ministries; 2) keeping the congregation well informed regarding the financial state of the church via the monthly Harbinger.

Any congregation member who would like to participate in or support this ministry may contact Don Klug through the church office.

Monica Slesinski

### **FRIENDS OF JESUS PRESCHOOL**

Friends of Jesus Preschool had to shut down when the rest of the world shut down in March 2020. For close to two months, teachers and staff worked on learning and at home packets for the families. Linda Stieve did music and Aaron did chapels – both virtually. Over the summer our entire staff resigned and the Ministry Team was left with the difficult decision to not open in the Fall, with the hope we might be able to open in January 2021.

Due to the level of uncertainty and ever changing state guidelines, this was not a possibility either. Our Director search probed the surface of Calling a full time worker who would be the Director of the Preschool as well as Children's Ministry Director for Zion. Leadership decided to stick with a part-time Director from the community.

We had a Director hired but COVID struck again and she was unable to fulfil her commitment to being the Director. The hiring process started up once again and we hired another Director, with the same outcome. We again made the difficult decision to remain closed.

Further discussions by the Board of Directors, many surrounding the challenges to early childhood education during these times, have led to other opportunities for reaching families of students in that age group. A "Playdates at Zion" group will be starting up in the summer of 2022. While the future of a preschool at Zion remains uncertain, ministry to families of that age group will continue on while the rest of the world tries to stabilize.

Aaron Grube

### **FUNERAL LUNCHEONS**

This special ministry has been carried out faithfully for many years, providing assistance with food and fellowship immediately after a funeral service at Zion. During our COVID experience we were unable to maintain such meals, and with the changing dynamics of what families are comfortable with, we have not yet resumed, but are open to finding new ways to assist in such fashion. Leona VanAntwerp and Bev Snow have been responsible for the menu, cooking, and coordination of volunteers. When we reinstitute this ministry of caring and support, we will be in need of additional volunteers to help.

Pastor Tim Seeber

### **GLORIA DEI SINGERS "GLORY TO GOD" – ADULT CHOIR**

During the past 12 months, the adult choir held a limited amount of singing due to COVID. However, we were able to provide welcomed voices at Christmas and Easter services as well as enjoying the accompaniment of a flute, pianist along with bells. During May we were able to sing at four services and recruited much needed two new members.

Members include: Alison Carlson, Karen Stokes-Chapo, Curt Chapman, Vicki Holt, Laurel Miner, Dennis O'Brien, Todd Schierbeek, June VerSluis, Joe Moulton and accompanied by Rebeca McLaren Craft and Roxanne Nieboer.

Goals are to rehearse every Thursday night sing a minimum of three services, early and late, each month September thru May. For additional information please contact Church Office or Senior Pastor

Wanda Jewett

### **GRATEFUL HEARTS THANKFUL HANDS BAZAAR MINISTRY**

Mission: to provide an annual fellowship event in which all members of Zion can give of their time and God-given talents and thereby contribute to both Zion ministries and mission outreach in the community.

The Grateful Hearts Thankful Hands Bazaar ministry was founded in 2009 with a grant from Zion's Endowment as a way to raise funds to reduce Zion's LURO building debt and provide support to other Zion Ministries. The bazaar is held each year on the third Saturday in November. Members are asked to use their talents to create and donate handmade items as well as canned and baked goods. Gently used household items, home decor, jewelry, holiday decor, books, etc. may also be donated for the very popular Attic Treasures area. Our goal is to provide quality products at reasonable prices for our community to purchase at the bazaar.

In 2021 we were excited once again to be able to have the bazaar after the COVID hiatus. We continued using the theme "From our Hearts to your Hands" and raised \$6,237.83. We disbursed \$6,000 giving LURO 30%, Zion Youth 25%, Shalom 25% and the Deacon's Conference 20%. The

remaining \$237.83 is put aside for expenses as needed. As a further opportunity to be of service within the community our Attic Treasures "leftovers" are picked up by the Deacon's Conference to be distributed to families who need these household items.

Our goals for the future are to maintain this ministry and involve as many of Zion's members as possible to assure its success as we desire to serve both Zion and the community.

Our committee is co-chaired by Jayne Mayer and Linda Mayer. Food chair people are Amy Nelson Gumbleton, Dee Wentzel, Lynne Gerfen, and Jeanette Meyer

Jayne Mayer

### **HARBINGER VOLUNTEER MINISTRY**

This team's mission is to in a timely and efficient manner prepare the monthly newsletter for bulk mailing.

COVID created a need to improve our processes due to decreased resources. Paper and toner shortages, along with people concerned about being in-person drove several changes. The weight and size of the paper was reduced resulting in a significant cost savings, producing the newsletter on the office copier versus the Riso addressed the office staffing shortage providing the ability to multi-task while newsletter pages printed. Additionally, the supplies for the copier resulted in an additional cost savings over the supply cost of Riso.

Regarding the Volunteer Team, it was initially a reduced number of volunteers this past year which gradually returned to normal as people became comfortable returning to in-person activity. The team meets one time per month collating, folding, applying required mailing tabs and mailing labels. Changing the size of paper made the teams work much easier, and reduced the mailing cost due to weight reduction. Additionally, the team is able to work much faster as the collating step has been eliminated by using the automated collating feature on the office copier. Riso cannot collate and volunteers previously had to collate all the pages by hand prior to folding, tabbing and applying labels. The volunteers have greatly appreciated the new format. Lastly, the number of people receiving the electronic version has increased resulting in a small cost and time savings as well.

This team is a joy to coordinate and each member knows their job on the team well. The members are: Bonnie Borak, Pat Frohnapfel, Phyllis Huberty, Mary Phillips, Lynne Gerfen, Lucy Maxson, Sharon Oisten, Kathy Pfeifer, and Kathleen Jordan.

For more information on this ministry, contact Marta at Church Office.

Marta Warren

### **HELPING HANDS**

Our purpose is to share God's love and resources with community families who are economically challenged by providing food and gifts during the Christmas season.

For the past several years we have helped seven to eight families from the greater Kalamazoo area. The Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services along with the Salvation Army provide the names of community families who are seeking holiday assistance. We help by purchasing gifts for the families along with providing food for their Christmas dinner. Additional food items are also purchased along with other items of necessity.

The program begins during the middle of November and concludes on the night we deliver all the gifts, just before Christmas. We have a sponsor family at Zion for each family we are helping

and they contact them to find out what kinds of gifts and food items they would like. The gifts are listed on trees and Zion members select the tree(s) of their choice, purchase and return them to church. The sponsor families wrap the gifts, purchase food and various items, and prepare for the delivery. We also invite our community members to our Christmas services. This program has been very blessed by all the support and generosity of our Zion members. Organizers of this activity are Jayne and Jim Mayer.

Jim Mayer

### **HELPING OTHERS**

Mission Statement - We will reach out with Jesus's love and help children and adults in our community. In the Bible it is written that what God gave us is for all. Matthew 25:40 tells us the Lord regards our gifts to the needy as gifts to Him..."for I tell you the truth, whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine you did for me." The purpose for Zion is to become involved in helping people in our community by giving them school supplies and health care items.

Each year Zion members have been very generous in supporting our Helping Others Ministry by donating the requested health care items, wash cloths and bath towels and school supplies. We collect health care items in the spring. This year 25 boxes of health care items and 3 garbage bags of bath towels were delivered to Ministry with Community. In July we begin to collect school supplies. This is when school ads come out so it is a convenient financial time to be involved. In September these items are delivered to Community In Schools Kalamazoo. This organization provides materials to needy elementary through high school students throughout the year.

Our goal is to continue this great mission, as it is one of the missions that is very visible to ALL Zion members and children can actively participate. Members can be involved by continuing to faithfully donate the requested items.

Jayne Mayer

### **HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY**

Of all the things cancelled in the past two years, our summer servant events were NOT! We were able to send 5 students and 2 adults to Camp Concordia in Gowen, MI in 2020. At camp we built a lean-to that would allow the Camp to have "outdoor" camp. The week after we finished they saw 40+ campers using the structure to keep their luggage dry and have some privacy while changing. We also helped erect their teepee rope swing in the water and painted some picnic tables. The camp served over 300 campers last year and our work was able to quietly impact each of them! In 2021 we ventured down to Chillicothe, OH. After doing some finishing touches on a house that other groups had spent a large amount of time on, we became close to the homeowner who had horses. With her help (and serious experience and knowledge) we repaired the fence and painted it. This was not in the original project list but we finished her mother's house much quicker than anyone thought.

Bible study has been a constant even through the pandemic. Early on we switched to a virtual platform and had former students (now away at college) join us. We had some great discussions and because of this, a new group consisting of "Youth Group Alumni" began. Thanks to Zoom we could continue having faith discussions even after moving away!

High School Youth also hosted a few service projects and Zoom activities, including a virtual Christmas Party and a virtual cooking competition. Once restrictions lifted we went Axe Throwing...and no one lost any fingers! One highlight around Christmas of 2020 – luminaries.

Remember seeing those in the parking lot? The High School Youth made over 100 of them to remind us of the true Light = Christ.

The student leadership team met and discussed some vision statements. We landed on "Space to learn about God." We talked about the opportunity we have at Zion: many different high schools are represented in our congregation. With this we have an opportunity to really reach out to many spheres of influence.

The past year has been a little more of a struggle but we just capped it off with having 7 seniors join us for baccalaureate and an 8<sup>th</sup> one joining us for the senior farewell. This has been the most graduates attending a baccalaureate service since my arrival ten years ago. Another fun highlight was our ongoing coffee bar cart during donut/coffee hour. We had a lot of fun discussions with congregation members during these times!

Aaron Grube

### **HOME CHARITIES**

Zion has a discretionary fund for the Pastor called "Home Charities." The intent of this resource is to help members in need. While the givers and the gifted always remain confidential, it is good for you to know how these gifts do get used. This year we again were able to assist members with several thousand dollars' worth of assistance for clothing, food, utility payments, and other such items for families of Zion. We were also able to provide assistance for families in the community through YWCA domestic assault program and Ministry with Community when they needed additional resources for families in distress.

If you have emergency needs, contact Pastor Seeber for confidential help. **(This really is confidential!)** Home Charities depends solely on the donations of members. Any donations should be clearly marked for "Home Charities." As Jesus said, "*When you have done this for the least of one of these you have done it for me*". Zion is special, and due to the generosity of many members, we continue to have a healthy balance as emergencies arise. This is YOUR ministry and a powerful and confidential way of sharing the love of Jesus when "some of his children are hurting."

Pastor Tim Seeber

### **LIBRARY MINISTRY**

The purpose of the library ministry is to provide resources to support the spiritual growth of our congregation. We have benefitted from special gifts, the endowment fund, and some budget support to add to our resources and support for the family of Zion. The pew bags, available for children during worship, are part of this ministry. Our ministry team of Marirose Meimers, Carol Daenzer, and Linda Kanamueller had worked to reinvigorate this ministry which was closed during the first eighteen months of Covid. Eighteen months later Marirose, Carol, and Linda have been joined by Lila Hauge-Stoffel to purge dated and unused resources and we are ready for members to utilize this resource again. Any who would like to help support this ministry, or simply for further information are encouraged to talk to a member of the ministry team or call the church office.

Pastor Tim Seeber

### **LITTLE DRESSES FOR AFRICA**

This ministry sews simple sundresses that tie onto girls' shoulders which are distributed to villages in Africa through a ministry that was started by a Christian woman in the Detroit area. You can check out the stories and see the photos of dress distributions at [www.littledressesforafrica.org](http://www.littledressesforafrica.org). As of June 1, 2022 Zion members have made and donated more than 14,000 dresses to this ministry. We have expanded our projects to coincide with a necessity for fabric (reusable) feminine hygiene pads to allow girls to stay in school during their cycles. These are usually made of flannel or other absorbent fabric. Our industrious seamstresses are Helen Reinkensmeyer, Mary Phillips, and Roxanne Seeber. We get contributions of completed dresses from other members of the congregation, including Cindy Bierlein. We appreciate the donations and find that when we think we might be running out of supplies, our "box" runneth over. Thank you to our many loyal contributors who scour the resale stores and garage sales for fabric! Congregation members who wish to support us can provide (new or slightly used) sheets and pillowcases (including flannel); fabric; trims, elastic and sew-on Velcro. We have a drop off box in the workroom, just to the left of the door. It takes a village to dress a village! If you have basic sewing skills and a machine available, send us a message at [seeber@michigantownshiplaw.com](mailto:seeber@michigantownshiplaw.com). We can always use the help!

Roxanne Seeber

### **LOAVES AND FISHES**

Loaves and Fishes was formed to give assistance to those in need of food. Donations from Zion members and friends are collected every week in the two bins by the office. Clean plastic and brown paper bags are also needed. Once a week the goods are taken to Trinity Lutheran Church by Bruce and Dorothy DeDee or Carol and Benno Rosin. There the food is sorted and given out by the Trinity volunteers known as *The Pantry Gang*. Each year the need for food donations increases so every item donated at Zion is greatly appreciated! Thank you!

Bruce and Dorothy DeDee

### **LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF SEWING AND KNITTING**

Our L.W.R. Quilt and Baby Care Kits sewing project members meet every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There are currently 12 ladies sewing and knitting. We work from January until mid-October, when everything that is completed is shipped out. Each year we distribute over 100 Baby Care Kits and over 100 quilts. We appreciate all the many donations of fabric, bath-size soap, socks, undershirts, towels, 14x24 diapers, and flannel blankets. Our knitters have very generously supplied us with beautiful sweaters and caps. Baby Care Kits are welcome gifts to mothers and newborns at hospitals, refugee camps, and villages all around the world. A quilt is very special; it serves as warmth on cold nights, shelter from the sun, a room divider, a bed, a backpack, and sometimes a home.

We encourage anyone to visit our group on Wednesday mornings, to share our work, and to join us. Our goal is to continue doing the Lord's work by reaching out and helping the needs of many unfortunate people in the world.

Leona VanAntwerp



**MEMORIAL RECORDS MINISTRY** is committed to recording all member deaths in the historical church registry, updating member record in church database, tracking and acknowledging contributions, and creating a memorial page for the memorial book. In addition to past practice, an electronic memorial log via an excel spreadsheet has been created as a quick reference / tracking tool. For more information about this ministry contact Marta Warren 269.382.2360.

Marta Warren

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH/CONFIRMATION**

Confirmation during the pandemic happened 5 months late, in October. This celebration was after the late service and was livestreamed for our out of town family and friends. The confirmands created a book – each one sharing in their own way, a testimony of faith. The second Confirmation happened at the typical April time. Our first meal back in the building was the Confirmation Banquet in which we had families spread around the room to share in some fellowship and celebration. Students designed an object and did a write-up on how this object was a representation of their faith life. Confirmation 2022 was much closer to pre-pandemic confirmations as we had a great banquet and much more regular classes. The project this year was a giant puzzle, with each student being a piece to that puzzle. The class had come up with this idea representing feeling like a fractured community. This class has not had a “normal” year since their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year ended with the pandemic, their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year was full of experimentation and hybrid styles, and their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year began with those same precautions. With all the changes, I think we miss retreats the most. We were still able to do some fun events and service projects but retreats really helped build the community.

Aaron Grube

### **MIDWEEK DINNERS**

Midweek dinners are held on Wednesday at 5:15 and are open to everyone for a suggested donation of \$4.00. The dinner allows you to ‘break bread’ with Zion family members and to easily attend a class meeting or special service on Wednesday without having to prepare a meal at home. Like so many things, returning to our mid-week dinners has been a challenge. We began in September with limited and sporadic attendance numbers, making it difficult to plan and prepare meals. It was decided to take a break until the Advent services began and try again with soup suppers. With attendance evening out, we continued our dinners in January, serving 30 – 35 people each week.

Although our numbers fluctuated more than in the past, we could see an uptick as we moved into spring. Sensing that people were becoming more comfortable with gathering, as we saw them linger and visit after dinner, we expanded the program to begin with “Dessert First”, setting out coffee and cookies early for those who wanted to come for a social hour.

All meals are prepared by our dedicated volunteers: Lucy Maxson, Diana Moulton, Dee Wentzel, Lynne Gerfen and Denise O’Brien. Our setup/clean-up crew includes Larry Harding, Pastor Larry Brelje, Ted Maxson, Joe Moulton, Tom Cooper, Bruce and Dorothy DeDee and Dennis O’Brien. Cookies have been willingly donated by Kathleen Jordan, Elaine Biddle, Carol O’Connor, Lynne Gerfen and Amy Woznik. Thank you, thank you!

Do you have a dinner idea, want to help once a month, can you provide cookies, help by setting tables? There are many ways that you can be a part of this ministry, even if you are not able to be involved every week. If you would like to join us, please call Denise O’Brien at 269-762-0465.

Who knows what the fall will bring but menu planning has started! Please join us on Wednesday evenings starting in September. - Denise O’Brien

## **MUSIC MINISTRY**

The past three years has brought about major changes in our music ministry after the retirement of Helen Fierke. Covid followed soon after. Many have stepped up. Greg Gerfen has taken over leadership of the handbell choir, and coordinates much of the special music and musicians in worship. Wanda Jewett worked with the adults who wanted to sing in an adult choir. She is moving out of town and we are currently recruiting a new choir director. Many of our members have gotten involved now as soloists, song leaders, and instrumentalists assisting in worship. We have had wonderful stability with our organists and pianists, including Roxanne Nieboer, Rebecca Craft, Denise O'Brien, Grayson Nye, and Jim Johnston, all who have been with us for more than a few years. Grayson Nye is leaving this fall and has recruited a new WMU student, Aedan McCauley, who also accompanied Gold Company. Music is a vital and vibrant part of our ministry and we continue to seek to recruit vocalists and instrumentalists (of all ages) who are willing to share their gifts in worship. For further information contact any of us who are involved in music and worship.

Pastor Tim Seeber

## **OFFICE VOLUNTEERS**

The definition of a volunteer is someone who chooses freely to do something – to offer or give of one's own free will. Zion is blessed with many members who enjoy volunteering. Without our volunteers who help with various jobs in the office, the staff would have a lot of extra work. As we have resumed the opening of the building we have a faithful group who collates the Harbinger each month, and always have a need for any who might want to help Marta with her tasks, whether it has to do with answering the phone, or helping her with the many aspects of her job. If you are interested in helping in the office, occasionally or maybe more often, contact Marta in the office.

Pastor Tim Seeber

## **PASTOR'S SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS**

### **Sundays at 9:15 a.m.**

This past year saw many more participate in this weekly class. It is a wonderful place for adults of all ages. We have benefited greatly from many new participants which has added to our conversations and fellowship. Whether you are someone who has never been in a Bible study or have been in Bible studies your entire life, all are welcome and valued. Young adults, retirees, young parents, couples, singles, brand new Christians, and long-time church members will all find this an enjoyable way to get to know each other better, while being nurtured by interesting discussions about scripture and its application to our daily lives and needs. The beauty of this class is that each week is a stand-alone discussion, so whenever you are able to be here, you will be just as much a part of the discussion as everyone else. Give it a try!

Pastor Tim Seeber

## **PERSONNEL MINISTRY**

Dana Butt is VP of Personnel, serves on the Board of Directors and leads this ministry team. Members are Chuck Wendling, Karen Chapo, Dave Newman.

Our mission is to assist the congregation in the nurture, support, and guidance of each of the called and hired members of our staff and various ministries. Over the past year, considerable time was spent on changing insurance plans for our full-time staff. The team is beginning a review of the personnel handbook to ensure it is consistent and up to date.

Earlier this year our office assistant, Christa Quandt retired. After much discussion we have increased the hours and responsibilities of Marta Warren into a full-time role. The team will be involved in replacing Wanda Jewett, who is moving out of town and had assisted as adult choir director, and will be working on the process of considering either a DCE intern or a DCE to assist in our ministry with young children, their families, and possibly music or the preschool. Keep an eye our updates throughout the year! Personnel was very involved in the initial phase of the call process for a Senior Pastor, dealing with the specifics of compensation, health and retirement benefits, housing, and moving expenses.

Annually the Team assists in budget review and salary planning. Annual reviews were assisted by Pastor Seeber and conducted in conversations with all the members of our staff. These will assist the Personnel Ministry Team with its work of support and guidance over the coming year.

### **PRAYER MINISTRY**

Requirements to join this ministry are a heart for prayer and a willingness to pray throughout the week for those in need. Prayer needs and thanksgivings are sent out by email once a week or as needed. This ministry is also a good fit for members who have moved away or snow birds who want to keep in touch with the church family, new members, college students, etc.

Our goal is to let members know we will stand with them in prayer and to pray for needs throughout the week. This group of 50 plus dedicated prayer warriors lifts up the needs and thanksgivings of the people of Zion in prayer. This is a good place to request prayers for friends, neighbors, family, friends whose needs are on your mind. Prayers are confidential. Cards handmade with love are sent to all for whom we are praying and to confirmands, graduates, new members, staff, Board of Directors and others who serve our church.

If you are called to join this ministry contact the church office or Kathleen Jordan at 269-343-4011 or email [jordankathleen@icloud.com](mailto:jordankathleen@icloud.com)

You are encouraged to send your prayer requests or prayers of thanksgiving to Kathleen or the church office. We are here for you! New prayer warriors are welcome!

Prayer ministry members:

Pastor Tim Seeber	Beth Koperdak
Pastor Larry Brelje	Sandy Krueger
Pastor Mark & Melody Couch	Jil Larson
Aaron Grube	Kim Licavoli
Dan & Sue Buchtrup	Rita Linnenkugel
Cindy Bremer	Dave & Linda Mayer
Marge Brinkert	Jayne Mayer
Rebecca McLaren Craft	Marirose Meimers
Dan & Sue Curtiss	Brittany Morrow
Carol Daenzer	Amy Nelson
Jan Davidson	Rhenda Pease
Lydia Decker	Kathy Pfeifer
Bruce & Dorothy DeDee	Mary Phillips
Michelle Devine	Rollie & Sharon Preuss
Nancy & Dennis Dressler	Kari Quandt
Marcia French	Helen Reinkensmeyer
Rosemarie Griffith	Carol & Benno Rosin

Larry Harding  
Phyllis Huberty  
Lauren Hubert  
Bruce & Kathy Huston  
Laura Jenkins  
Kathleen Jordan  
Linda Kanamueller  
Debbie Kipp

Susie & Todd Schierbeek  
Monica Slesinski  
Grace Stiegemeyer  
Linda Stieve  
Ruth Stokes  
Teresa Tucker  
Mary VanDenBerg  
Dee Wentzel

Kathleen Jordan

### **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY**

Due to the concerns during COVID our prayer shawl ministry took a break. We are hopeful that as programs move back toward normalcy, this ministry will resume its helpful, servant role. In the past, prayer shawls are made while the person knitting, or crocheting, prays. They are blessed during a worship service and are given out by pastors or other Zion members to give to other church members, home-bound members, or community outreach. People who receive them have something going on in their lives, be it medical, physical, or emotional. The shawls serve as a comforting and loving embrace from our church family and a tangible reminder of God's ever-present love for us as shown through the caring prayers of others.

Cynthia Cosgrove has been serving as the coordinator for this ministry and would appreciate hearing from any of you who would like to continue to be involved in this ministry. Currently we have a great inventory of shawls, but there will always be needs for more. And the fellowship of this small group of members of Zion and others in the community is an important aspect of this ministry that brings people together in service. The group was meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday at Biggby on Stadium Drive for idea sharing and fellowship, but that can always change. We encourage any and all of you to give a shawl to anyone who needs a little love. You don't need to ask permission, and there are no age restrictions (kids/teens, I'm talking to you!) These shawls are for the congregation, pastors, and support staff to give out as needed.

Cynthia Cosgrove

### **PROPERTY MINISTRY**

The Property Ministry team is responsible for the physical resources of Zion and works to maintain, improve, update, and dispose of all tangible and real property of the congregation in support of its missions and ministries. We presently have nine members on our team; seven members and one special project contributor. We work closely with staff in support of short and long term needs, and liaise with Michelle Devine, Zion's Building Manager, on daily facility issues and mechanicals.

The following is a highlight of projects and changes made this past year:

The lights in the parking lot have been updated to LEDs and should pay for themselves in 5-10 years. And the parking lot has been patched and striped.

We used an endowment along with other funds we have been saving up to put a new roof and fix the chimney in the Zion Haus. We are also using funds from the rent paid to us through Bob Bresser's insurance to update the painting and the floor coverings in the Zion Haus.

During the past year we have had some unexpected expenses with our HVAC in the church. We had to update our control system, and during a power outage/surge we lost a leg of our power burning out one of our large fan motors. We are in the process of updating our surge protection so doesn't happen again.

In the next year we are looking to make some updates to the lighting in the sanctuary and have already put in an endowment request to update the lighting to LEDs and fix issues we have been having with controlling the lighting system. These updates are scheduled to be completed by Fall.

I want to thank the following people for their work on the property ministry; without their help and support, it would have been impossible to finish all that was done: Jim Mayer, Bob Brennan, Joe Moulton, Stan Leitz, Laurel Miner, Curt Chapman, Pete Asaro, Rick Wordell (Of Counsel), and Michelle Devine (Staff Contribution).

I also want to thank Ron Masek who will be taking my spot as VP of the Property Ministry. I have enjoyed the past 2 years in the Property Ministry and will continue to support and be a member.

Todd Schierbeek

### **SATURDAY MEN'S STUDY**

#### **Saturdays at 8 a.m.**

This group meets with Pastor Seeber on Saturdays (September through May) to support each other's daily faith life. We have been using John's Gospel as our springboard for discussion to discern practical guidance for our daily living. This has been a wonderful opportunity for men to talk about faith, support each other, and become more comfortable in being men of faith. The growth that has occurred and level of support and understanding that has been shared is remarkable! This year we continued to utilize ZOOM which allowed for those out of town to participate as well. Each week is a self-contained discussion and theme. The participants "set the table" and lead the discussions, which have been genuine, honest, and helpful for all of us. This is an enlightening process of learning that guys from various backgrounds, with different vocation and interests, can find a unity in our common faith.

Pastor Tim Seeber

### **SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY MINISTRY**

We will be looking ahead at starting our 12th year fall of 2022. We currently have five groups numbering around 50 or so people. Our current facilitators include Linda Stieve, John and Candy Buetow, Chuck Wendling, Debbie Weber, and Dave Mayer. We have been guided by the Holy Spirit, and that has always been our source in looking ahead.

Each group or facilitator selects the day, time and location of their meetings. Some groups meet weekly, others monthly and, still others, at their own choosing. Each group is asked to do a mission project, however, due to COVID, this has not been done for a couple of years. Prior to 2020 we had some great projects. We have fed people at The Mission and Ministry with Community, worked and fed students at Tree of Life School, and worked at Ministry with Community, among other projects.

The goals for our group remain the same: grow in God's word through Bible study and develop and foster new relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are always looking for new group members and facilitators to help us carry out our ministry.

Our Ministry Team Committee meets once a month with our current members being Debbie Weber, Dee Wentzel, Carol O'Connor, Carolyn Daenzer, Aaron Grube and Dave Mayer. Anyone interested in joining may contact Dave Mayer at 375-1241 or Aaron Grube at 382-2360.  
Dave Mayer

### **OUTDOOR BEAUTIFICATION**

This ministry involves caring for the grounds around the church, Zion Haus, and the garage/shed. Some of our jobs include leaf removal from the lawn, cleaning the parking lot, trimming shrubs, spreading mulch and general outdoor maintenance. The work can be physical and we are encouraged to work at our own pace.

We usually work on various Wednesday mornings during the spring, summer and fall from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. If you are only able to work part of the morning, that is perfectly fine. Schedules are located in the Harbinger. If the weather is inclement, the work day will either be rescheduled or cancelled.

We take about a half hour break at 10:00 to 10:30 for refreshments, devotions, and rest and relaxation. This is a great opportunity to meet and get to know other members of Zion. With our work scheduled on Wednesday mornings, we rely on retired people; averaging about 6 to 10 workers each session.

If you are interested in helping call Jim Mayer at 375-8342 . Equipment is always available for your use, and it is a good idea to bring along a pair of work gloves.

Jim Mayer

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY- PRESCHOOL THROUGH 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Sunday School: A ministry that began in the 1700s. A need at the time because kids that were school aged worked every day of the week in factories. Those kids learned how to read from reading the Bible...naturally those stories became known and kids grew in their faith.

Flash forward to 2020. Kids don't work. They know how to read. They go to school 5 days a week (well, in 2019) and spend their weekends in extra-curriculars.

Why were we still doing Sunday School in the "traditional" way?

Well, 2020 has revealed yet another obvious weakness that the Church has been in denial about. So we switched gears. We didn't have "Sunday" School in 2020-21. Instead, I delivered packets to our 20 families each month containing activities, videos, and spiritual conversation starters that would help a family learn about God. Families were able to do the lesson on their own schedule and on their own terms.

Some great results:

- A high school sibling leading the lesson/discussion for their younger brother and sister
- A family that hasn't attended on Sunday mornings, sharing their thanks
- “Pen pals” for students in a similar age group
- Interacting with families at a time when everything was shut down
- Waving at Middle School siblings through the window
- “We missed a lot of Sunday School because we're so busy Sunday mornings. But now we're able to have this talk/lesson on Wednesday nights because that's when we're home together!”

- Eliza (4 year old) playing the role of "Children's Ministry Intern" and vigilantly helping her dad pack all 20 packets each month, and even helping him make the drop off one month
- Families having spiritual discussions centered around Bible stories and fun activities
- High school students getting their eyes on the videos and learning from them as well

We also did an Advent Project, Christmas Program, and Easter Project! Families recorded themselves re-enacting a Bible story which paired with our Advent stories. For Christmas, families gathered together and worked on their own designs to include in a video sharing the joy of Christ's birth. At Easter we read a poem celebrating the resurrection of our Lord. These projects included many age groups – Sunday School, Middle School, and even High School. And the videos...family near and far were able to watch, anyone with ties to our Facebook or YouTube page from around the country and in other countries were able to watch, and the kids themselves now have a record of them sharing their love for Jesus.

New things continued for "Sunday School." A new Children's Ministry Team formed to help adapt and change this "dedicated education hour." The 1700s are long gone but our efforts to provide a foundation of spiritual education and faith instruction are still going strong. This past year we moved away from traditional classrooms and it was the right decision. Numbers continued to be inconsistent, however we had a core group that was faithful and spanned 3 year old preschool through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Our "family group" stayed together all but one or two weeks and experienced the lessons. We moved to a topical approach, removing the chronological tradition our instruction had become. We did however keep the stories on a timeline and jumped all around. We had sets for our themes and each month the undercroft transformed into something new. We jumped from a garden to the mountains to a storm to fire and many more. Middle School students came and helped the younger kids many of the weeks. High School students performed skits and mentored the students. Adult members of the congregation came and gave a presentation or read a story. Our ministry team silently helped out by designing and creating the sets, writing the lessons, and identifying volunteers. Our greatest need was another volunteer or two on a regular basis.

The end of the year proved our efforts at making the ministry more effective were fruitful. We did a recap using our timeline. Students were able to connect the activity or share tidbits of the lesson for ALL but TWO of the stories from the entire year! We rejoice that the Holy Spirit is growing faith inside these young ones!

Aaron Grube

### **WKZO RADIO MISSION OUTREACH**

In 1950, Pastor Grother initiated a radio ministry by broadcasting part of the Sunday worship service on WKZO. This ministry continues and has become an outreach ministry to much of southwest Michigan. It is funded through Zion's "mission" budget. Each Sunday at 9:30am a recorded sermon and meditative music are broadcast on AM 590. We regularly hear from a variety of people from Stevensville to Grand Rapids, and from Jackson to St. Joe. It is interesting how many people of other congregations in the Kalamazoo area have made this part of their weekly devotional life as well. What began as a "live feed" over a phone line and open microphone, is now produced in Neil Segerdahl's studio on KL Avenue. Each week a CD with the sermon and meditative music is delivered to the radio station, along with a script for the brief ads that WKZO shares to promote the broadcast. This has been a wonderful way to share the message of a risen Christ with our congregation and community.

Pastor Tim Seeber

## **YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY**

The Youth Alumni (college aged students who attend Zion) wanted to meet once a month for Young Adults

The pandemic killed our efforts at a 20s/30s group as no one was able to meet anywhere! We had a Zoom discussion for awhile but since everyone was working remotely, another hour online was the last thing anyone wanted to do. As some key members of that group moved to other states and had life changes happen, we lost momentum completely. Our efforts moved towards those Youth Alumni mentioned in the High School Youth report. This group of college and college grads has had some good success this year. We met at least twice a month and many months three times. We had a combination of online studies and in person breakfast discussions. With the return "home" of a few members of the original 20s/30s group, we have a good opportunity to have a second set of young adults meeting in the future.

Aaron Grube

## **WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE / Tuesdays on Facebook and YouTube**

Pastor Seeber has used illustrations from the Crossways series to help him share introductions for each book of the Bible. This is a presentation to assist participants have a better understanding for the reason each book of the Bible was written, what its purpose is, and give a better background for any Bible study or text that is read in worship. The advantage of this series is that it can be accessed online anytime it might be helpful.

## **WEDNESDAY ADULT SPECIALS**

This year we offered a variety of practical presentations and discussions on Wednesday evenings after our midweek meal. Dr. Jeanette Meyer and Judy Adlam shared issues related to aging and caring for older adults. Rhonda Newman, a CPA, assisted with tax issues. Carol Daenzer, Chris Wilkins, and Pastors Brelje and Seeber shared issue related to Christian Caregiving, and a commitment to a new ministry called "Zion Cares" grew out of this effort.

### **Annual Congregational Meeting May 22, 2022**

- I** The meeting was called to order by President Dave Alsvig and opened with prayer by Pastor Seeber.
- II** Election of Board of Directors: The following members agreed to stand  
for election: President-Elect: Joe Zerbel  
Vice President of Property: Ron Masek, Joe Moulton  
Director-At-Large: Sue Bickel, Rita Linnenkugel, Jason Woods  
  
The members of the congregation present voted. The ballots were collected and counted by members of the Board of Directors. At the end of the meeting the results were announced as follows:  
President-Elect: Joe Zerbel  
Vice President of Property: Ron Masek  
Director-At-Large: Sue Bickel and Rita Linnenkugel
- III** Budget FY2022-2023: Joni LaPointe, outgoing Vice President of Finance, presented the proposed budget. She thanked the Board of Directors, Pastors and Staff, the Finance Ministry Team, and for their help and support in this endeavor. Joni will be stepping down. The Board appointed Don Klug to finish her term at their May meeting.



Joni reviewed the proposed budget for FY22-23 and explained how it was developed by asking ministry teams to submit requests which were consolidated into the appropriate categories along with information from the Board of Personnel regarding salaries and benefits. The current budget is in an overall favorable YTD position. There is a reasonable savings cushion moving forward. Mission monies that would have gone to FoJ Preschool will be used for other ministries. The proposed FY22-23 is based on a Giving budget of \$704,020.00.

A motion was made and supported for a voice vote. The Budget was passed unanimously.

<b>FY 2023 BUDGET</b>				
<b>ZION LUTHERN CHURCH</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Over/Under</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Budget</b>		
<b>INCOME</b>				
Total Zion Income	740,025.00	715,000.00	25,025.00	Increase 3.5% to cover expenses
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Zion Staff Support	377,362.00	384,721.00	-7,359.00	Decrease after health plan change savings & wage increases
Office Operations	15,270.00	14,430.00	840.00	Increase - supplies cost increase
Church Property	96,355.00	88,100.00	8,255.00	Increase - repairs of HVAC system & utilities cost higher
Education Ministry	12,700.00	11,000.00	1,700.00	Increase - program changes & cost increases
Evangelism/Missions	500.00	500.00	0.00	No change
Worship Ministry	6,150.00	5,950.00	200.00	Increase - streaming & copyright costs
Other Ministries	3,270.00	2,510.00	760.00	Increase due to rising costs of Portals of Prayers
Music Ministry	31,755.00	29,100.00	2,655.00	Increase due to pay increases
Finance Ministry	112,400.00	112,400.00	0.00	No change
Zion Haus Ministry	13,400.00	3,235.00	10,165.00	Increase due to repairs needed
Missions - General	72,892.50	64,086.00	8,806.50	Increase due to 10% of tithing of total giving
Total Expenses	<u>742,054.50</u>	<u>716,032.00</u>	<u>26,022.50</u>	
<b>INCOME LESS EXPENSES</b>	<u>-2,029.50</u>	<u>-1,032.00</u>	<u>-997.50</u>	
<b>SOLID GROUND</b>				
Solid Ground Income	117,704.00	121,656.00	-3,952.00	Decrease due to fewer renters & parking income
Solid Ground Expenses	114,896.84	116,296.00	-1,399.16	Decrease after health plan change savings & wage increase
<b>INCOME LESS EXPENSES</b>	<u>2,807.16</u>	<u>5,360.00</u>	<u>-2,552.84</u>	

**IV.** Call Committee Update: The process continues as Pastor Braun declined the call. The Committee members have agreed to continue the work and will receive new names for consideration. They asked for continued prayers to support them through the process.

**V.** Other Discussion and Action:

Q: *Could there be an online voting option in the future?*

R: The Bylaws require that members be present to vote so they can participate in any discussion. The issue has been under review and discussion by the Board of Directors as well.

President Dave Alsvig thanked the outgoing Board members for the service to Zion: President Rick Wordell, VP of Property Todd Shierbeeck, VP of Finance Joni LaPointe, Directors at Large John DuBois and Helen Fierke. He then thanked the loyal volunteers who have dedicated time to serve at Zion, the office and building staff - Marta, Michelle, and Monica - who kept things running, the AV volunteers - Neil and Fritz who keep Zion connected online with those at home, and the Pastoral staff for their continued devotion to the members of Zion.

**VII.** DCE Aaron Grube led the congregation in prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Janis Dinda

## CORE MINISTRIES

*This year we want you to understand how our "core" ministries fit together. This can also serve as a resource to share with neighbors or friends who have no church home. And if you have comments or suggestions concerning any of our ministries, please don't hesitate to share those thoughts or offer your time, talent or energy as part of our family.*

**Baptism:** Call the church office to schedule a Baptism. A pastor will meet with you and help support you as we celebrate that new life in Christ.

**Campus Ministry:** Pastor Couch is called to serve the Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College campus communities in a partnership with the Michigan District. Solid Grounds is the location for this ministry on the campus of WMU. Students from that ministry are very involved in the life of Zion and we benefit from their life with us.

**Confirmation Ministry:** Our 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> graders participate in a 3 year program on Wednesday evenings from September through May. During this time we review the purpose and plan of the Bible, and the basics of our Christian faith (using Luther's Small Catechism as a guide, but set in a relevant and practical format for today's young people). Each Spring our 8<sup>th</sup> graders "affirm their baptismal faith" and are "confirmed" in that faith.

**Counseling:** Our pastors are available to support and be a sounding board and faith resource during difficult times of life. We do a lot of counseling, but when we feel that long term needs would be better met by a full time professional, we will help in that referral.

**First Communion:** After appropriate instruction, our 6<sup>th</sup> graders participate in receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion.

**Funerals:** At the time of death, we celebrate what Baptism began. Pastors work with the family to plan a funeral or memorial service. If desired, women of the congregation provide a fellowship meal after the service as a ministry of support. Pastors are available to support the family in the time of transition that follows loss.

**High School Ministry:** Our high school students meet on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings for Bible study and discussion that relates to their daily lives. They also have opportunities for fellowship and servant ministry. Each summer they have an opportunity for a major servant trip, or youth gathering. Our high school students are encouraged to be involved in ministry wherever they are comfortable serving.

**Homebound and Nursing Homes:** Pastor Brelje provides ministry to those who are unable to join us for worship and fellowship at Zion. Pastors are also available to help in this ministry of encouragement, support, and carrying Holy Communion to those whose health prevents from joining the rest of the worshipping community at Zion.

**Hospitalizations:** Please call the church office when you are facing surgery or confined to the hospital. The pastors visit the hospital daily to pray with patients and offer support for their families.

**Marriage:** Any couple seeking to be married at Zion must meet with one of our pastors before setting a date. If either or both are not active members of Zion, they attend a Membership Class. In addition, they go through premarital counseling with one of our pastors. Our pastors are involved in marriage as the worship and spiritual leaders of the couple getting married.

**Middle School Youth Ministry:** The Middle School Youth meet monthly and participate in a variety of activities. During the year there are opportunities for retreats as well. Our goal is to involve them in every aspect of congregational life. Sunday classes to make faith relevant in daily situations they encounter. They meet for fellowship and servant opportunities. During the year there are opportunities for retreats as well. Our goal is to involve them in every aspect of congregational life

**Small Group Bible Study Ministry.** We reject the notion that worship is for adults and education is for kids. Both are for all! We have many opportunities for adults to grow in faith, and to more comfortably integrate their lives as Christians into daily living. Check the calendar as we have a variety of classes taught by pastors, members of Zion, and community resource people. Classes are available on Sundays and other various days/times during the week.

**Sunday School.** Children ages 3 through grade 5 meet on Sunday mornings. Our lessons follow the church year and are the same stories we read that day in worship. This allows families more support as parents, children, and grandparents all have the same weekly lessons. Sunday school also has a strong emphasis on mission projects and allowing children to participate in worship and servant ministry projects.

**Worship.** Zion has a variety of worship opportunities each week. All of our services follow a traditional liturgical format, but use different language and musical styles. All are respectful and powerful as God's guidance and blessings are the motivation and power of our worship. Saturday evening at 5:30 p.m. utilizes piano and a variety of guest musicians and musical styles in an informal worship setting. Sunday at 8 a.m. is our most traditional, by-the-book format, primarily using the organ for music leadership. Sunday at 10:30 a.m. is a service where we experience the entire range of our potential. We utilize any and all of our resources including organ, handbells, jazz, and praise band with liturgy that is sometimes out of the hymnal and sometimes entirely printed.

