



Zion Lutheran Church NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO THE ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER
Zion is a member congregation of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)

JANUARY 2017 **5831 GRUNDY ROAD, HUDSON, IA 50643**
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The 12 Days of Christmas begin on Christmas Day, so we are in the midst of the Christmas season until January 6. So, it's not too late to wish you all a wonderful Christmas! And a Happy New Year! As we end one year and begin another, it is natural to reflect on the many blessings we have received this past year. We might even think to ourselves, "Whew, I've made it through another year!"

At the same time, we are also somberly drawn to remember those who are no longer with us for the holidays.

In First Corinthians 15:54-57 we read, "When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Traveling eastbound on U.S. highway 20 between Grundy Road and Hudson Road there is an electronically animated sign above the lanes that periodically gives safety information and reminds people to practice such safe habits as wearing your seatbelt and not texting while driving. Frequently the sign is headed by a running total of the number of people who have died on Iowa highways so far in the year.

According the Iowa Department of Transportation's website, their goal of having "Zero Fatalities" which it admits "sounds like an impossible goal unless you think about it one person or one crash at a time." In 2012 the official number of traffic fatalities was 365 (1 less than the number of days in the leap year). Since then, I have noticed that the number of deaths had stayed less than one per day. 2013 = 317

deaths. 2014 = 322 deaths. 2015 = 320 deaths.

Driving under the sign during each year I make the calculation of "How many days so far this year?"

While never rejoicing that there have been any traffic deaths, I have been "glad" to see that the number of deaths is on a pace to be less than one per day.

However, early in 2016, I began to notice that the number of traffic deaths reported on the sign was running higher than the number of days so far in the year. As I am writing this, in the last week of the year, the total deaths so far is 397. Not good. According to the Iowa D.O.T. the number of yearly fatalities between 2002 and 2010 was over 370 each year and as high as 450 in 2005. So, maybe the four years (2012-2015) that the totals were less than the number of days in the year is the anomaly.

What point am I trying to get across with this statistical information? Earlier in the 15th chapter of First Corinthians (verse 26) Paul writes, "The last enemy to be destroyed is death." Death is not our friend. Especially in circumstances like auto crashes, but also in cases of disease and "old age" it is an enemy. It brings grief and changes the lives of those left behind who will never be the same. As we look back on our year, we recall those who have died, not just this past year, but in previous years, as well.

Our calling as Christians is to comfort those who are grieving. In Second Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God."

In Christ, *Pastor Mark Decker*

Thrivent Members

If you invest through Thrivent, please remember that you need to designate where your Thrivent Choice dollars go every year. This does not happen automatically, you have to call to renew every year. Thrivent matches funds that you make and disperses them to local charities/organizations.

If you do not designate Zion, or any other organization of your choice, Thrivent donates to an organization of their choice. If you wish Zion to benefit from your matching investment funds, please call 1-800-thrivent (1-800-847-4836) by the end of February. If you do not call, unclaimed monies are dispersed by March 15. Last year, multiple Thrivent members did not donate their Choice dollars to any organization of their choice. Remember, the 'Choice' is yours!

Thank You

Sherrie and I are very grateful for the thoughtful card and gift which was presented to us at the Christmas Eve service. We appreciate the many kindnesses and appreciation you show us throughout the year, but it was an especially nice surprise to receive your gift on Christmas Eve. Many thanks from both of us! *Pastor Mark and Sherrie Decker*

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ - Three Days of Prayer

Every congregation, member and pastor is being invited to set aside some time each day of January 3, 4 and 5, 2017 for prayer.

Our attitude toward prayer has often been characterized by saying, "well, all we can do now is pray!". Prayer is not the hopeless act of desperation. Prayer is a gift that God has given to us as a means to approach the throne of grace with confidence—like that of a child coming to her parents sharing concerns, victories, defeats and every part of life. It is an opportunity to express the deepest heartache and the greatest joy. Prayer is a conversation between the Creator and the created...and the conversation began with God, for us, in Christ Jesus.

Organize these three days of prayer any way that seems good to you. Please simply spend some time each day in prayer...whatever works best in your situation is the right way to go.

Day One: January 3

This is a day focused on confession. We have made our lives, our relationships—and even the church—in our own image. We confess that the

church belongs to Jesus and not to us. We gather to lay down our pride, our sin and our agenda and ask the Lord of the church for forgiveness, which He gives freely and with mercy.

Day Two: January 4

This is a day of petition. Pray for your congregation, for the pastor, for the leaders, for those who carry out ministries, for the Sunday School teachers, for the Confirmation leaders, for those leading adult Bible studies and for those leading small groups. Pray for those in hospital and nursing home ministries. Pray for all those connected to your church that they might know God's redeeming love for all in Christ.

Day Three: January 5

This is a day for vision. Pray that the Holy Spirit will again move through the hearts and minds of leaders and pastors that God's vision for His church might be revealed and fulfilled. This is a time of prayer for renewal, revival and encouragement. Pray for God's vision.

Each of us can structure this however seems best. No matter how you structure this time of prayer, let's come together as an association of congregations across the U.S. and around the world to pray! I believe that the church will never rise up until we first get down on our knees!

Mark VanderTuig (LCMC Service Coordinator)

The "Arrogance" of Christians by Martin Yee

Why is Jesus Christ the only way to salvation?

I once went to a public library and to my surprise when I opened a Christian book on a shelf inside I found a hand-written note by a Hindu complaining why Christians are so arrogant to claim that Christ is the ONLY way to salvation. That is the question in the mind of many people. Although they recognize that Jesus is a good teacher, guru or sifu (master), they think it is arrogant to assert that Jesus is the only way. They can accept Jesus as one of the ways but not the only way. That of course does not bother those from Judeo-Christian heritage and culture.

So why is Jesus the only way? Of course we can resort to repetition saying that the Bible said so, and of course it did in Acts 4:12. Why do you think the Bible is true? It is God's Word. How do you know it is God's Word? Jesus said so and so on...

So why do you think that Christianity proclaims that Jesus is the only way?

Because the Master Himself says in John 14: "I am the Way..." And this isn't the only place where the Master himself claims the "arrogant" claim. If Jesus is such a great Master, the question truly is this: Why does He get this particular thing, and only this thing, wrong?

Because Jesus presents a fundamentally different picture of salvation than other saviors.

He's the only way in the same sense that the only way to get to the moon is through outer space. It isn't like you might be able to get to the moon by water or by land but we prefer space. There is no other perfect sacrifice for sins. It isn't that there is no other name under heaven by which we can succeed with God. It is that there is no other name under heaven by which we might be saved. Unfortunately, when Christians begin to add works as necessary somehow to merit salvation, even as necessary signs somehow, Jesus becomes just another paragon of law and is another figure in the long line of systems which promise some form of enlightenment through human effort and cannot deliver, so for many the exclusivity of Jesus really is entirely arbitrary. But for us who believe in the power of the simple gospel, that simple faith in Christ unadulterated by any hint of law is able to save us, the answer is clear. Martin Yee (LCMS pastor)

2017 Perspectives Classes

The 2017 Perspectives on the World Christian Movement class is fast approaching. It will be on Monday evenings starting on January 16th. As usual, we have a great roster of speakers lined up to teach the lessons.

Here are the details - Immanuel Lutheran Church,
4820 Oster Parkway, Cedar Falls
Mondays, Jan 16 – May 1, 2017, 6:00 – 8:45 pm

Register online at <https://class.perspectives.org/Visitor/Public.aspx?ClassId=433392>

Pricing - \$250 registration fee
\$50 Family Discount
\$50 Student Discount

A number of churches offer \$100 scholarships - see pricing on website for details

If people have questions, they can email us at: cfperspectives@gmail.com

Congregational Meeting on January 29

Our annual congregational meeting to set the budget for 2017 fiscal year will be held immediately following worship on Sunday, January 29. All Zion members are welcome to participate.

Sign-up to Read of Serve Fellowship Treats

There are sign-up pages on the wall of the church entryway for those interested in taking a turn to serve as a reader or bringing fellowship treats on Sunday mornings. Please take advantage these opportunities to use your talent.

Adult Sunday School Resumes

Our adult Sunday School class using the DVD and discussion format with materials prepared by Concordia Publishing's "Men's Network" series: "He Who Dies with the Most Toys Still Dies." This study uses Scripture to examine how toys (our possessions) can accumulate, overtake our priorities, and choke off our relationship with God. Toys come in many sounds, sizes and shapes, As the presenter says, "The challenge is realizing that what Jesus earned and imparted to us is enough. In fact, it's far more than all the toys on earth are worth. The good news is that you can be rich in Christ without having all the money or wealth in the world." This new class will consist of five sessions.

January Anniversaries

- 4 Pastor Mark & Sherrie Decker
- 6 Jerry & Donna Dufel
- 29 Jeff & Angie Marsh

January Birthdays

- 4 Jenna Shirley
- 7 Judy Shirley
- 11 Lori Gutknecht
- 12 Stacy Lee
- 12 Jamie Miller
- 14 Josh Shirley
- 16 Hayden Gutknecht
- 19 Tanner Wright
- 24 Bob Petersen
- 25 Casey Bonwell
- 28 Chrissy Peters
- 29 Carson Wright
- 30 Madeline Brandhorst

January Acolytes

- 1 Preston Seible
- 8 Kristina Kajtezovic
- 15 Tanner Laube
- 22 June Volding
- 29 Zach Young

Ushers

- January 1 Jim & Marian Grover
- January 8 Jim & Marian Grover
- January 15 Gerald & Janet Brandhorst
- January 22 Gerald & Janet Brandhorst
- January 29 Brad Ohrt & Lynn Pedersen

Communion Servers

- January 1 Gerald & Janet Brandhorst
- January 8 Gerald & Janet Brandhorst
- January 15 Steve & Carson Wright
- January 22 Steve & Carson Wright
- January 29 Rod & Marilu Degener

Communion Clean-up

- 1 Janine Knapp & Carol Jorgensen
- 8 Janine Knapp & Carol Jorgensen
- 15 Jennifer & Mallory Laube
- 22 Jennifer & Mallory Laube
- 29 Monica & Amber Laube

Our lectionary readings for the Sundays are:

January 1: Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-22

January 8: Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43;
Matthew 3:13-17

January 15: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11;
1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 22: Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9;
1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

January 29: Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15;
1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12

The **WEB SITE for LCMC** – Lutheran
Congregations in Mission for Christ, is www.lcmc.net

**If you have an announcement, message,
quote, picture, or prayer, that you would like to
share in the newsletter, contact Pastor Mark,
(515-538-2200) by the 25th of the previous month.**

Minutes of council meetings which will be
included in the newsletters will be from 2 months
earlier as they have to be approved at the next
monthly meeting before they can be published.