



# *Zion Lutheran Church* **NEWSLETTER**

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

*JUNE 2018      5831 GRUNDY ROAD, HUDSON, IA 50643*  
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Romans 8:26-28 is one of my favorite Bible passages: Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Lately, when I reflect on these verses, I've been thinking a lot about aptitude. A couple of years ago, I was asked to teach golf lessons to a group of interested Zion church members. Having worked as a golf instructor in a past life, I felt fairly comfortable taking on the task. I set a plan to cover a series of basic skills within a specific time frame. I imagined beginning each session by demonstrating a new technique, which we would then all practice and master as a group.

What I soon discovered however, was that even in small groups, the ability to pick up these skills differed so dramatically from one person to the next it was impractical to hold the classes in the manner I had envisioned. What one person mastered intuitively before I'd finish explaining it, another would be unable to replicate even after repeated physical demonstrations.

After that, I altered the format of my teaching to be less class-like, and more like personalized sessions held in a group setting. I spent more time with each person individually, and accepted that everyone would learn on their own timeline - only marveling, now and again, at the difference in the rate at which this happened. Most of them had started from scratch. All were equally enthusiastic; all genuinely tried their

best. And yet, by the end of the program, some would whiz past my originally envisioned Basic Skills and become full fledged golfers, while others would still struggle with holding their club correctly.

I was witnessing the phenomenon of aptitude. And it was only when confronted with it so directly, that it truly sunk in what a huge role it plays in any activity involving skill - including, of course, golfing, but also our Christian "skills" such as prayer and Bible study.

In contrast to my aptitude for golf, it is fair to say that my aptitude for prayer is poor. Now in my 30th year as an ordained pastor, I am only starting to approach the level of praying skills that many Christians I know attain within their first few months of praying. That is pretty poor indeed. And it's not as unusual as some might think.

On a regular basis, I hear from other believers in Christ who are frustrated by their lack of 'progress.' They love praying, but just aren't getting 'good' at it, no matter how hard they try. Other folks at church might look at them strangely, when they say how long they've been trying to pray yet ask for a simple prayer they might use. Their friends have moved on to prayer for difficult situations without them. Will they ever improve? Should they just admit defeat and call it quits? Sadly, I suspect that many do.

As part of the religious culture of the church, we tend to classify other believers on a scale ranging from Beginners to Experienced. The assumption there, is that what stands between a person having poor mastery of prayer skills and excellent mastery of those skills, are experience and practice.

In reality, that is often not the case. There exist dedicated Christians with decades of experience, and poor praying skills. Likewise, new believers can become proficient at these same skills within a very short time span.

That there is no allowance for aptitude in our view of prayer is problematic. We read in the Bible that God gives different talents to different believers, but all those gifts work together to build up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

When the experiences of those who do not do so well in their practice of prayer is undermined or dismissed a disservice is done not only to those people. A disservice is done to the concept of being a follower of Christ in of itself. By trying to make every person exactly the same, we are not being true to the way God made each of us individually.

Because if we think about it... The very fact that those of us who aren't 'good' at praying still love it, and want to do it, and are able to do it, is fascinating, and wonderful, and a testament to what an engaging, beautiful thing the Holy Spirit does for us.

Often times my poor aptitude for praying has made me feel like an outsider in the very culture and industry in which I have been working. It has not, however, deterred me from persisting with praying, enjoying praying, and sharing my experiences of praying with others.

My hope is that over time we can all find a way to adjust ourselves to be more reflective of, and sensitive to, the wide range of aptitudes that exist among us. And that all those who want to pray, in any way at all, feel free to enjoy it as the Holy Spirit guides them.

In Christ,  
Pastor Mark Decker

## **Prayers**

Each Sunday in worship, we publish a list of people who have requested prayers. To help you remember them in your regular prayer time: Dianne Bascom, Susan Decker, Gordon Gartner, Sean Love, Don Schrage, Dorothy Juhl Zelle, and Eunice Neil. If you would like another name added to the list, please let Pastor know.

## **Thank You**

We are so grateful to all of our relatives, our church family and Pastor Mark for all the prayers, support, memorials & kind words. Thank you to everyone for the food for the luncheon and at our home as well. A special thank you also to the group serving it. God loves you and so do we.

- Donna, Craig, Janet & Brad

## **Hospital Visits**

If you or a family member are in the hospital, please let Pastor Mark know so he can visit and pray with you during your time there.

## **Flowers at the Cemetery**

If you have places flowers (real or artificial) at the cemetery, please remember that they should be removed by July first.

## **Pastor Mark and Sherrie Away**

We will be traveling to Scotland for three weeks in May and June. Lord willing, we will depart on May 22 and return on June 13. Thank you to those who have agreed to cover preaching and worship leading duties. Thank you to those who have encouraged us to take this vacation. Please pray that all goes well, especially driving on the left side of the road.

## **Vacation Bible School**

Our annual VBS event is set for Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, June 17-19. The theme this year is "Shipwreck." We begin with a meal at 5:30 p.m. each evening, followed by the opening, the class, the craft, and the games. VBS is not just for kids, V will be an adult class as well. So much fun, so much Jesus, what more could you ask for? Here's what their official description has: "Venture onto an uncharted island where kids survive and thrive. Anchor kids in the truth that Jesus carries them through life's storms. We're going to be feeling the motion of the ocean as we weather life's storms and come upon a desert island and learn that God is always with us, even through the toughest waters."

## **Confirmation Camp at Riverside**

Cameron Seible and June Volding will be attending Confirmation Camp at Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp near Story City the week of June 24-29. Pastor Mark will be at camp with them for most of the week. Please pray that they may have wonderful and growing in faith experiences.

## **Helping at NewAldaya**

The month of June is Zion's turn to help residents of NewAldaya get from their rooms to the chapel for worship on Sunday mornings. This usually involves inquiring about their attendance and pushing their wheelchairs to the chapel. A sign-up sheet is up in the Zion narthex for those interested. Thank you.

## Sign-up to Read or Serve Fellowship Treats

There are new 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.

## Thank You

May was Zion's turn to provide cookies for the NewAldaya fellowship time after their Sunday morning chapel services. Thanks to all of you who helped provide cookies. Special thanks to Elaine Brandhorst for transporting them from the church building to NewAldaya.

## June Anniversaries

6	Chris & Barb McCulley
14	Rodney & Marilu Degener
15	Phil & Monica Laube
18	Irv & Jennifer Laube
30	Harold & Julie Sorensen

## June Birthdays

1	Miles Bern
4	Donna Dufel
9	Holley Bergman
13	Jessi Sorensen
15	Edward Juhl
19	Bob Johnson
20	Eleanor Wettengel
21	Harris Jorgensen
21	Monica Laube
23	Brad Ohrt
26	Marilu Degener
27	Pamela Degener
30	Ronnie Degener

## June Acolytes

3	Zander Young
10	Tanner Laube
17	Cameron Seible
24	Zack Young

## Ushers

June 3	Andy & Cindy Appleton
June 10	Paul & Janine Knapp
June 17	Andy & Cindy Appleton
June 24	Jerry & Donna Dufel

## Communion Servers

June 3	No Communion
June 10	No Communion
June 17	Ed & Gayle Juhl
June 24	Paul & Janine Knapp

## Communion Clean-up

June 3	No Communion
June 10	No Communion
June 17	Cindy Appleton & Shirley Dufel
June 24	Cindy Appleton & Shirley Dufel

**The color of the paraments on all the Sundays of June is green for the season after Pentecost.**

**Our lectionary readings for the Sundays are:**

**June 3:** Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Ps. 139:1-6, 13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

**June 10:** Genesis 3:8-15; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

**June 17:** Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:6-17; Mark 4:26-34

**June 24:** Job 38:1-11; Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

The **WEB SITE for LCMC** – Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, is [www.lcmc.net](http://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.