



Zion Lutheran Church NEWSLETTER

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

MAY 2020 **5831 GRUNDY ROAD, HUDSON, IA 50643**
Pastor Mark's cell: 515-538-2200 Church & Parsonage: 988-4534 www.zionlutheranhuson.com

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“The church isn’t a place to go, the church is who we are.” These past few weeks we have been living this statement. While we have not been able to “go” inside the Zion church building, we continue to be the church. It is my hope that (despite not being able to gather in person) your faith has been strengthened.

“Prayer is positive. Worry and fear are negative.” It’s the 1st of May. And it’s hard to believe that many of us have been in some sort of lock-down, sheltering in place for 5-6 weeks. During that time, worldwide, about 250,000 people have died from the virus. About 120,000 people in Europe have died. Deaths in the United States are over 65,000. We grieve tremendously over this loss of lives. Looking at statistics as to how many of those who died were not Christian, we know that many of them are not spending eternity with Jesus. As followers of Christ, we share a common passion and concern for the eternal destiny of these people and the life they can have here on earth with Jesus as well. Unfortunately, over time, and the distraction of crisis, that passion can dwindle. During the month of May, I challenge us to join in praying together that the Holy Spirit would rekindle the kind of passion that leads us to share our faith with others. Let us see lives changed because we are compelled to tell others of the faith that gives us hope during these times. Thank you for sharing this passion with us, and for joining us in prayer.

For those of you who are able to go on Facebook, please connect to the Zion page at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings for a short “service” of readings, prayers, singing and reflection led by my wife and myself. It’s hardly a substitute for gathering in person, but it is a way to connect with one another and possibly observe the Sabbath. I am also

having phone conversations with many of you, just to check-in and see if you have any needs, especially for prayer or pastoral concerns.

Until last March, I’d never used the Facebook Live format. We have these figures regarding the number of “views” for each service.

March 18: 83 views (Wednesday evening)
March 22: 196 (Sunday morning)
March 25: 199 (Wednesday)
March 29: 142 (Sunday)
April 1: 185 (Wednesday)
April 5: 363 (Palm Sunday)
April 8: 262 (Wednesday)
April 9: 114 (Maundy Thursday)
April 10: 125 (Good Friday – noon)
April 15: 69 (Wednesday)
April 19: 123 (Sunday)
April 22: 85 (Wednesday)
April 26: 164 (Sunday)
April 29: 56 (Wednesday)

While the number of “views” is by no means an equal statistic to numbers of people who attended worship in person, it is nonetheless interesting to consider what having these numbers of views means. In my phone conversations with many of you, I have enjoyed hearing how many have been watching these Facebook presentations and how many of you have clicked on the “Like” or “Share” icons on the screen. Who knew sharing your faith could be so easy? Many have invited their friends and co-workers to watch, also. Thank you!

When I began doing these live video presentations, I imagined maybe 20 or 30 people would be watching, certainly not any more than our regular worship’s average attendance. To think that we are getting 5 or

6 times that number of “views” has been a surprise.

What a blessing! To think that those whom many of us would consider to be on the “fringe” of our congregation are feeling a connection to Zion is a good thing. I recall stories of the owners of Major League Baseball teams being reluctant to allow their team’s home games to be broadcast when television first became popular in the 1950’s. They were fearful that people would stop paying to come to games in person when they could watch for free (and often with a better view of the action) from the comfort of their own homes. As it turned out, just the opposite was the case – as people watched the televised games at home, they began to feel a connection with “their” team, they knew the players better and (eventually) they felt drawn to want to attend games in person at the stadium. In recent years, many teams which broadcast all their home games have full stadiums with huge in person attendance numbers.

I believe the same will be true for our congregation. Because they have been watching our Facebook Live services, folks will begin to feel they are part of our church. These are people who, quite often, seldom or never would darken the door of a church building. As they hear the gospel message, they will be drawn into a closer relationship with Christ as their Lord and Savior. If anything good is coming out of these COVID-19 days, may it be that more people come to Christ, and that the faith of believers is strengthened.

Throughout these months, what I’d like you to do – in the midst of self-quarantines, cancelled programs, closed schools and restaurants. Make sure you reach out – find somebody you know who is lonely, feeling isolated and give them a phone call. Let them know you are thinking of them and they are not alone. Ask them what are some concerns you can pray with them? Let them know they have a God who cares for them. As challenging as the weeks ahead are sure to be, I convinced that as we reach out as a church, we will become closer to the heart of Christ – in new and powerful ways as we are reminded how connected we are. “Go, and be the church.”

In Christ’s Love, Pastor Mark Decker

Please Join Us in Prayer

Each month, we publish a list of people who have requested prayers. To help you remember them in your regular prayer time: Dianne Bascom, Whitney Laube, Sean Love, Eunice Neil, and Holly Paar. Prayer requests can be submitted to Pastor Mark.

Hospital Visits

If you or a family member are in the hospital, please let Pastor Mark know so he can pray with you during your time there. Unlike in years past, hospital staff does not call the pastor to notify him when a church member has been hospitalized. Although, during this time of quarantine, the pastor is not allowed to visit in person, we are nonetheless able to connect via the phone and pray in that manner.

From the Church Council

During this time of suspension of gathering for worship, the expenses of being a congregation continue. Although, many of our church members regularly give through electronic means, we cannot collect offerings as we usually do during worship. Please consider sending your offering checks through the U.S. mail to the church: 5831 Grundy Road, Hudson, IA 50643

Zion Cookbook

During this time of quarantine, many people are experimenting with new ways to prepare meals. Our Zion Cookbook is a great way to accomplish that. The cookbook is available for purchase and can be mailed to those who are unable to come in person to the church. The price is \$20, please include an additional \$5 for postage if you’d like one mailed to you. It contains 615 recipes. Each recipe makes our book special. Our cookbook also contains many recipes from those we hold in our memory. Thank you to everyone for your support and encouragement. We have a great cookbook and we hope you enjoy it!

Snow Fence Dismantling

Thank you Garry Dufel for bringing over a crew to take down the snow fence across from the church building!

New Phone Service

Like many of you, Zion has been forced to deal with the deterioration of our rural landline phone service. Because we have an elevator, the state requires us to have a working phone inside the elevator that can both make and receive calls. After much research and conversation, the church council has made the decision to move the church's phone number to U.S. Cellular service. This new cellular "Home Phone" service is for calls only (no texting, internet or mobile phone use) but that is exactly what we need. The church phone number (319-988-4534) remains the same. When you call that number, it will ring on our existing "landline" phones in the church office, the Sunday School wing hallway, and inside the elevator.

The new system has a battery back-up in case of power outages. A new feature (not available with our old company) is "no answer call forwarding" which means that if an incoming call is not picked up after six rings, the call will be forwarded to the pastor's personal cell phone. This way, incoming calls that were previously sent to the answering machine after four rings, now go to the pastor directly. One other advantage is that the calls through this new system have a much clearer sound quality than the weak and static-filled experience we had with the old landline. On top of all that, the monthly cost to the church is substantially less than the old system. Thank you to Harlan Brandhorst for skillfully connecting the existing phones to the new system.

When and How to Resume Worship at Zion

On Monday, April 27, our Zion council met (not in person, but via a conference phone call). One item that was discussed was when and how we should resume our worship services. According to Iowa Governor Reynolds, churches in all 99 counties (even those in our county with the most confirmed COVID-19 cases in the state) are free to resume their worship services. The council agreed that resuming our "regular" services immediately would be too soon. For now, we will continue the Facebook Live internet version of our Sunday service. The council is in agreement that – when we do resume worship – some things will be eased into gradually. For example:

- a. we will try to sit at a safe distance from other families,
- b. we will not pass the peace with hugs and handshakes, but with a wave or nod from a safe distance,

- c. we will not pass the offering plates, but have setting near the entrance, watched over by an usher, so offerings may be dropped off,
- d. we will probably not have a sharing of Communion for the first few weeks, and once it is resumed, use tables set up with pre-filled cups and bread cubes to be picked up rather than handed directly from person to person,
- e. we will probably not have coffee and fellowship time following worship at least until the end of summer,
- f. the tradition of shaking the pastor's hand as you exit will not be done, but people may simply depart from the building while keeping a safe distance.

We are sure there are other considerations you might have. The council would like to hear from you, our regular participants in worship, as to how you hope we will resume to gather in person for worship. Please give your opinion on the following questions:

1. When would you like to see in person worship resume?
2. What other physical restrictions or boundaries would you like to see?
3. If you have watched the Facebook Live services on the internet, how do you see that continuing to be used in worship?

Thank you (in advance) for your responses.

One other item from our last council meeting. After much discussion, it was agreed that Zion will apply for the assistance offered by the Congress's recently passed Paycheck Protection Program.

Something to keep in mind, be kind

As officials are trying to figure out how to ease back in to a new normal, please remember:
---Some people don't agree with the state opening.... that's okay. Be kind.
---Some people are still planning to stay home.... that's okay. Be kind.
---Some are still scared of getting the virus and a second wave happening....that's okay. Be kind.
---Some are sighing with relief to go back to work knowing they may not lose their business or their homes....that's okay. Be kind.
---Some are thankful they can finally have a surgery they have put off....that's okay. Be kind.

--Some will be able to attend interviews after weeks without a job....that's okay. Be kind.
---Some will wear masks for weeks....that's okay. Be kind.
---Some people will rush out to get the hair or nails done.... that's okay. Be kind.
---The point is, everyone has different viewpoints and feelings and that's okay. Be kind.
---We each have a different story. If you need to stay home, stay home. But be kind .
---If you need to go out, just respect others when in public and be kind!
---Don't judge others because you're not in their situation. We all are in different mental states than we were months ago. So remember, be kind.

May Anniversaries

19 Elwin & Stacy Lee
30 Dan & Jane Miller

May Birthdays

1 Dan Bergman
1 Russ Pedersen
1 Preston Sieble
3 Evelyn Andorf
7 Lucas Gutknecht
10 Sue Gibson
11 Cindy Paige
18 Bridget McCulley
20 Gayle Juhl
23 Brad Dufel
23 Amber Laube
23 Sammy Ohrt
25 Jennifer Weitzell
26 Greg Bergman
28 Marissa Gutknecht
30 Craig Dufel
30 Mallory Laube
31 Holly Appleton

Our lectionary readings for the Sundays are:

May 3: Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 31:9-16;
Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 26:14—27:66
May 10: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-24;
Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18
May 17: Acts 2:22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9;
John 20:19-31
May 24: Acts 2:36-41; Psalm 116:1-19;
1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35
May 31: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-35;
1 Corinthians 12:3-13; John 20:19-23

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.