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Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

Zion Lutheran Church NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO THE ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Zion is a member congregation of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC)

JULY 2021 **5831 GRUNDY ROAD, HUDSON, IA 50643**

Pastor Mark's cell: 515-538-2200 Church & Parsonage: 988-4534 www.zionlutheranhusdon.com

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ's promises are true: "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18). And "Surely I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). These promises are especially comforting when church life feels upside down. COVID-19 became a tidal wave to rock our boat of safety and freedom.

In March of 2020, the governor told us to stay home. Our church canceled in-person worship services. We adjusted, trusting that God is blessing what we do. We immediately began services online. We didn't know exactly how to do that and we've learned as we went. Sherrie and I did the whole online service – inside an empty sanctuary – trying to make things seem as "normal" as possible, praying the gospel message came through each week. Ten weeks later, we added in-person worship services with a few gathering together in our sanctuary. At every church council meeting we discuss how we are doing worship, both online and in-person inside the sanctuary.

As a pastor, I visited with people on their patios. I wore a mask, but I wasn't allowed to see people in hospitals or nursing homes. To avoid spreading the virus, we served communion laid out on tables for worshippers to pick up as they exited the sanctuary. We cancelled coffee and snacks together.

With the church council's advice, discussion, and approval, we are returning to as much of a "normal" Sunday morning activity as we can. We continue to pray that God is blessing what we are doing. People are signing up to serve as readers during worship. The first Sunday of July, we are moving the distribution of Holy Communion back to its traditional place within the sanctuary before



the dismissal. Those who feel safe to do so come downstairs following worship for a time of snacks and fellowships conversations. Some choose to avoid that.

Hospitals and nursing homes are now allowing pastoral visits. I am blessed to be able to make those calls. I take my calling to visit our sick and shut-in members very seriously. During the COVID-19 shutdown times, in my phone conversations with you, I found that some

people were open for me coming by their home for a visit. At the same time others have been more cautious, saying something like, "Let's just wait for awhile to do that, Pastor." Okay, I can respect that caution. Now, with more people having been vaccinated (or having acquired immunity the hard way of actually recovering from the virus) more people are coming to worship in person. More people are also desiring a pastoral visit at home. Others are cautious and do not want to take the risk.

The trouble is that I cannot read people's minds to know who wants what. Yes, I always make phone calls in advance, but quite often those calls go unanswered and my messages are not returned. So, I'm asking here – if anyone would like an in-person home visit, please let me know. Call the church office at 319-988-4534. Even if I am not able to pick up the phone in the office, the calls are forwarded to my cell phone. Likewise, if you hear of someone who wants me to come visit, please encourage that person to let me know, or let me know yourself.

As a whole church, we will pray. We will love our neighbor. We will offer the good news of reconciliation and hope to our society that seems to be bent on destroying its own roots.

In Christ's Love, Pastor Mark Decker

Driving Directions to Zion

During this time of construction on Grundy Road, please use Strayer Road (from the east) or 190th Street (from the west) as you approach the Zion Church building. Coming this way, you will only have about 100 yards of driving on Grundy Road and will avoid much of the heavy machinery that is moving dirt and rocks elsewhere along the construction area. Please come and see for yourselves how the landscape is changing as the work progresses.

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, Pastor Mark and Sherrie Decker, Jim & Julie Leonard, Mary Mommer, Eunice Neil, Holly Paar, Sheila Petry, Eleanor Wettengel, and Jean Wittgreve.. 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. Even though some facilities may not allow the pastor to visit in person, we are nonetheless able to connect via the phone and pray in that manner. Let us appreciate the blessings we have, as few and far between as they may seem to be. One bright spot regarding hospital visits is that some hospitals are now allowing pastors to visit church members!

Vacation Bible School

Many thanks to those who helped make Vacation Bible School a wonderful event last week. The theme for our program was "Armor of God" from Ephesians 6:10-18. We had between 12 and 17 students participating each night.

Health Updates for Pastor Mark and Sherrie

First of all, we give thanks and praise to God for actively working through our caregivers, medical procedures, and medications that work for healing and daily relief from chronic conditions. We joyfully thank you for your continuing prayers.

When Sherrie fell down a stairway while we were on vacation last February it was a life changing event that continues to affect her daily work and activities. Although, her spinal cord was not damaged, the fracture of her T-10 vertebra was completely through the bone and dangerously threatening the spinal cord. It was unstable because so many ligaments were torn, so surgery to fuse the T-9, T-10, and T-11 together was performed as soon as possible. As most of you know, her recovery from that

surgery required her to stay in the hospital and rehabilitation center in Florida for an extra three weeks beyond our originally planned return. Since our return to Iowa, she has made steady progress in her healing. She no longer needs to wear her back brace, use her walker, or take strong prescription pain medications. However, she continues to require physical therapy and wear her electric "bone-growth-stimulator" device on her back. Because of limited range of movement in her neck, she is still not able to drive. She tried driving last week and it did not go well – fortunately there was no crash. She relies on me to attach the stimulator device to her back every day, as well as drive her to physical therapy and various doctor appointments.

I have had chronic elbow pain and discomfort since fracturing both elbows in a fall in September of 1985. I have previously undergone four surgeries (two on each elbow), which have generally been fairly successful in helping my elbows function properly. Most days my left elbow works very well, with only slight pain. But now that joint has deteriorated to the point where some days there is almost no range of motion (like I can't even touch my chin with my left hand) and the pain is very intense. So much deterioration has occurred, that another surgery is necessary to repair that elbow. My surgery is scheduled for Wednesday, July 14, at Mayo in Rochester. I appreciate your ongoing prayers.

On top of all that, I had a recurrence of kidney stones last month. After several days of having those stones rock my body, the stone was passed and my latest visit with the urologist confirmed that I am (presently) free from those little demons.

To sum it up, we are dealing with our health issues as well as we are able. God is active and working in the midst of all that is going on.

Pastor Mark

Online and In-person Worship at the Same Time

With the resumption of in person worship in the sanctuary, we continue to use the camera and post the Sunday worship service with Facebook Live. The church council is looking at other options for mounting the camera in a position other than hand held in the front of the sanctuary. Some prefer watching the worship service on Facebook, from the comfort of their home. Others prefer to be in the Zion sanctuary have been welcome to attend the service in person. The in person attendance has leveled off to about 30-40 people per Sunday – plenty of room to spread out and keep a safe distance. Those attending in person are able to share in Holy Communion. We are no longer requiring masks be worn as you enter and are welcoming people come to come downstairs for fellowship. Online Facebook Live views have been between 100 to as many as 380 per Sunday.

From the Church Council

Although we have restrictions for gathering together, the expenses of being a congregation continue. We are grateful that many of our church members regularly give through electronic means. Please consider sending your offering checks through the U.S. mail to the church: 5831 Grundy Road, Hudson, IA 50643. Many thanks to those of you who continue to give during this “down” time. Your gifts are greatly appreciated!

July Anniversaries

- 7 Russ & Sandy Pedersen
- 21 Dan & Tammy Bern
- 24 Pastor Mark’s Ordination (1988)
- 28 Bob & Shirley Dufel Petersen

July Birthdays

- 1 Pastor Mark
- 7 Dylan Garbes
- 11 Tara Seible
- 21 Tammy Bergman
- 23 Mitch Juhl
- 25 Lyle Wulf
- 25 Dan Bern

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.

Colors:

The color of the paraments for July is green for the season of Pentecost.

Calendar:

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Worship in the Sanctuary and Facebook Live streaming

Sunday, July 4 at 12 Noon

Committal service for Ed Barnett

Sunday, July 18 at 10:30 a.m. - Church Council meets