



**lcmc**  
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)*

**OCTOBER 2021**

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

**Pastor Mark's cell: 515-538-2200**

**Church & Parsonage: 988-4534 [www.zionlutheranhusdon.com](http://www.zionlutheranhusdon.com)**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I'm writing this month's newsletter while away at the LCMC annual convention in Columbus, Ohio. After the past year and a half of dealing with fallout from the COVID virus, it is no surprise that this topic seems to infect almost every conversation. Like the rest of our society, congregational life has suffered greatly and most are doubtful there will ever be a return to "normal" life as it was before COVID. Zion is certainly not alone; other congregations report extreme drop-offs in attendance and general participation among formerly faithful attenders in worship. Most agree that, while offering online worship opportunities such as Facebook Live has been necessary to keep people connected, for many, it has become too easy to stay home watching online, and not receiving the benefits of communion and fellowship that only comes with in-person gathering. The excuses for not attending in-person are too easy.

I've heard from many other pastors for whom the decline in member participation has led them into feelings of self-doubt and futility with their ministry. As one pastor put it, "I keep thinking 'If only I had done something more or better, we wouldn't be going through these difficulties with lower attendance and reduced giving.'"

If anything, the past year and a half has pulled off a thin veneer in our world that has revealed many of its underlying problems. As a church, it can be too easy to get caught up into that same mindset of despair that distracts us from the message of Jesus – the

gospel's good news of Christ's love for us. We need the reminder that we can't let our sin, our pride, prevent us from hearing that message. We all know that our enemy is not flesh and blood, but the devil. Yet it's hard not to get caught up in anxiety when flesh and blood (virus and earthly rulers) are firing off all sorts of arrows at us. Instead of gathering together, joining arms under the protection of the armor of

God, a united group of believers, we begin attacking each other.

We look at the issues we face today and we can forget that God's people have been through difficult times before. In Exodus 3:7-8, we hear God speaking to Moses from the burning bush, "Then the Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.'"

When we watch the news, we know that the bad news gets the attention. Yet, we can offer the good news of Christ coming to save us. That good news isn't about politics or depend upon who is in charge of the government. When we proclaim that good news, we are a blessing to those who suffer the hardships the world is throwing at them. Please keep this mindset among yourselves as a face these difficult times. Although we have differences of opinion as to how "safe" it is to gather in-person for fellowship and worship, what unites us is something (someone) much more powerful than any differences we face. We are united by the neverfailing love of God in Christ Jesus.



*In Christ's Love, Pastor Mark Decker*

## **Zion Cookbooks Make Great Gifts**

Are you looking ahead to what you might give as Christmas presents? How about one of our Zion Lutheran Church cookbooks! Many are still available for purchase at \$20.

## **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. Every week there is something different.

## **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, Marcia Ecker Jim & Julie Leonard, Eunice Neil, Holly Paar, Sheila Petry, Adriana Reyes, 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 most hospitals are now allowing pastors to visit church members!

## **Sign-up to Read or Serve Fellowship Treats**

There are still some open days on the 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 or serving Holy Communion during worship on Sunday mornings. Please take advantage these opportunities to use your talent.

## **Pastor Mark at the Annual LCMC Convention**

After last year's convention was held online because of COVID restrictions, we are blessed to be able to gather again in person this year at Upper Arlington Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio for the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) 2021 gathering. Total attending in person are 445. The theme is "Speak It – Live It – Share It." What a blessing to return to the convention and meet with old friends and acquaintances, hear inspiring speakers, and come home with fresh ideas! I am truly grateful for being granted this time away and special thanks go to Ben Volding for leading the worship and preaching the sermon in my absence.

Thank you,  
Pastor Mark

## **From the LCMC: October is Pastor Appreciation Month!**

*By Steve Lien*

*LCMC Coordinator for Pastoral Ministry*

Dear Friends:

Did you know that Thanksgiving sometimes comes in October? Well, not the official Thanksgiving, but elements of thanksgiving have found their way into October in many congregations, because October has been designated as Clergy Appreciation Month. Some congregations observe this spirit of Thanksgiving all month long!

The Apostle Paul may have been the first to express the sense of Clergy Appreciation Day in the church. In 1 Timothy, he wrote, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). And, in 1 Thessalonians, he said, "Respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Focus on the Family named and began emphasizing October as Clergy Appreciation Month in 1994. It was established with the mission of uplifting and encouraging pastors, missionaries and religious workers.

My work as Coordinator for Pastoral Ministry has reinforced my perception that pastors and congregations absolutely need Clergy Appreciation Month. Not all, but many, of the pastors and church staff members that I encounter are overworked,

underpaid, and exhausted. They shoulder many responsibilities, and feel the weight of great burdens. Nationally, pastors experience a very high rate of burnout and marital and financial stress. Leadership Magazine (Spring, 2014), published these sobering statistics:

- 80% of pastors are discouraged in their role as pastors.
- 40% of pastors seriously considered leaving the pastorate in the past three months.
- 50% of pastors say they are unable to meet the demands of their job and are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living.
- For every 20 pastors who go into ministry, only one retires from the ministry.
- 45% of pastors say they've experienced depression or burnout to the extent that they need to take a leave of absence.
- 70% of pastors say they do not have a single close friend, and the same percentage say they have lower self-esteem than when they entered the ministry.
- 80% of pastors believe that pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families and 80% of spouses feel left out and underappreciated by church members.
- And... there are pastors who love what they are doing and find it a complete joy to serve.

*Statistics from Fail: Finding Hope and Failure in the Midst of Ministry Failure (IVP, 2014).*

Thrivingpastor.com offers this information: Clergy Appreciation Month is a special time that congregations set aside each year to honor their pastors and pastoral families for the hard work, sacrificial dedication and multiple blessings provided by these special people.

The nature of the service provided by pastors and their families is unique. God has entrusted to them one of the most precious of assignments — the spiritual well-being of His flock. When a pastor becomes ineffective, the very souls of his or her parishioners are endangered. When eternity is in the balance, we should all be concerned.

When discussing this possibility with the LCMC Ministry Board, members recognized that many pastors are underappreciated while many already feel deeply appreciated; others wanted to be sure the congregations consider the entire church

staff when showing appreciation. Well, rather than doing nothing, we're forwarding a few suggestions. There are literally dozens of resources available online (just search "Pastor Appreciation"). Check out ThrivingPastor.Com, Focusonthefamily.com, or Biblegateway.com. You can even find FaceBook and Pinterest pages devoted to pastor/staff appreciation. There's even a blog post on what not to get your pastor for pastor appreciation month!

### **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 continues the plan for mounting the camera in a rear wall position rather than using an phone 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.

### **From the Church Council**

Although the COVID virus continues, with some 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. Your gifts are greatly appreciated!

### **October Anniversaries**

- 7 Joel & Jenna Parr
- 19 Kyle & Lacey Degener
- 23 Paul & Janine Knapp
- 29 Andy & Cindy Appleton

### **October Birthdays**

- 1 Bruce Bascom
- 3 Kelly Paige
- 4 Betty Bergman
- 4 Elwin Lee

- 7 Cindy Young
- 8 Carson Laube
- 9 Spencer Simpson
- 13 Holly Petersen
- 13 Carol Weaver
- 14. Chris McCulley
- 20 Langley Jensen
- 24 Irv Laube
- 24 Holley Wulf VanHemert
- 25 Jim Grover
- 25 Jane Miller

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.

**Colors:**

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

**Readings:**

Our lectionary readings for the Sundays are:

- September 5: James 5
- September 12: Psalm 23
- September 19: Mark 9:30-37
- September 26: Mark 9:38-50