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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)

MARCH 2022 **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,

As you enter the Zion sanctuary, there are copies of Rediscover Church available for free to anyone who would like to read this timely book. In this book, authors Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman discuss why church is essential for believers and God's mission. Here's a quote from the introduction:

"Through biblical references and personal stories, they show readers God's true intention for corporate gathering: to spiritually strengthen members as individuals and the body of Christ. In an age of church-shopping and live streamed services, rediscover why the future of the church relies on believers gathering regularly as the family of God.

"Since a global pandemic abruptly closed places of worship, many Christians have skipped church life, even neglecting virtual services. But this was a trend even before COVID-19. Polarizing issues, including political and racial strife, convinced some people to pull away from the church and one another. Now it's time to recommit to gathering as brothers and sisters in Christ.

"A Christian without a church is a Christian in trouble."

It is my hope that as many of you as possible will read Rediscover 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, Pastor Mark Decker, Sherrie Decker, Marcia Ecker, Eunice Neil, Sheila Petry, Adriana Reyes, Janet Schoenfelder, Jean Wittgreve, Carrie Carey, Nikki and Russ. Prayer requests can be submitted to Pastor Mark.



Lent Begins March 2

Ash Wednesday is March 2 this year. We will have a worship service at 6:30 that evening with a celebration of Holy Communion as well as the traditional imposition of ashes on our foreheads. Lent is often seen as a time of more solemn preparation for the great celebration of Jesus' resurrection. In a previous congregation in which I served, the senior pastor would scold the church members by saying, "If you can't bother coming to worship during Lent, you have no right to show up on Easter Sunday."

After an interruption for the past two years, we will resume offering Wednesday evening worship services during Lent. We will also resume our shared meals prior to the Wednesday services following Ash Wednesday. No meal on Ash Wednesday, but meals prior to worship on Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6.

At our Zion Lutheran Church council meetings we have discussed the benefits of fellowship time and agreed that the recent success of potluck meals should be continued. For this Lenten season, we are blessed to have volunteers scheduled to provide the main course part of the meals. We are invit-

ing others to bring items such as salads and desserts to share prior to the Wednesday Lenten services.

As a reminder, here is the schedule for those bringing the main course:

March 9 – Marilu Degener
March 16 – Marian Grover
March 23 – Julie Sorensen
March 30 – Donna Dufel
April 6 – Stacy Lee

The meals will begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by worship at 6:30.. Even if you forget (or are unable) to bring an item, you are welcome to join us for the meal. Past experience tells us that there will be plenty to go around. Even if you can't be there by 5:30, usually folks arriving as late as 6:15 are able to grab a quite meal before worship begins.

During Holy Week, there is no worship service on Wednesday, April 13. We are planning to have worship on Maundy Thursday, April 14, at 6:30 p.m.

Concerns about what is happening in Ukraine

In Ecclesiastes 3, there is famous Bible passage where we read, "There is a time for love and a time for hate, a time for war and a time for peace..." As we look at the rest of the Bible, we can see clearly that God has a preference for love as opposed to hate, and a bias toward a time for peace as opposed to war. But we live in world that has been corrupted by sin. We live in a world where sometimes the ideals of peace and justice cannot always co-exist together. We think of the legacy of people like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran pastor who took a stand against Hitler and the Nazis that eventually led to his involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler and his own execution by the Nazis in a prison camp in 1945. He first tried one path and then found himself going on a different path that accepted the necessity of war.

People around the world are observing the events in Ukraine and we have to say it is very troubling. It provokes anxiety in many people. Not just out of their love for their neighbor (which is a good enough reason to have feelings that lean towards anxiety) but this war also brings on feelings of stress.

We know there are Godly reasons to reject anxiety (over and over again, the Bible records the words of God and his messenger angels, "Do not fear!"). Jesus himself expressly warns against being anxious ("Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." - Matthew 6:34) but we hear this news and it's not easy to avoid feelings of anxiousness.

Just the notion that what is going in Ukraine could destabilize the whole world has people reaching out to their Christian brothers and sisters in prayerful concern. Can we all honestly admit that we are anxious about the whole mess? During this time, what better thing to do than pray? So, I invite you to join me in prayer: Gracious God, we give you thanks for this beautiful world that you have created. We give you thanks that you have placed us in this world and we give you thanks that you have saved us through the love of your Son, Jesus. We give you thanks that you have offered us the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life. We confess that we have not always been great stewards of what you have given us. You have placed great gifts in our hands and we have squandered those gifts. As citizens of this world, we have seen and tolerated injustice and that has placed our world in danger of warfare too often.

We pray now, Lord that you would intercede in the circumstances in Ukraine. We pray, Lord, for a rapid peace and the minimal loss of life that goes with warfare. But we pray also, Lord, for justice. We pray, Lord, that you would bring about the most peaceful and just future for that region, and for our whole planet. We pray that you especially keep safe and protect all the people, both civilians and military who are at risk during these violent times. We pray for those who feel trapped in the midst of circumstances that are beyond their control. We pray for soldiers who are seeking to be obedient to their commanders, to their nation, and to you. And we pray that you would end this warfare, as soon as possible, according to your will. We pray that you would care for all those who will be harmed in the midst of this situation. And that you would stir up in our hearts that we can all work together for peace in all places and to care especially for refugees who are fleeing the dangers of this war in Ukraine. Amen

Pastor Mark Has Announced Retirement Plans

This is a shortened version of the letter that was mailed to Zion's members last week.

Dear Zion Family,

With a heavy heart I inform you of my impending retirement. It is time for me to consider a new stage in my life to practice God's word and God's grace. Serving as Zion's pastor has been an incredible privilege. I have loved being part of this family. Meeting and speaking with each family member every Sunday morning has been a tremendous blessing. I will continue to say a prayer every night for the people who make up this church.

The Zion congregation will continue to worship every Sunday. I urge each person who would like to discuss the changes they feel need to be made as Zion moves forward to schedule a time with the church council members.

I thank the leaders of Zion and the Lord for this incredible opportunity to lead each Sunday service as your pastor. After consulting with the church council leadership, I am planning to remain through the upcoming Lenten and Easter seasons. With the perceived budgetary shortfalls looming, I cannot see how I would function as a less than full-time pastor. Lord willing, Sunday, June 26, will be my final service as your pastor.

As I look at who you are, and what this congregation has grown into I am filled with wonder at what our God has done. So it is with a heart that is heavy with a lot of love, more than a little sadness, but more than anything, an enormous amount of gratitude, that I say to you that my work as the pastor of Zion has gone as far as it could.

*In Christ's Love,
Pastor Mark Decker*

Congregational Meeting and Potluck Meal on March 20

The annual meeting the congregation that was held on January 30, tabled the vote to approve a budget for 2022. On Sunday, March 20, an amended budget will be presented for discussion and vote. All Zion members are encouraged to attend this meeting. The meeting will be followed by our monthly potluck meal.

Zion Cookbooks Make Great Gifts

Our Zion Lutheran Church cookbooks are still available for purchase. The price is \$20 and contains 615 recipes. Cookbooks make great gifts! Thank you to all that submitted recipes and asked others for 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!

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!

More Are Gathering In-person for Worship while Live Streaming Is Still Offered

The new video camera has been installed in the rear wall position and will be used rather than the phone camera hand held in the front of the sanctuary. While some still prefer watching the worship service on Facebook, from the comfort of their home, more are gathering in the Zion sanctuary to participate in the service in person. The in person attendance has increased to about 35-45 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, celebrate with singing as well as 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!

March Anniversaries

- 9 Ed & Gayle Juhl
30 Greg & Tammy Bergman

March Birthdays

- 6 Whitney Laube
6 Margaret Karsjens
8 Angie Johnson
10 Rorie Volding
11 Jaxsen Weitzell
12 Luke Kilgore
13 Bill Gutknecht
13 Ryan Johnson
16 Doug Wulf
17 Connor Simpson
20 Austin Appleton
21 Allan McCulley
26 Dayne Watson
28 Karen Wulf
31 Jace Brandhorst

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.

The color of the paraments for all the Sundays in March is purple for Lent.

Our lectionary readings for the Sundays are:

- March 6: Luke 4:1-13
March 13: Luke 13:31-35
March 20: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
March 27: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Calendar:

Sundays at 9:00 a.m. - Worship in the Sanctuary and Facebook Live streaming

Sundays at 10:00 a.m. - Sunday School classes

Wednesday, March 2 at 6:30 p.m. – Ash Wednesday service with Communion and ashes

Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 6:30 p.m. Lenten services preceded by shared meal

Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, and 30 – 7:00 p.m. - Confirmation Classes

Sunday, March 13 and 20, at 11:00 a.m. - Church Council meetings

Sunday, March 20 at 10:00 a.m. - Congregational meeting to approve the annual budget

Sunday, March 20 at 10:30 a.m. - Monthly potluck meal

Zion Lutheran Church Snow Removal Schedule

March 1-15	Ben Volding	319-415-0043
	Elwin Lee	319-988-4219
March 16-31	Andy Appleton	319-239-0340
	Mark Decker	515-538-2200