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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)

APRIL 2022 5831 GRUNDY ROAD, HUDSON, IA 50643

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Two years ago, we offered worship during Holy Week solely in an online format. While we continue to offer the opportunity for people to worship online with Facebook Live, for the last year, we have also opened up our Zion sanctuary for in-person worship. Although more and more people have made the decision to return to in-person worship, there are still others who steadfastly refuse to participate beyond watching online. When I ask them why they haven't been here in person, they continue to express their concerns about the global pandemic. Many Christians have skipped church life, even neglecting virtual services. But this was a trend even before COVID-19. I tend to agree with the authors of Rediscover Church who recognize that other issues, including political and racial strife, convinced some people to pull away from the church and one another. Some were probably just looking for a reason and COVID-19 has provided that excuse to stop coming to worship. I also agree with the Rediscover Church statement that "Now it's time to recommit to gathering as brothers and sisters in Christ.... A Christian without a church is a Christian in trouble."

Church attendance numbers across all denominations have faded in the past two years as online services have become very convenient. It's important to remember why church attendance for you and your family matters so much. You can't serve from your sofa. You can't have a community of faith when you

are sitting alone. You can't experience the power of a room full of believers worshipping together when you are by yourself. Christians aren't consumers. We are contributors. We don't watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We pray by hearing the prayers of others. The church needs you. You need the church.



Dealing with differing opinions regarding our worship practices is nothing new. It is probably a miracle of the Holy Spirit that we have as many active members as we do. As followers of Christ, we are called to accept our variety of gifts and our differences as a strength (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-26). I sincerely hope that as many people as possible will like the way we worship, but my goal is not to get people to like what I do. My goal is for people to hear the gospel message of God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Of course, if people are

liking how we worship and enjoying themselves, they are more open to hearing that message, but sometimes we need to wrestle with tough issues in ways we don't like. When Jacob wrestled with God in Genesis 32, the struggle didn't make him happy, but it was a necessary step toward reconciliation with God and his family.

Because we take these things seriously, recounting Jesus' betrayal, innocent suffering, mockery and tortured death are painful to reflect upon. For me, the events of Holy Week, as we traditionally observe them, are not something that I particularly like. Yet it is necessary. As we read in Matthew 26:42, "Again,

for the second time, Jesus went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”

As we have made plans for worship, I invite to participate in the best way you are able. The services will be live on Facebook, but we are also welcoming those who wish to join us in the sanctuary for in-person worship.

*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. Please pray along with the newly formed call committee that they are guided by God in their preparations and search.

Lent Continues

After an interruption for the past two years, we have resumed offering Wednesday evening worship services during Lent. We continue our shared meals prior to the Wednesday services on March 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 inviting others to bring items such as salads and desserts to share prior to the Wednesday Lenten services.

As a reminder, bringing the main course on April 6 is Stacy Lee. The meal begins 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.

Blessing of Seeds and Soils

As we look forward to warmer weather and spring planting we have scheduled our annual “Blessing of Seeds and Soils” for Sunday, April 10, immediately following the conclusion of worship services.

Call Committee Survey

Zion Lutheran Church Call Committee is seeking your input. Please use the following form to give us your feedback:

<https://forms.gle/MRzrG1wwPJFsMc786>

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. We have a great cookbook!

Cemetery Flowers

The sign at the entrance to the Zion Cemetery reminds us that flowers are to be removed by the first of May. Thank you!

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. One bright spot regarding hospital visits is that most hospitals are now allowing pastors to visit church members!

Easter Breakfast

Please join us for a breakfast served by our Sunday School families on April 17. The meal begins at 8:00 (although you will still be served if you come later than that time), followed by our Easter worship service at 9:00.

April Anniversaries

- 6 Bruce & Dianne Bascom
14 Jim & Marion Grover
19 Doug & Karen Wulf

April Birthdays

- 3 Andy Appleton
3 Julie Sorensen
4 Dianne Bascom
4 Tammy Bern
5 Joanne Nicklaus
5 June Volding
6 Carrie McCalley
12 Cindy Appleton
15 Harold Sorensen
26 Danielle Bascom
26 Ryan Ohrt
26. Marian Grover
28 Kevin Simpson

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 Sundays, April 3 and 10, and Thursday, April 14, is purple for Lent, the color for the remainder of April is white for Easter

Our lectionary readings for the Sundays are:

April 3:

1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Galatians 5:22-23; John 3:16-17

April 10:

Galatians 5:22-23 and Luke 23:1-49

April 17:

Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 114; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Luke 24:1-12

April 24:

Acts 5:27-32; Psalm 16; Revelation 1:4-8; John 20:19-31