

Zion Lutheran Church & Preschool
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Jonathon J. Bakker and Benjamin J. Ulledalen, Pastors

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“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.” Isaiah 24:6

We’re a little over half of the way into 2020, and what a year it has been so far. What does the rest of the year hold for us? Would you like to get off this wild ride yet? Will crises and strange times be content with what they’ve done to 2020, and not touch 2021? Does the Bible have anything to say about plagues, tyranny, rebellion, corruption, and hard times?

“Change and decay in all around I see. Oh Thou who changest not, abide with me.” So we sing in Hymn 878. What a year of change! Actually, what a *half-year* of change. When coronavirus first broke, we were strictly told not to wear masks. Now here we are, required to wear them. We were told not to meet in large groups, and then our Governor and other elected officials appeared in large protest groups. We were told to stay home for a few weeks in order to “flatten the curve,” but now, after the curve has flattened, and Michigan daily death rates are in the single-digits, all of a sudden we have more executive orders. Again, the original call was that we “flatten the curve.” But now, the goalposts have been moved. Now they say we must find a vaccine or eradicate the virus before we return to “normal.” I’m convinced they will never let us return to normal. The long-term goal here is the “new normal,” and we Christians should be concerned about it.

A lot has been said about loving our neighbors by staying home, wearing masks, and the like. Not enough has been said about loving our neighbor by keeping his small business open, or maintaining human connections for the elderly or those with mental health problems. Not enough has been said about loving our neighbor by endeavoring to preserve his freedom and way of life. Not enough has been said about threats to

religious liberty. Yes, Gov. Whitmer did exempt worshipers from the recent mask mandate, and she never technically called for a stop to worship. But other governors in this country did. What will the rules be next time?

Change, decay, ups, downs, chaos, and confusion. How are Christians to navigate in times like these? How are we to navigate when we don’t even all agree on the right course of action? Why should we take these dictates from the experts so seriously today when there’s a good chance they will tell us to do the exact opposite in a few weeks or months? This is why we at Zion are reluctant to make drastic changes to our worship practices. Back in March, we decided to forgo worship for a time, in order to love our neighbor, let the hospitals prepare for an influx of cases, and play it safe in light of the unknowns surrounding this epidemic. And in May, when we decided to resume in-person worship, likewise we implemented some reasonable sanitation practices. It has been our philosophy that individuals and families must decide for themselves what level of risks at Church they are willing to take. We’ve committed to certain practices, and those who are not content with the level of precaution we have undertaken can decide for themselves how they personally would like to respond. “Furthermore, as pastors and elders there are some things we can do better—things we’ve already set out to do: assuring that all communion assistants wash their hands, setting out hand sanitizer, and reminding worshipers to be respectful of personal space.” What else should we as Christians do? Return to the Lord. Return to his word. In fact, even as we turn to precautions, medical science, and procedures, we should return to the Lord and his

word. And what does his word say for times like these? It says that God himself is without change; he is an everlasting rock (Isaiah 24:6). Worshiping God is essential—not optional (Third Commandment). If you're not worshipping him in person at Zion each week, then please do worship at home. God's word also tells us that the Lord has power over the facts of history (Matt. 10:29-31). Sickness and disaster are not accidents, but God permits them, and even works these things for our good and his glory (Joel 1:15; Rom. 5:3-5). We are to fear God more than we fear bodily death (Matt. 10:28). Disaster is a time for personal repentance (Luke 13:3-5).

I would challenge you to prayerfully consider whether in-person worship is essential. I would challenge you to prayerfully consider whether worship is worth the risk. I would challenge you to look at the actual risk coronavirus poses to you. If you're reluctant to return to worship, what other risks do you take in your life these days? How do those compare with the theoretical risks posed by worship? Can we remove all risks from life? I would challenge you to prayerfully consider what other dictates from Government officials you would be willing to take. Today it's masks, but tomorrow or next year it will be something else. And it will be in the name of "loving your neighbor" and "working for the common good."

In times like these, we should return to the Lord in daily prayer and Bible reading. We should return to the Lord in humility and repentance. God often uses disasters to discipline us—to wake us up, cause us to reflect, and call us to a deeper love in Him (Deut. 28). And so when things go sour, we should return to the Lord in reflection and repentance. We should ask him to forgive our anxieties. We should ask him to forgive our lack of trust in him. We should ask him to forgive all of the things we took for granted back in the good old normal days—things like human contact, freedom of movement, and most of all, taking worship for granted. We should return to the Lord, because He is faithful. Even though we falter and sin, and even though the world around is turned upside-down, "He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." (Joel 2:13b).

Pastor Ulledalen

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Sunday School News!

Our Sunday School year is scheduled to begin on September 13 with Rally Day!

We are looking forward to sharing this day with you in God's Word and fun activities! Additional details will be coming in future bulletins and the September newsletter. The following students received an attendance certificate for completing 13 Sundays in February and March:

Grades N - K
Leland Zalud - N

Grades 1 - 3
Amelia Couturier - 3
Andrew Geiger - 1
Lydia Gilbert - 3
Emma Grossnickle - 2



Preschool News:

The new school year is upon us! The construction phase of our Preschool and Early Childhood Center expansion is moving along and should be complete very soon.



Preschool & Early Childhood Center

Open House

Tuesday, August 18

10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

This is primarily for parents and children; however, everyone is welcome to stop in and see the changes to our facility. Come anytime between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The first day of preschool is Monday, August 24. All programs remain open for enrollment. Please share this wonderful news with friends, family, co-workers and "anyone you meet on the street". Brochures continue to be available in the hallway. Take a few and share.

Tina is looking for anyone who would be interested in helping out in the classrooms periodically. You can contact the office if interested or with any questions.

As always, please keep our growing program in your prayers.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Monthly Income & Expense Report

through June, 2020

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
YTD Budgeted Expenses	\$ 226,194.56	\$ 230,658.99
YTD Actual Expenses	<u>\$ 211,967.14</u>	<u>\$ 231,756.86</u>
YTD Balance	\$ 14,227.42	\$ (1,097.87)
YTD General Fund Income	\$ 198,124.63	\$ 212,538.52
YTD Actual Expenses	<u>\$ 211,967.14</u>	<u>\$ 231,756.86</u>
YTD Income Less Expense	\$ (13,842.51)	\$ (19,218.34)

Winston Churchill reportedly said, “we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” According to Churchill then, our lives are defined less by what we have gotten and more by what we give away.

Our Lord’s life is defined in this way. He gave completely of Himself for us. He became man for us. He taught the truth of God’s Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserve because of sin. He gave of Himself in order to save us from sin, death, and hell. So it is that by giving completely of Himself, He got us for Himself, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace.

As it was for Jesus, so it is also for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. Giving softens our hearts and frees us from the worries of this world and making a living. For when we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get. That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives – our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking “How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others?” to “What have they done for me lately?” We become more selfish instead of selfless. But, when we give, we do not have less, and we do not become less. We have more and become more. Because when we give, we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus, we are participating in the divine nature. As Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Mission of the Month



Concordia Theological Seminary St. Louis

Concordia Seminary serves church and world by providing theological education and leadership centered in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for the formation of pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, scholars, and leaders in the name of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.



In memory of Erma Cameron

Yvonne Fitzgerald
Wayne & Karyn Kiefer

In memory of Rachel Vrudny

Wayne & Karyn Kiefer

In memory of Sharon Cotter

Ashley Fitzgerald
Derek Fitzgerald
Yvonne Fitzgerald

2 Day Youth Event

Friday, August 14 & Saturday, August 15

All youth are welcome! Come ready to camp overnight at Zion. **Friday evening** there will be dinner, a bonfire and fellowship. Members are welcome to join us. **Saturday** breakfast will be provided and Pastor Ulledalen will have a presentation at around 9:00 a.m. Again members are welcome to join us on Saturday morning.



RSVP to Jeremy Couturier @ 810-513-6179 or Tim at the church office by August 10 so proper food arrangements can be made.

Thank you to all of you at Zion for your patience and love and support you have shown to your church and pastors as we work through the myriad of difficulties that go along with living in these strange circumstances. For those who have decided not to take the risk of attending worship in person yet, be assured that we will continue to make the service available online after the fact. I apologize it hasn't been uploading in as timely a fashion as any of us would like, but there are logistical issues that arise on a weekly basis that make it quite challenging. If anyone has experience or a willingness to take this on as a volunteer project, your help would be greatly appreciated. Once infrastructure is in place for fast enough internet at Zion, we will have the capability to stream video live from Zion, which will mean members can watch as the service happens, and then the video will remain available on YouTube thereafter for viewing later. Until then, videos will be available as soon as they can be processed and uploaded.

Lifelight Bible Study

Even though we are more than a month away from when things normally start taking place, keep your eyes and ears open for announcements about the start of Lifelight Bible Study. This fall we will turn to the prophet Isaiah. Often labeled 'The fifth Gospel,' the book of Isaiah is a treasure for us. The first class will be Thursday September 10, and two sessions will be offered each week so that you can attend whichever best fits your schedule. The morning sessions will begin at 10:30 a.m. and the evening sessions at 6:30 p.m. When they are prepared, the compiled Scripture readings for each session will be published on Zion's website. Depending on attendance, we may end up meeting outdoors (weather permitting) or in the fellowship hall, so that people can spread out during the study.

Men's Breakfast Bible Study

While we haven't met for months, depending on the response in July, we plan on restarting this monthly event where we left off in the book of Joshua. If you're able and willing to help provide a meal that allows for social distancing in distribution (i.e. not buffet style, which we're used to), please let Pastor Bakker know.

Annual Stewardship Emphasis

While it is hard to imagine that it is that time of the year again, the annual stewardship emphasis will take place the final three Sundays of September – 13, 20, and 27. September 13 will also be Rally Day, and so it will have a dual focus for us, with Pledge Sunday falling on September 27. Watch for more information in next month's newsletter!

Bible Reading Challenge

"Taste and see that the Lord is good."



We've made it to the end of our summer read-through of the entire New Testament. How did it go? Was it worth it? Even if you fell behind or didn't manage to read every single selection, hopefully this was a chance to stretch and grow a bit. In uncertain times like ours, God is our refuge and strength. He is unchanging. He is merciful and mighty. His word gives us wisdom, direction, strength, and the reminder that he forgives our sins and has purchased us to be his own treasured possessions for all eternity.

August 1 & 2 — 2 Peter; Hebrews 1-2

August 3— Hebrews 3-6

August 4— Hebrews 7-10

August 5— Hebrews 11-13

August 6— James 1-5

August 7— Ephesians 1-4

August 8 & 9 — Ephesians 5-6

August 10— Mark 1-4

August 11— Mark 5-8

August 12— Mark 9-11

August 13— Mark 12-14

August 14— Mark 15-16

August 15 & 16 — 1 Thessalonians 1-3

August 17— 1 Thessalonians 4-5;
2 Thessalonians

August 18— 1 Timothy 1-3

August 19— 1 Timothy 4-6

August 20— 2 Timothy 1-4

August 21— Titus 1-3

August 22 & 23 — Revelation 1-3

August 24— Revelation 4-6

August 25— Revelation 7-9

August 26— Revelation 10-12

August 27— Revelation 13-15

August 28— Revelation 16-18

August 29 & 30 — Revelation 19-22

August 31— Psalm 1; Psalm 19; Psalm 150

LWML – Zion Lutheran Women’s Society



Comfort from the Psalms – Leaning on the Lord - Mustard Seed Devotion

In the Word

I said to the Lord, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing. “Psalm 26:2

Of the Word

An atheist says, “Religion? A waste of time! A crutch for the weak! A cop-out!” But think of why a crutch is useful. Without it, how would the patient with a broken ankle be able to walk? For that matter, consider walkers, braces, wheelchairs. Are they only a copout, a waste of time? Of course not, a fact even an atheist knows.

Is leaning on Jesus then a useless waste of time? God’s people trust Him. They know they need the support He provides. They trust His wisdom and power no matter what circumstances confront them.

With St. Paul they confidently say, *I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13)*. Will confidence waver and weaken? Yes, because God’s people are sinful humans. But Jesus remains strong, the firm crutch that will never fail.

Walking with my Lord

Dear Lord, thank You for being my Help, my support, my Strength. When I am weak, hold me and draw me closer to You. In Jesus’ name. Amen

Our new officers took office on July 1, 2020. They are: Kathleen Nims, President; JoAnn Gust, Vice President; Janah Aldrich, Secretary and Charolette Mogielski, Treasurer. If you have any questions about the LWML, please contact the President, Kathleen Nims.

Did you watch the 2020 Virtual Convention on You Tube? It is still out at lwmlmichigan.org and under hot items Click on the You Tube Link to the Convention and it will take you to all the videos regarding the convention. You can learn about your LWML from that convention. The convention would have met at Ellison

Conference Center at Gaylord, Michigan, but because of the pandemic, were not able to meet. Your newly elected LWML Michigan District officers are: MaryBeth Heikkinen, President; Marie Riley, Vice President for Organizational Resources; Sandra Newport, Vice President of Communication; Sheri Comeford, Vice President of Mission Outreach; Carol Swenson, Financial Secretary and Rev. Robinson, Junior Counselor.

Events: August 15, EC meeting, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. (EC Board Only); September 12, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Women’s Bible Study at CTK (continuing on our study of the “One Christ, Many Creeds: A Study of Denominations from a Lutheran Perspective;” September 19, Saturday, General Meeting and Potluck with Phillis Daws, Speaker, at Zion; September 26, Saturday, Zone EC meeting, Our Savior Lutheran, Midland (EC Board only). Our calendar is posted on the website at zionchristtheking.org under LWML.

These events will be subject to change because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Ladies’ Bible Study

The Ladies’ Bible study will begin its 2020/2021 year on Saturday, September 12. We’ll continue to meet the second Saturday of each month from 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. at CTK. Because three of our studies were canceled this past year, I’ve decided to continue our look at Christian denominations from a Lutheran perspective. All women are invited to attend. Childcare can be provided with advance notice. Please contact Anne Bakker with any questions.



Campus Corner

Obviously the 2020-2021 campus ministry year will be out of the ordinary! You may know already that CMU will begin the year on August 17. That means Welcome Back Sunday will be August 16. **The lunch will be on the following Sunday, August 23.** This year, we will be sure to have outdoor seating under some tents in order to relieve congestion inside the Chapel, plus advertise our meal and our ministry. The Campus Board will order individual boxed sandwiches for the meal in order to minimize COVID risks. Our student leaders have begun discussing what fellowship events might look like this year. They are discussing a variety of events, some with stricter COVID precautions than others. Some of our students are very COVID cautious. Others are not very concerned, and desire a return to normal fellowship events. Most of them are somewhere in the middle. I'm confident that they will be able to creatively and faithfully work on how to tackle fellowship events this year. Thank you for your continued support of Christ The King Lutheran Chapel, which allows us to provide a home-away-from-home for Lutheran students, and a chance to expose others to the saving Gospel of Christ.



CTK MONDAY LUNCH FOOD DRIVE

CTK is having a food drive for staple items for the preparation of meals on Mondays where no one has signed up to provide a lunch. A sign-up sheet is on the LCMS U table at both CTK and Zion. The sheet lists common, every day food items for making simple, home-cooked meals. Please help us continue to provide lunches for our CMU students. Please also continue to support our Campus Ministry by signing up to provide a Monday Lunch. If you can only provide just a portion of the lunch, I will take care of the rest. We are also accepting monetary donations which will help purchase these staple items on the sign-up sheet. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the CTK church office (773-5050). Thank you so much.
Kathy Nims

International Ministry

CMU begin August 17th, and so do our ESL classes! I am looking for volunteers to help teach a weekly, one hour class or work one-on-one with an international as a conversation partner. No experience necessary. Training and materials will be provided! Please contact me as soon as possible, if interested! Thanks, Anne Bakker



PRAYER FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

“Gracious Father, Your Son grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and all people. Bless, guide, and govern the children and young people of Your Church by Your Holy Spirit, that they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Your Word. Grant that they may serve You well and usefully, developing their talents not for their own sakes but to Your glory and for the welfare of their neighbor. Protect and defend them from all danger and harm, giving Your holy angels charge over them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”
 (“For Young Persons,” LSB p. 315)

From Lutheran Service Book © Concordia Publishing House



Notes from Your Elders



We will soon be approaching the end of summer. Camping, fishing, and vacationing may soon end for many of our members. Yet, we wait for the end of the current pandemic—COVID-19. It has placed stress on many of us. However, our stress-reliever is always present—that of Jesus Christ. Remember that God is in control of everything. No matter how much we think and believe that we are doing all that can be done, HE still is in Control.

We continue to provide worship services in person at Zion and CTK. Our members are encouraged to practice social distancing and to wear masks. With the size of our sanctuaries, there is plenty of room for more attendees while maintaining social distancing. So, please consider returning to our in-person worship services with your fellow Christians.

Our pastors and elders encourage our members to use their best judgment in determining when each feels comfortable and safe to remain healthy by worshiping in person. Please feel free to speak to our pastors or any of the elders should you have questions and also concerns. We continue to provide worship services on-line through YouTube. For those of you who would like a weekly reminder via email of when the service is available, please provide us with your email so we can add you to our mailing list. It is a private list and will not be shared. You may also go to Zion's web site at zionchristtheking.org and select the date for the service you wish to watch. Pray along, sing along, and worship along with the service.

We do hope and pray that all of you will soon be able to feel safe in returning to worship with us. Remember, our commitments to the Lord in terms of stewardship have continued right on through the time when we were not meeting.

Electronic giving is an option to consider especially now during this time. Give the office a call at 772-1516 should you want more information about how you can sign up for regular electronic giving weekly or monthly.

Dale Gust

Ushers

Since returning to worship services from our closure in March, the ushering requirements have changed. We thank those who have repeatedly stepped up to help. Because of the changes, our ushering duties have been reduced to only helping with the communion service. Ushers are working to limit the number of communicants at each table to around five. Some exceptions are made in the case of families who can commune without social distancing.

Also, the bulletins have been placed on the piano at Zion and the pool table at CTK. Worshipers have been encouraged to pick up a bulletin and take it with them when the service is over. The red attendance pads have been removed. Offerings continue to be received at the door before and after the service. All this is being done to reduce the multiple touching of items.

For all of our ushers, you may have observed in the newsletter that teams have been listed for duty on specific Sundays. Some team members have not responded and it may be that it has to do with their level of comfort in attending our worship services in person. We have continued to assure you that it is up to each of you individually in determining when you feel comfortable and safe to worship with others. Please continue to watch our recorded services on YouTube.

For the time being, we will continue to assign teams for duty realizing that some will be missing. Thanks to all those men who have stepped up to serve each Sunday. Should any of our ushers desire to be removed from an ushering team or others desire to be added to a team, please email the Usher Coordinator at gust1dd@cmich.edu

