

Zion Lutheran Church & Preschool
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Christ The King Lutheran Chapel
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December 2021 Jonathon Bakker, Pastor Garrick "Ricky" Beckett, Pastor Volume 57, No.12

"Behold your King!" – John 19:14

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, behold your King! As we approach the Advent and Christmas seasons, those words from John's Gospel sound like they are there to get us ready for something wonderful that is about to happen. In Advent we are full of anticipation for the coming of the Lord. At Christmas we remember that he came in human flesh. The king of salvation and king of the universe was a baby boy, born in the manger at Bethlehem. Yes, we are certainly ready to "behold our King," yet if we read the rest of the context surrounding that passage in John 19, it might stop us in our tracks.

No, it isn't wrong that we are preparing for the coming of the Lord as we approach the end of one church year and the beginning of a new one; but the circumstances of those words in John 19 bear with them a heavy burden. Do you remember what happens in the nineteenth chapter of John's Gospel? If it isn't clear already, knowing the speaker of those words may help you understand – it wasn't John the Baptist, the disciples, a demon, or even the Pharisees or Scribes who said, "Behold your King!" – it was Pontius Pilate. Jesus wasn't teaching, preaching, curing the sick, or raising the dead; he was on trial. The day was Good Friday, and the last thing Pilate commanded before he delivered Jesus over to be crucified was for the people to behold their king. They rejected Jesus. They shouted, "away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

It was for all of them, for all of us, and for all people of all times and all places that Jesus took on mortal flesh, bore the burden of our sins and transgressions, and died for them willingly on the cross. His death paid the price for all mankind's salvation. His death on the cross is his greatest act,

and he rose from the dead three days later as confirmation of the forgiveness of all mankind. Indeed, on the cross, Jesus wore thorns instead of a crown of gold, yet his reign became eternal. On the cross, he proved Pilate was right beyond Pilate's deepest fear – he was their king, and not just their earthly king, but their eternal king. On the cross, Jesus became king of their guilt and their shame over sin. On the cross he revealed himself as the king of the low, lifting up all of us before God. Through him, we have the hope of being heirs of God through our adoption as his sons by Holy Baptism!

The great joy of the coming of Jesus is that he comes to forgive sins and deliver us to eternity as beloved children of his Heavenly Father. As we enter the Advent season this year, we will once again hold Wednesday night Evening Prayer services to devote additional time to the hearing of the Lord's Word, to prayer, and to the singing of his mercies. We will meet at 5:30 p.m. at Zion on those Wednesdays – December 1, 8, and 15. We will once again begin each service with a hymn-sing of treasured Christmas hymns and carols. Please join us!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Bakker



5:30 services at Zion
Wednesdays, December 1, 8, & 15



"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11k



Symbols of Salvation

What joyous news the angels shared that first Christmas night. The children of Zion ECC are preparing to share that same joyous message with family and friends. The children have begun working on songs, fingerplays, and memory verses for their Christmas services.

The four-year-old preschool class has again been asked to join our children's Christmas service on Sunday, December 12. We ask the children to arrive for one final joint practice at 9:30 a.m. and the service will begin at 11:00 a.m. There will be a short fellowship time following the service to enjoy Jesus' birthday cake.

The three-year-old preschool class has begun practicing for their Children's Service on Thursday, December 16 at 10:30 a.m. Children who do not attend on Thursday normally, are encouraged to join us on that day. Parents, please keep an eye out for an email concerning the cookie fellowship immediately following the service. There will be a Google signup sheet attached. If you would like to assist with this gathering, we would greatly appreciate your help,

Please continue to send your child's winter gear every day. We make every effort to take the children outside when the temperature is above 20 degrees. We also always take into account the wind chill.

Preschool will enjoy Christmas break from December 20 to January 2. Our childcare and toddler care will remain open throughout those two weeks. The center will be closed December 23, 24, 30, and 31 for Christmas and New Year.



CCI will meet on December 1, 8, and 15. After a short break class will resume on January 5.

A Children's Christmas Service for All Ages
Come! Celebrate Jesus' Birthday! With song, instruments, dance, and verse, join the Zion four-year-old preschool children, and Sunday school children, and youth on Sunday, December 12, 11:00 a.m. at Zion!

Give thanks to the Lord!

Here we go again, with the Thanksgiving "Holy Day" behind us. A time to contemplate God's blessings in our lives: our homes with all the provision for our needs, and above all the love we share with our family. The Bible is abundantly clear. God holds our children especially dear: "Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them", Psalm 127.

However, our Thanksgiving focus should continue all through the month of December. While every child is precious in His sight, the birth of the most precious of all is worth our eternal gratitude. To hold a newborn babe is a miracle beyond description. Can you imagine cradling the very creator of the universe? The Alpha, Omega, and our very salvation? Take your children in your arms this Christmas season and tell them the greatest story ever told, with the love of God in your heart!

Thanks be to God! And Merry Christmas!

Christmas Eve Services

3:30 p.m. service will be a *high precaution service*
4:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.



Christmas Day Service	10:00 a.m.
Sunday, December 26	10:00 a.m.
New Year's Eve Service	7:30 p.m.
January 6, Epiphany Service	5:30 p.m.

ALL SERVICES AT ZION

STEWARDSHIP

Monthly Income & Expense Report
through October 31, 2021

	2021	2020
YTD Budgeted Expenses	\$ 385,447.20	\$ 377,690.60
YTD Actual Expenses	\$ 404,756.45	\$ 349,852.58
YTD Balance	\$ (19,309.25)	\$ 27,838.02
YTD General Fund Income	\$ 411,930.98	\$ 317,974.40
YTD Actual Expenses	\$ 404,756.46	\$ 349,852.58
YTD Income Less Expense	\$ 7,174.53	\$ (31,878.18)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great physician of both body and soul, healed a man with dropsy by His Word on the Sabbath (Luke 14:1–6). Dropsy is a paradoxical ailment, with an unquenchable craving for drink even though the body is over inflated with fluid, a craving that, when indulged, served not to ease but to feed the disease.

And so, if a man drinks a great deal but is never filled, he sees a doctor to inquire about what ails him, what is wrong with his body, and how to remedy it. For that is not thirst but a disease (Seneca, *Consolation to His Mother Helvia*, 11.3). But if the owner of five couches goes looking for 10, or the owner of 10 tables buys up as many again, and even though he has plenty of land and money, he remains unsatisfied and desires yet more, losing sleep and always in discontent, does he not also require a physician to diagnose the cause of this distress?

For this is not want or lack, it's a disease (Aristippus, quoted in Plutarch, *Love of Wealth*, 524b). As St. Augustine of Hippo wrote, "we may rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man: For the more the one is swollen with excess of water, the more he thirsts; so also the other: The more he abounds in riches ... the more eagerly he desires them" (*The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, 4:135). Both require physicians. Both require diagnosis and medicine applied from the outside to the inward being. For these are not desires to be fulfilled but diseases to be cured.

This is why our Lord instructs us not to be consumed by money. "No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and money" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Our desire for money, like the disease dropsy, is never satisfied. We always desire more. We think, "If I just had this much then I would be happy."

But even when that much comes, which God gladly gives, happiness evades us. The desire for more is never satisfied. It demands our constant energy,

either in procuring more or protecting what we already have. When this happens, God, in His mercy, shows us that the money that He has given is no longer serving us, but we it. We have another master.

To overcome this, we need a physician's diagnosis and a physician's remedy. And our Lord Jesus Christ, our great physician of both body and soul, applies His Word to us as He did to the man healed of dropsy. He shows us how we have put our fear, love, and trust in our money and not feared, loved, and trusted in Him above all things. In essence, He says, "Stop chasing after these fleeting things. They are vanity. They are the things that moth and rust destroy. You cannot have two masters. Repent!" And in seeing our great error, we are sorry that we have not fully feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. And, in the mercy and grace that He earned for us on the cross, He takes away this sin, restores us to health, and bids us to live.

But then what? What do we do with this healing balm and care that our great physician has given? Do we simply go back to our old ways? "By no means!" St. Paul says (Rom. 3:31; 6:2). We do not just go back to the old ways, the ways that lead us to death. No, we live a new life, a life filled with the grace, mercy and love of God toward us. And God's great mercy, grace, and love toward us is so abundant that it overflows and pours out onto those around us.

So we no longer hoard money and possessions. We no longer scrape and crawl our way to amass more. We give to those around us, as God in Christ has given to us. We press our money and possessions into service for those who need it: our family, our society and our church. For money is God's gift to us to serve us and others. Not the other way around. It serves us because it is a gift from our Father in heaven.

New Year's Eve Worship

New Year's Eve worship at Zion is Friday, December 31 at 7:30 p.m. During the worship service on New Year's Eve, our tradition is to read the names of members who have passed away during the year. Also read are names of members' relatives who have passed away during the year. Contact the church office if you would like to verify that we are aware of your relative's name.





A big thank you to all of our volunteer ushers and greeters at church! With many extra services in the coming month and the different circumstances we continue to be living under; please know that your help and leadership is a real gift to your church family, and we thank you. Thanks also to the teams of student ushers who have been serving us faithfully this year at Christ The King Lutheran Chapel. Thank you, also, to all who serve Zion as our treasurers, financial secretaries, and also to our counters – you render very important services to the congregation and rarely receive any recognition. Know that your work is not in vain and that you are all appreciated!

Christmas Eve Worship Opportunities

The Nativity of our Lord is a special time at Zion, one where many of our members make an extra effort to come to church. In order to make as many of our members confident and comfortable to come to church on Christmas Eve, we are adding an earlier service with Higher Precautions. This service will be the same as our other higher precautions services we have had in the past. Masks are expected to be worn by all in attendance, distancing in the pews, communion distribution will also be modified so attendees will come in a continuous (distanced) line, and pastor will wear a glove distributing the Body of Christ. At the end of the service, those interested and comfortable are welcome to remain for the traditional Christmas Eve candle ceremony and the singing of Away in a Manger and Silent Night. This service will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. The other Christmas Eve services (4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.) will follow the regular precautions we have been observing on Sunday mornings.



Guided Reading



Esther, Lamentations, and Christmas: As we reach the end of this year, we read a few smaller books and then some Christmas texts as we prepare for the incarnation of our Lord! Esther is an account of courage in the face of danger and the triumph of good in the face of evil. God's name is not mentioned in Esther, but his divine providence is evident throughout. Lamentations is a collection of laments – cries to the Lord for mercy and hope in the face of despair. It reminds that God's faithfulness is forever. The final readings will prepare you further for the celebration of Jesus' birth on Christmas!

- Esther 1 – Vashti's Refusal to Obey
- Esther 2 – Esther Chosen Queen
- Esther 3 – Haman Plots against the Jews
- Esther 4 – Esther Helps the Jews
- Esther 5 – Esther Prepares a Banquet
- Esther 6 – Mordecai Honored
- Esther 7 – Haman's Plot Revealed
- Esther 8 – Esther Saves the Jews
- Esther 9 – The Jews Destroy their Enemies
- Esther 10 – The Greatness of Mordecai
- Lamentations 1 – The Lonely City
- Lamentations 2 – The Lord has Destroyed Without Pity
- Lamentations 3 – Great is Your Faithfulness
- Lamentations 4 – Holy Stones Lie Scattered
- Lamentations 5 – Restore Us to Yourself, O Lord
- Matthew 1:1-17 – Genealogy of Jesus
- Matthew 1:18-25 – The Birth of Jesus
- Matthew 2 – Magi, Egypt, Herod, Nazareth
- Luke 1:1-38 – Annunciation
- Luke 1:39-80 – Magnificat, John the Baptist
- Luke 2:1-21 – Jesus' Birth, Shepherds
- Luke 2:22-52 – Presentation of Jesus and his Youth
- John 1:1-18 – The Word Became Flesh

Mission of the Month

Lutheran Child and Family Services Wellspring Lutheran Services

LCFS of Michigan is a not-for-profit corporation that provides a range of services for children and families. Services are available through multiple service sites located in the lower peninsula of Michigan. Programs incorporate prevention, intervention and treatment components to provide a continuum of care. By joining Lutheran Child & Family Service of Michigan with Lutheran Homes of Michigan under the Wellspring Lutheran Services brand, we will be able to serve people and communities in new ways. We'll be able to engage them at every stage of life to help them discover and embrace their own potential. So together, we can bring more of God's love to a world in need. From foster care and adoption to a complete line of senior services, you can be confident that as we work together, you will experience a life-changing difference. www.wellspringlutheran.com *Information quoted from their website and brochure.*

EVANGELISM NEWS

Sharing the Gospel is called evangelism. We all evangelize each week as we attend regular worship. As we approach the Christmas season the pastors remind us to share the Gospel. We share with others through the distribution of the "Portals of Prayer." The pandemic made it more difficult for us to go into nursing homes or care centers and to evangelize, and still there are locations that restrict entry. We look forward to the day when we can resume our mission. We can also share the Gospel with our fellow members by participating the church activities. A few prior choir members are going to attempt to revive the choir on a much smaller scale at first, by using the hymnal as a resource and soon to lend voices to the worship service, especially during advent and Christmas. Please join us. We will meet for a 1/2 hour practice following the Sunday morning bible class in the choir room. Most members did not want to drive at night. We also welcome the Christmas season with decorating the sanctuary, narthex and fellowship hall (gym) at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 2. Outreach or reaching within, it's all about the sharing and experiencing the Good News.

Youth & Family Life News

Parade On **Saturday, December 4**

The youth and children will meet at 5:30 p.m. at the Methodist Church to line up for the annual Christmas parade in downtown Mt. Pleasant. The parade starts at 6:00 p.m.

*Youth are needed to help decorate the float on Friday evening, **December 3**, for an hour or so at the Coyne Warehouse at 6:30 p.m.*

Caroling On **Sunday, December 5**

After the 11:00 a.m. service at CTK, we will be going caroling to some of our shut-ins. All youth and those interested are encouraged to participate. It will be fun and rewarding. See Mr. Epple if you have any questions.

Thank you to everyone who participated with the apple pie fundraiser in all capacities. Your generosity is much appreciated. Over 250 pies were made and sold!



DECORATING AT ZION

Thursday, December 2

Anyone interested in helping with the decorating at Zion may come on Thursday, December 2, during the day. We will start about 10:00 a.m. If you have questions see Claudia Schimmelmänn.



In memory of Mary Bennett

Jim & Delores Morford

In memory of Lewis Camp

Dale & JoAnn Gust

In memory of Joseph Kuranyi

Yvonne Fitzgerald



Zion Lutheran Women's Group

Do not be Anxious About Anything...

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6 NIV).

Sometimes it's difficult to separate the things we can control and the things that we can't. Many suffer sleepless nights trying to figure out how they can fix a problem, only to realize it isn't within their control.

We prayerfully turn the problem over to God, only to pick it up again. Is it due to a lack of trust that some are unable to let go and let God take control? The Simple Trust Mustard Seed Devotions can help us through this process!

If you would like to receive similar helpful Mustard Seed Devotions daily via email, go to the lwml.org website and scroll to the bottom of the page where you'll find "Stay in Touch" and "Sign up today!"

Your sister in Christ
Darlene Keca, President
LWML English District



Who We Are

Have you often wondered who we are and what do we stand for? In the following months, there will be little inserts about LWML. Did you know that because we are an auxiliary of LCMS, you are a member. That means in order for this group to function, we need you to come to our meetings and events. We need you!

THE LWML MISSION STATEMENT

As Lutheran Women in Mission, we joyfully proclaim Christ, support missions, and equip women to honor God by serving others.
—Adopted January 2021

Calendar of Events - 2021-22

Orphan Grain Train – Clothes - These clothes must be in good condition and clean. Please place in the container at the door at Zion. Do not fill the garbage bags full as they are too heavy for to lift. A volunteer is needed to take the bags up to Orphan Grain Train in Sebawaing, Michigan.

Christmas Party – Saturday, December 11, Potluck Brunch with a gift exchange of a maximum of \$20. Everyone is welcome. Invite a friend.

Dishes – There are still some very nice dishes at Zion to be picked up. If you do not remember that you may have brought some for a meal, they are here waiting for you.

Cookie Walk – Saturday, December 4, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. It is time to start thinking about the cookie walk and making those special cookies.

Thank you – to those that attended our general meeting and also the luncheon at Loafer's Glory. It was a fun time for all.

Women's Bible Study – No Women's Bible in December—See you on January 8, 2022
Also there is NO General Meeting.

National Notes – The convention has been changed to be held in Frankenmuth, Michigan, July 8-10, 2022. It should be a fun time for all and is close for us. You might not even have to stay overnight, however, I would recommend it if you are on a committee. Many volunteers will be needed from our Mid-Michigan Zone as we are one of the co-hosts.

(5) Mission Grant Spotlight

LWML Mission Grant #5 = \$25,000
Providing Hope for Children with Learning Needs (LSEM)
Our Lord has instructed parents to bring up their children in the way of the Lord and has asked that the little children be brought to Him and not to hinder them. Mark 10:14. Lutheran Special Education Ministries reaches out to students, families and schools with special needs. LSEM is a national ministry headquartered in Michigan. Children with learning difficulties experience moments of immediate or unexpected need throughout the school year and not all Lutheran schools have the resources to meet these unexpected needs. These funds will enable LSEM to reach out to ALL children with support, testing, and resources so they will not be hindered to come to Jesus.

“Serve the Lord with Gladness” Psalm 100:2

NURSE'S NOTE:

Type II Diabetes is on the increase in the United States and around the world. This month I am continuing to discuss this disease and management.

Prediabetes: Your body's wake up call. If your blood glucose is higher than normal yet too low to warrant a diagnosis of Type II Diabetes you have prediabetes. This gray area is easy to ignore because you do not see or feel the extra sugar and we hope it will all just go away by itself.

You already have insulin resistance and this, prediabetes, is the next step that leads to full-blown diabetes. When you have insulin resistance, your cells ignore insulin's signal to absorb blood sugar. This prompts your body to pump out more insulin. Now a second problem develops: your body can no longer make enough insulin to force cells to absorb blood sugar. The American Diabetes Association warns that if you ignore prediabetes, your chances of becoming Diabetic is nearly 100% within 10 years.

Here's what you need to do to decrease these odds by 51% to 71%.::

- 1) Lose a little weight
- 2) Walk briskly for at least 30 minutes 5 days a week
- 3) Eat a diet low in saturated fat, high in fiber. Living a healthy lifestyle like above can delay development of Type II Diabetes by 11 years.

Prevention: Balls in your court! More than 90% of people with diabetes are obese or overweight. Studies show that losing weight can help you avoid getting diabetes. Just by losing 5% of your body weight can significantly cut your risks. If you have already been diagnosed you can send it into remission with weight loss.

Lifestyle Changes: At first there seems to be a lot of rules and they are difficult to follow. Be diligent, none of the rules are impossible to follow and soon they will become part of your routine. Think of each lifestyle tweak as brushing your teeth. It might seem inconvenient at first, but once you are in the habit, nothing can stop you from achieving your goals.

Mind over Diagnosis: Receiving a diagnosis of Diabetes is serious. The psychological and emotional trauma that strikes moments afterward, and can persist for days and weeks can make you feel worse than the disease itself. You and your Doctor should be partners in the effort to control your Diabetes. Ask for help in understanding the necessary rules and habits you need to follow. Do your own research, learn and purpose treatment plans to your Doctor. Maybe you should see a Diabetic specialist and classes and / or a dietitian. Involving someone to be a lifestyle coach is also extremely helpful to keep you within the rules.

Next month I will continue discussing Control of Diabetes.

God Bless,

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