

Zion Lutheran Church & Preschool
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February 2022

Jonathon Bakker, Pastor

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Volume 58, No.2

"Again, I saw vanity under the sun: one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business. Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him- a threefold cord is not quickly broken." – Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, vanity is everywhere. King Solomon, toward the end of his life and reign, called all kinds of things "vanities" as he wrote about life and human nature in Ecclesiastes. By "vanity" he meant a breath, or a vapor, and he applied that label to virtually every single thing, every single idea, and every single enterprise of mankind. They are all vanities; there is nothing to them, no meat on the bones. The best intentions and aspirations of man are all for naught. In a world where everything is supposed to have a positive spin and everyone is expected to reflect a positive outlook, Solomon's words of wisdom sound bleak. Bleak, but also true. If there is anything our world needs to be reminded of in the middle of vast confusion about man and woman, the family, and God's gift of life, it is truth. God's Word is truth, and it is life for us who hear it and follow. Now, in the midst of all the bleakness Solomon cuts through all the nothingness to the very few things that are not vain, that are not a chasing after the wind. Among them is the one found in the fourth chapter of Ecclesiastes, which is sometimes heard at wedding ceremonies. Surrounded by the context of dresses, pictures, flowers, dinner, dancing, and cake, God's Word dives right to the heart of what it is that makes marriage a different sort of union than every other. The man who is alone toils only for himself, and this is as good as nothing. He deprives himself for vanity. Two together, however, are



better than one, for one at least makes his sacrifice for the sake of the other, who is there to lift him up when he falls, and the two together keep warmer than one alone. Two are stronger than one, but it is the threefold cord that is not quickly broken. This threefold cord represents the presence of God in each holy marriage, and shows the foundation for something that rises above the vanities of this life. Marriage is meant for God. It comes from him and it points us back to him. The vain world around us would have us look at our lives and our marriages as if they were creations of our own will, as if the one is stronger than the two (or as if the two are stronger than the three!), but this is vanity. From the beginning God saw the problem with Adam being alone, made for him a wife – Eve – and brought them together. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Those two become one flesh around God's Word and God's gifts. In them he works companionship, uses them to help both husband and wife fight against temptation, and he works the miraculous gift of children. All of these things don't always follow in every marriage – we live in a world corrupted by sin and sinfulness – but God's Word remains the fountain and source of our lives and our families. The threefold cord is not quickly broken. As you continue to live as God's baptized and beloved children, give thanks to him for the gift of holy marriage and the gift of his presence in your

families. Even if you find yourself apart from family – perhaps you’re widowed, divorced, or single – do not despair. God doesn’t exclude you or abandon you. He comes to you and provides, for you belong to his bride, his body, the church. In him, you have life and hope forever, as he has bought and redeemed you through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Yours in Christ, Pastor Bakker

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A popular song from Disney’s “Frozen” asks the question “Do you want to build a snowman?” While the snowman in question was built in the girl’s livingroom, most of our snow people are confined to our front yards. As for us flesh-and-blood humans, we are all created in the image of God: *imago deo*. Shaped and molded by the will of our Lord. A growing child is influenced by both life at home and the world they encounter upon entering public school. It falls upon us as responsible adults to see the spiritual condition of our young ones. But one must listen closely to what they bring home through the front door. Communication, real communication is vital. Not easy, sometimes, but vital. Build their spirits solidly on the love of God. Then, as they mature, they will stand firm, strong enough not to “melt” under the world’s false promises. Build your “snowman” strong!!



2022 - 2023 Registration

Open enrollment applications are now being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Children must be four years of age on or before September 1 to enroll in the four-year-old class. Children attending the three-year-old class must be three years of age on or before September 1 to enroll in the three-year-old class. Parents may choose from two days up to five days of morning preschool. Preschool childcare is available again this year.

Toddler Care is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Toddlers are accepted from 16 months to 36 months.

Parent-Teacher Talks will be held February 17 and 18. Parents will be able to sign up for an in-person parent teacher talk. Please keep an eye out for this information, the sign-up sheet will be sent home soon.

Registration for our **Summer Camp** program will begin in March. Summer Camp will operate from June 13 to August 12. Brochures will be available in the school office or on our website:

www.zionlutheranpreschoolecc.com



Spaghetti Dinner

Friday, February 11

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.



@Zion

This wonderful event returns! Those who have attended know what a treat this is. There will be a freewill offering with proceeds going to our Zion youth program. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex at Zion or you may call the church office at 772-1516 to sign up. Join us for some Italian cuisine, fun and fellowship. Please sign up in advance to help with proper planning. Thank You.

Attention all Youth – Look at Concordia University Ann Arbor

Did you know that Concordia University Ann Arbor is the fastest growing university among private schools in Michigan. Did you know it has a Physician Assistant program, a Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy program, a great music program, super business programs, nursing, sports, a pre-seminary program, and even doctoral programs. You must visit their web site at WWW.CUAA.EDU

[In the recent edition of the Reporter, here is what was posted as things happening around our Concordia campuses:](#)

“Recently, seniors in the School of Education at **Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA), Ann Arbor, Mich.**, practiced being teachers who had to react to a student’s medical emergency in the classroom. Such simulations are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to experiential learning at CUAA. In addition to participating in these labs for their coursework, students must complete in-person field work hours. All of this practice helps education students see what being a classroom teacher is actually like. [Learn more.](#)”

<https://blog.cuaa.edu/experiential-learning-2163/>

Our Lutheran schools are in need of teachers. If you are considering becoming a teacher, please consider becoming a Lutheran school teacher with training at CUAA. There is nothing more rewarding and in the same manner serving the Lord. (See Dale Gust if you need more information)

STEWARDSHIP

Monthly Income & Expense Report
through December 31, 2021

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
YTD Budgeted Expenses	\$ 460,447.66	\$ 450,172.02
YTD Actual Expenses	<u>\$ 506,445.08</u>	<u>\$ 430,314.69</u>
YTD Balance	(\$ 45,997.42)	\$ 19,857.33
YTD General Fund Income	\$ 514,163.11	\$ 410,202.44
YTD Actual Expenses	<u>\$ 506,445.08</u>	<u>\$ 430,314.69</u>
YTD Income Less Expense	\$ 7,718.03	(\$ 20,112.25)

God in Man Made Manifest

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, signs, and wonders of Jesus in the world. This made plain to all that Jesus really is who He said He was. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. These belong together, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking enactment of God’s Word.

It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts but also to trust in God in word and deed. As James wrote: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22), and again, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14, 17–18, 26).

Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world. It is, as Luther wrote of faith:

– Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit.

– Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them.

– He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

– Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace.

– And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God’s power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor – in church, in the family, and society – with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures.

Mission of the Month

Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod University





A very big thank you to all of our faithful volunteers at Zion who help to support and carry out the ministry of our congregation in our life together. This has been a tough year and many have had to take a break from volunteering, while others have been able to step up. No matter who you are and what you have been able to do; know that you are appreciated. I thank God for all of you. Pastor Bakker



Men's Breakfast Bible Study

*Saturday, February 19
8:00 a.m. at Zion*



In memory of Ronnel Deeg

Adella Bergey
Mary Chudej
Roger Cole
Dale & JoAnn Gust
Shirley Hopp
Ken & Doris Johnson
Lynn & Audrey Laskowsky
John & Claudia Schimmelmann
Bill & Nancy Whitehead

FLOWERS!



The 2022 Flower Chart is posted at Zion. Flowers are just \$20 and you can take them home after the service. Sign up at Zion or call the church office. 772-1516. Thank you.

Guided Reading

Ezra and Nehemiah: As we prepare to enter the season of Lent; a time of repentance, and focus upon the gravity of our sin, we are reminded of the Lord's promises and mercy to preserve the remnant and restore his people. Our restoration is complete in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting that is ours in Jesus Christ!



- Ezra 1 – Cyrus' Proclamation
- Ezra 2 – The Exiles Return
- Ezra 3 – Rebuilding
- Ezra 4 – Struggles in Rebuilding
- Ezra 5 – Rebuilding again
- Ezra 6 – Temple Dedication
- Ezra 7 – Artaxerxes' Decree
- Ezra 8 – Ezra's Requests
- Ezra 9 – Intermarriages of Israel
- Ezra 10 – Confession
- Nehemiah 1 – Nehemiah's Prayer
- Nehemiah 2 – Nehemiah sent to Judah
- Nehemiah 3 – Rebuilding the Wall
- Nehemiah 4 – Opposition
- Nehemiah 5 – Serving the Poor
- Nehemiah 6 – Conspiracy and Completion
- Nehemiah 7 – Those who Returned
- Nehemiah 8 – Ezra reads the Law
- Nehemiah 9 – Confession of the People
- Nehemiah 10 – Covenant
- Nehemiah 11 – Jerusalem's Leaders
- Nehemiah 12 – Dedication
- Nehemiah 13 – Nehemiah's Final Reforms

Youth Pizza / Topic / Sledding Sunday, February 20

We will meet after the late service at CTK for pizza and a topic discussion and then do some sledding, more than likely at Mission Creek.



The History of Mustard Seed Devotional Packets

The seed of the mustard plant is among the smallest of seeds, yet from this small seed grows a large bush. Jesus used the analogy of a mustard seed to show how something small and seemingly inconsequential can have a powerful impact.

In 1971 the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) developed a new series of short personal Bible studies called Mustard Seeds. These individual leaflets were designed initially to help women working outside the home share their faith during coffee breaks and lunch hour discussions. Over the years the LWML developed numerous Mustard Seeds packets, all on different topics.

Mustard Seeds packets are used both for personal Bible study and as an evangelism or witness tool. The newest packets in this series include a devotional text, clear Gospel message, and include the complete text of quoted scripture. With these additions to a time-honored product, the LWML hopes that Mustard Seeds continue to be a strong, vibrant tool for Christian growth and Gospel sharing.



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

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

Bazaar – 2022. We have had some requests to once again have our bazaar / craft show in 2022. In order to do so we will need a volunteer to chair the Bazaar and one for the Cookie Walk. If you are interested, please contact Kathleen Nims at (989) 294-1373.

Women's Bible Study –We will meet next on Saturday, February 12 at 9:30 a.m. at CTK.

Pie Tasting Sunday – February 13. This is our annual tasting of pies. Women are encouraged to bring their favorite pie or pies. We will serve after the first service at Zion and again after the service at CTK. Those that attend CTK and wish to bring pies should bring them to CTK. It would be nice, if we could get a volunteer at the CTK service to serve and prepare coffee for those that wish to have a piece of pie after the second service.

District Convention – The convention has been changed to be held in Frankenmuth, Michigan, July 7-9. It should be a fun time for all, and is convenient for us to attend. You might not even have to stay overnight, however, I would recommend it if you are on a committee. We will need two delegates to represent our society with all expenses paid. Many volunteers will be needed from our Mid-Michigan Zone as we are one of the co-hosts.

Hostesses - We are looking for volunteers to serve as hostesses at the District Convention. Please contact Kathleen Nims (989) 294-1373.

MITES: DO YOU HAVE POCKETS OF CHANGE? REMEMBER OUR MITE BOX IS LOOKING FOR LOOSE CHANGE.



“Serve the Lord with Gladness” Psalm 100:2