

CONNECTIONS

Website: ZionsLuth.org | zionsluth@gmail.com

Worship Services

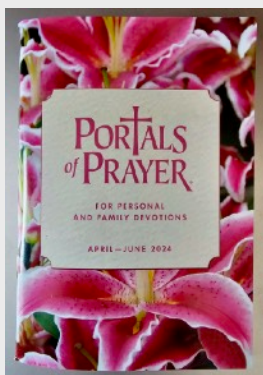
Zion's worship services are at 10 a.m. each Sunday at 510 Pine St. Our First-Sunday Potluck will be after worship on March 3. Bible Study, "How Lutherans Read the Bible" is then too.

Save the Date

We will have a special congregational meeting on March 17 to name Synod Assembly representatives.

Portals of Prayer

The April-June *Portals of Prayer* is available in the back of the Sanctuary and in the Fellowship Hall along with some large-print versions.



Finding Joy

By Jo Moss

At Epiphany, I was introduced to "Star Words". The premise of which is that the magi followed the star to find baby Jesus, and brought with them gifts. As Christians, we too seek Jesus and we know that God uses many signs to guide our earthly and heavenly journeys. For me, my Star Word was such a sign.

My journey began with an Epiphany dinner where a bowl containing "stars" was passed around the room. Each of us selected a star on which was written a single word. We were encouraged to think and pray about our word as a gift from God, focusing on the word that "selected us". It reminded me of the Harry Potter story when Harry was told that, "The wand chooses the wizard."¹

Although everyone was encouraged to trust the word that selected them, there were no rules. A person even could exchange their star for another. When I got my star, the word that chose me was "joy".

I decided to keep it.

(continued on page 2)

Serving Zion's

Church Council:

Kathy Broman
Peggy Gustafson
Norine Hazen
Cherie Holder
David Lamb
Mike McNeil
Mark Moss
Jeff Smith
Julie Wersal

Staff:

Lisa Rygiel, Vicar
Jo Moss, Asst. to Clergy

Standing Committees:

5 Loaves/Thanksgiving — Norine Hazen, lead
Altar Preparation — Kathy Nicolai, lead
Angels in Aprons/Birthday Cards — Lynn Chase, lead
Building & Grounds — John Rygiel, lead
Communications/Social Media — Lisa Rygiel, lead
Communion Bread — Cherie Holder
Flower Guild — Lynn Chase, lead
Prayer List/Warriors — Carol Smith, coordinator
Safety & Security — Jeff Smith, lead
Worship & Music — Lisa Rygiel, lead
Worship Assistants — JoAnn Karspeck, coordinator
Contact these people via Zion's email or by phone listed in the church directory.

Finding Joy...cont.

(continued from page 1)

As I looked at the words on some of the other stars I honestly thought, "I've got this one, it's easy." After all, I do have a "**joy**" down in my heart to stay."²

When I got home, I put my star in a prominent place where I see it each day. In the six weeks since my journey began, I've pondered "joy", and realized that perhaps I didn't understand it at all, especially when I am sad, discouraged, worried, tired, etc. My thoughts turned to a song from the 1960s written by Sister Miriam Therese Winter — "Joy is Like the Rain."

*I saw raindrops on my window; joy is like the rain.
Laughter runs across my pane, slips away and comes again.*

Joy is like the rain.

*I saw clouds upon a mountain; joy is like a cloud.
Sometimes silver, sometimes gray, always sun not far away.*

Joy is like a cloud.

*I saw Christ in wind and thunder; joy is tried by storm.
Christ asleep within my boat, whipped by wind yet still afloat.*

Joy is tried by storm.

*I saw raindrops on the river; joy is like the rain.
Bit by bit the river grows 'til all at once it overflows.
Joy is like the rain.³*

I set aside my notion that equated joy to happiness. I studied simplistic and complex analogies of joy. I learned that I'm not alone in my search. Pastor Lindsay Mack, at Luther Memorial Church in Chicago wrote, "In today's world, many of us are struggling with joy. I wonder, though, if it's because we have forgotten what it is. We confuse the concept with happiness or pleasure, but it is neither."⁴

I began to recognize that joy is more enduring than a single moment or event. Those things can be part of joy, but in and of themselves are not joy. I learned that joy can be found in the darkest times as well as the brightest. Isn't that also the message of Lent?

(continued on page 3)

Finding Joy...cont.

(continued from page 2)



I found comfort in Galatians 5:22-23 where Paul describes the nine fruits of the spirit, “²²By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control...”

I like that the second fruit of the spirit is joy!

I found peace knowing that joy is a gift from God and is part of me even if I don't feel joyful. I realized that joy can be found in sadness, disappointment, and the humdrum of daily life.

I also was strengthened by James 1:2-4, “²My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; ⁴and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.”

I am thankful for my Star Word. Indeed, **joy** is a gift of the spirit that brings us closer to God and to one another.

¹Rowling, J.K., author. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. New York :Arthur A. Levine Books, 1998.

²# 140 in Bobb, Barry *All God's People Sing*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992, 316 pp.

³Hymnary.org, Miriam Therese Winter, accessed 13 April 2021

⁴LivingLutheran.org, Lindsay Mack, “Finding Joy” © Copyright 2024 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America®

Generous Donations Make Organ Repair Possible

For several years, Zion's beautiful organ has not worked as intended. Even with regular maintenance and periodic repairs, the almost 100-year-old organ was not working properly. Thanks to the attention and expertise of our organist Connie Pallone, few people noticed the problem. However, more formal repairs were inevitable; that is when David Lamb stepped in.

He decided it was time to draw attention to the repair needs and began a special collection to cover those costs, the estimates of which were substantially higher than that which was budgeted. David also was the first one to contribute. Steve and JoAnn Karspeck followed suit.

When David brought the fund drive to the congregation's attention at worship on Sunday, Feb. 11, Andrew Jackson and wife T.M. Garner stepped up to donate the balance of the funds for the repairs.

The congregation is grateful to David for starting this project and to everyone who quickly stepped up to make the repairs, which began in late February, possible.



*T.M. Garner & Andrew Jackson
at Zion's organ.*

What's Happening in Zion's Lutheran Family?

- ★ During worship on Sunday, Feb. 18, Vicar Lisa formally installed Zion's 2024 church council members. Pictured here, they are (from left) **Mark Moss, Mike McNeil, Peggy Gustafson, Norine Hazen, Julie Wersal, David Lamb, Kathy Broman, Cherie Holder, and Jeff Smith**. We congratulate these individuals for their willingness to serve.



- ★ At the Feb. 4 congregational meeting, three people were appointed to Zion's nominating committee; their responsibilities will be to identify church members to serve on various committees, such as the audit committee. The committee members are: **Melodie Lanosga, David Lamb, and Tracy Wahl**.
- ★ We are grateful to those who supported Zion's by preparing and serving meals on behalf of The Way Ministry while **Pastor Clay** and **Mary** were on a well-deserved hiatus visiting family in Texas. More than 75 people gathered at Cimino Park on Sunday, Feb. 18, for lunch and devotions.
- ★ If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of Zion's Lutheran, please let **Vicar Lisa** know. We will be welcoming new members by Baptism and by Profession of Faith on Easter Sunday.



Las Animas County
Board of County Commissioners

Las Animas County
Board of County Commissioners

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- ★ Again this year, Las Animas County awarded funds to Zion's to support the church's 5-Loaves ministry. Last year, Zion's received \$5,000 for 5-Loaves funding. This year, the county generously has awarded Zion's \$6,000 for the ministry.

- ★ Soup Suppers continue at 6 p.m. each Wednesday in Lent through March 27. We need volunteers to provide soup, salad, bread, or a light dessert. The sign-up sheets to do so are on the table in the Fellowship Hall. Soup suppers include not only the meal, but also fellowship and devotion time.
- ★ Zion's joins **Norine Hazen** in celebrating with her daughter-in-law **Pastor Thulie Beresford**, who is now the assistant pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in South Carolina. In February, Thulie came out of semi-retirement to take the post there.
- ★ Coming soon! **Julie Wersal** says that the 2024 church directories should be available later this month, so stay tuned.

We Are Journeying Through Lent to Easter

Our Lenten season continues into the month of March as we approach Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

During Lent, Zion's will continue as host for Soup Suppers at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays in the Fellowship Hall. This is an opportunity to enjoy a meal and devotional time, both of which support our Lenten journey.

Palm Sunday is March 24, followed by Holy Week, including Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Holy Saturday is on March 30, and Easter Sunday is March 31. Our Easter Sunday Worship begins at 10 a.m. when we celebrate our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We also will celebrate our sisters and brothers in Christ as we welcome new members both by profession of faith and baptism.



Palm Sunday Inaugurates Holy Week



Palm Sunday, also known as Passion Sunday, inaugurates the most important week of the Christian year — Holy Week. It begins with Jesus' glorious entry into Jerusalem and ends with his crucifixion and death. As is the tradition of many congregations, including Zion's (and weather permitting), the congregation will gather outside in the area between the back of the Sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall where Vicar Lisa will bless the palm branches. The congregation then

will "process" into the Sanctuary, waving their palms along the way.

Zion's will burn and retain the palms for next Ash Wednesday, when they re-emerge as ashes placed on the foreheads of worshiper as a symbol of penance during Lent.

Good Friday Worship is a Solemn Time

Zion's congregation will join Christians around the world in observing Good Friday. Also known as "Tenebrae", this service commonly is held the evening of Good Friday. The Zion's service will begin at 7 p.m., on Friday, March 29, and is a solemn service that includes the traditional "stripping the altar," symbolizing the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and the stripping of Jesus by the soldiers before his

crucifixion. This service also includes the gradual dimming of Sanctuary lights and extinguishing of candles. The Christ candle is extinguished and removed from the sanctuary and a concluding "Strepitus" or loud noise (slamming shut the Bible) symbolizes the earthquake and agony of creation at the death of Christ. This worship also represents the humiliation of Jesus and the consequences of sin as a preparation for the celebration of new life.



Flowers Add to Zion's Easter Celebration



Easter 2023

On Easter Sunday, our Sanctuary will be filled with beautiful flowers symbolizing the glory of the resurrection. As is tradition, Zion's Flower Guild has special plans for Easter and you can help. Sign up to help sponsor Easter flowers using the special sheet in the flower book at the back of the sanctuary.

Include your name and any commemoration you would like to see included in the bulletin. A minimum donation of \$35 is encouraged. The donation envelopes also are in the flower book or can be made using Tithe-ly.

Reconciling in Christ Exploration Begins

On Feb. 13, Zion's church council began exploring requests from the congregation to re-evaluate the potential of becoming a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) faith community within the Evangelical Church of America (ELCA). This exploration previously was put on hold during Pastor Andrea's illness. However, during our February 2024 council meeting, a motion was made to begin this process anew.

The concept of Reconciling in Christ (RIC) is straightforward. It is a program that publicly provides the way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for all people, recognizing that "discrimination is incompatible with Christ's unconditional love." This also is consistent with the ELCA Human Rights Message of November 2017, that stated, in part, "This message summons God's people to courage, confession and engagement to promote and protect human rights."

Begun in 1983, the RIC program recognized Lutheran congregations, synods, organizations, colleges, and seminaries that welcomed people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The welcoming list soon expanded to include people of all faith backgrounds, races, ethnicities, cultures, and ages.

There currently are 1,055 RIC Congregations and 303 Faith Communities making the RIC journey. These include congregations, synods, campus ministries, colleges, and other organizations, in the ELCA, ELCIC (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) and independent Lutheran churches.

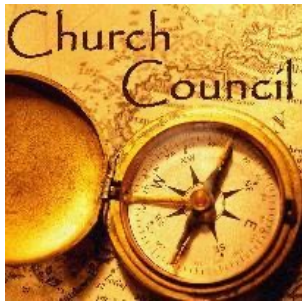
Our synod is a RIC synod and professes such in their Statement of Welcome: *"We as the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, welcome all into the fullness of God's love. This welcome is inclusive of people of every race, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical or mental ability, sex, or station in life. Rather than using our differences to divide us, we pledge to use our differences as gifts for our work together."*

Stay tuned for more information on this exciting chapter in our congregational life.



ReconcilingWorks
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

Church Council Bits & Pieces: February 2024



Zion's Lutheran church council met after worship on Feb. 11. All secretary and financial reports were approved. After Vicar Lisa offered the Invocation, council members shared in reading out loud the Behavioral Covenant, which was developed last year, primarily using guidance from the Transition Team.

Becky McNeil attended the meeting and spoke about her concerns that Zion's is not "open to all" since it still has not made a commitment to be a RIC (Reconciling in Christ) church.

She inquired as to whether this was a designation that Zion's still sees in its future. Vicar Lisa supported Becky and said she thought Zion's should seek RIC status. Lisa pointed out that this is something that began with Pastor Andrea and the church council voted to support. Forward movement was stopped in light of Pastor Andrea's illness. After discussion, the council decided that Zion's should pursue what is needed to be approved as a RIC congregation.

Ruthie Culpepper resigned from council due to her busy schedule. David Lamb was nominated and appointed to complete her 3-year term. The following council officers were selected: Julie Wersal, president; Norine Hazen, vice president, Kathy Broman, financial secretary; Mike McNeil, Treasurer; and Jeff Smith Trust Fund Officer. The Secretary position will be decided at the next meeting.

Vicar Lisa reported on plans for Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter. The Lenten sermon series is entitled *The Depths of Love*. She also reported that Zion's has three more sessions of the adult Bible study, *How Lutherans Interpret the Bible*, which are scheduled for March, April, and May. Lisa also is working with a committee to update Zion's Mission and Vision statements.

On Feb. 28, Vicar Lisa will meet with representatives from the Rocky Mountain Synod and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary to assess her progress and readiness to complete her candidacy program. Once endorsed, she will have three more series of classes (June 2024, Oct 2024, and early 2025) and then will complete her internship at Zion's.

Julie received information from Church Mutual Insurance to explore ways to change coverage and reduce premium. Jeff Smith and Mike McNeil will look at the information. The council set a congregational meeting on March 17 to select Synod Assembly delegates. Sharon Sorenson and Melodie Lanosga have volunteered to attend with Vicar Lisa. If anyone else is interested, please let Julie know.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Wersal, Council President

The official meeting minutes are available upon request. A summary is included in E-formation the week after the council meeting.

In the Spotlight:

Communion Tasks are Important to Worship

Zion's worship services require coordination among many people who help make it comfortable and welcoming. During the next few months, we look at why these responsibilities are important.

Holy Communion is a sacred meal in which Christ comes to us in bread and wine. "This is my body given for you... This is my blood shed for you." We believe these words are true. Christ is truly present in Holy Communion. When we receive the bread and wine, we receive his body and blood; thus preparation for Communion requires reverence and care.

Zion's Communion assistants prepare the bread and the wine for worship using the communion trays for individual cups and the chalice (cup) and paten (plate) for clergy use. All items are in the cupboards adjacent to the kitchen, including the paraments (cloths) and the pitchers for pouring wine.

The Zion's bread, made by Cherie Holder, is gluten free and stored in the freezer. Assistants should place one round piece of the bread onto the plate, but **should not** break it; the presiding minister does this during worship. (If communion bread is not used, assistants place the individual communion wafers onto the paten.)

Individual cups are placed into the trays and all (except those in the center that are filled with apple juice) are filled with wine. Assistants also pour a small amount of wine into the chalice for use by clergy during worship.

Once communion preparations are complete, the chalice, paten, and trays are placed on the altar in the sanctuary – the chalice and paten are on the pulpit side and the trays on the lectern side. The paraments are used to cover each of those items (according to size). If outdoor worship is scheduled, the assistants also take the wicker basket from the cupboard as it is used to collect empty cups.

After worship, assistants dispose of the small cups left at the communion rail. They place the remaining consecrated bread on the ground for the birds. Consecrated unused wine may be consumed or poured on the ground, but never is poured back into the bottle or down the drain. All communion items are washed and returned to the cupboards.

If wine spilled on the paraments, assistants should treat the spot with a baking soda and water paste immediately (baking soda is on the top shelf of the communion cupboard). Many assistants also take the cloths home to launder (gentle setting/cold water/low dry/no bleach). If assistants do not care to launder the paraments, they should let JoAnn Karspeck or Julie Wersal know.

If communion supplies are low, they let Julie Wersal or Norine Hazen know.



Mike McNeil prepares communion.



March 2024

Lectors:

3 — Mike McNeil
 10 — Melodie Lanosga
 17 — Paula Little
 24 — Jeff Smith
 29 — TBD
 31 — Kathy Broman

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Birthdays: 7 — Ed Blount 9 — Lynn Chase 11 — Cherie Holder 16 — Norine Hazen 24 — Jo Ann Karspeck 24 — Matthew Hass 24 — Kathy Broman 26 — Janet Nesbitt					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 am Worship 11:30 Adult Bible Study 	Noon - 2 pm PEO 5:30 pm AA (FH)		6 pm Lenten Soup Supper (FH) 			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
10 am Worship & 11:30 Fellowship/ Ch. Council	5:30 pm AA (FH)		9:30 am Bible Study 6 pm Soup Supper (FH) 			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
10 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship/ Congregation Meeting	Noon - 2 pm PEO 5:30 pm AA (FH)	First Day of Spring 	6 pm Lenten Soup Supper (FH) 	Newsletter Deadline 		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
10 am Palm Sunday Worship 	5:30 pm AA (FH)		9:30 am Bible Study 6 pm Soup Supper 		 5-Loaves Prep & Delivery 7 pm Good Friday Worship	
31	Ushers: 3 — Mike McNeil & Cherie Holder 10 — Ruthie Culpepper & TBD 17 — Mark & Jo Moss 24 — Dick & Ann Rasmussen 29 — Good Friday (TBD) 31 — Joni Jones & Jo Moss					
10 am Easter Worship & Baptism 						

What Does It Mean?

Hymn Boards Steeped with History, Purpose



Tucked away at the front of Zion's Sanctuary near the organ a hymn board hangs on the wall and, in its own low-tech way, it helps prepare the congregation for worship.

Hymn boards have long been considered part of sanctuary furnishings, though many churches have ceased using them. The boards originated in the 16th century when they were used to write the opening lines of hymns. By the 18th Century, the boards most often only displayed the page numbers for the songs in the hymnal. This was important at the time as the boards predated printed bulletins options.

The board that Zion's uses is relatively new and, according to some congregation members, was moved to the front of the sanctuary from the narthex to replace the aging board that had been there. The numbers on the Zion's hymn board represent the songs from the red hymnal that will be sung during worship. This allows the congregation a chance to bookmark relevant pages in their hymnal in advance of the service. If a selected hymn is not in the red hymnal, it usually is printed in the bulletin.

While Vicar Lisa or the worship assistant still announce the songs as the worship service progresses, the board is helpful for the congregation so that they have a visual reminder up front and don't have to shuffle papers or struggle with a book to figure out what hymn is next.

The Zion's hymn board also displays the worship service day, such as the "... Sunday in Lent" or "... Sunday after Pentecost". It is updated each week (or more often when weekday services, such as Ash Wednesday, are scheduled). The words and the numbers are stored in the bins beneath the board.

While not representative of modern worship service practices, the hymn board can be an additional worship tool. It also may stir memories of other churches a person has attended or evoke a memory of a childhood worship experience.

Acknowledgements: Contributors — Becky McNeil, Julie Wersal, Lynn Chase, Lisa Rygiel, JoAnn Karspeck, Connie Pallone, David Lamb, Sherry Gartside, Rocky Mountain Synod, Norine Hazen, Sunday & Seasons -Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved., and Las Animas County Board of Commissioners. Photos/Images — Jo Moss.
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