

The Glory of Zion

Christ's Light Shining Among Us

Newsletter of **Zion Lutheran Church, School & Preschool**

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“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

– John 11:25

Things are not supposed to be like this!

Have you ever felt that? Have you ever looked at the world around you and thought that things are not the way they are supposed to be?

I know, silly question. Who hasn't looked at the war, the violence, the drugs and alcohol, the broken families and shattered homes, and not thought about the fractured state of God's creation?

Who hasn't felt their bodies failing, or their hearing going, or their joints aching and not given Adam and Eve a silent curse for failing to follow God's simple directions not to touch the tree? As though you or I would have done any different.

Who hasn't looked at the news and been disheartened by talks of another war? Ukraine and Russia. Rising tensions with China. Missiles flying again in the Middle East. Trouble brewing in South America.

Who hasn't looked at the church and thought that we are not what we used to be? There are not enough pastors. There are not enough teachers. There are not enough volunteers. What's happening to Christ's church? Where are all the people going? Why have so many turned away?

Who hasn't looked at our world and seen its brokenness?

God saw it. And so, He did something about it. He so loved this broken world that He sent His Son to fix it. That is the JOY of Holy Week and Easter. That is our JOY: to know that because of Christ's gift of His body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine; His arrest, trial, suffering, and crucifixion; His rest in the tomb and His Easter Resurrection; we know that our brokenness is only temporary. With Easter JOY we know that it is His life and salvation that are everlasting!

Is it easy to grow disheartened by the broken world around us? Is it easy to be blinded by our own pains and struggles?

Absolutely.

That is why we gather as brothers and sisters in Christ throughout Holy Week.

Together, we can be reminded of the gifts and the sacrifice of His Son. We can be reminded of Christ's resurrection and life. And we can be reminded that because of Easter what is His is now ours.

Join us to see beyond the brokenness of the here and now. Join us this Holy Week to be reminded of the JOY that is ours through our Savior Jesus Christ!

Your Brother in Christ,
Pastor Bryan Meadows



MINISTRY FOCUS: Youth Events

By Peggy Hettick

Seven youth and three adults from Zion will head to Nashville in June to participate in an urban mission trip. The team will drive the 1200 miles from Rapid City to Nashville.

The youth will serve with The Center for Student Mission (CSM) and stay at the center's housing site.

CSM offers opportunities for churches across the US to serve in cities, partnering with dozens of faith-based and nonfaith-based organizations that are already seeking to meet a specific need in their community. Zion's youth have had great experiences working with this organization in the past, having gone to Denver in 2012 and 2014 and Nashville in 2017.

Although they don't know how or who they will be serving until they arrive in Nashville, Zion's DCE, Lorien Petersen, said there are a number of different ways in which they might serve, such as serving meals, playing with kids, sorting food donations, or visiting the elderly. The youth will be working with local organizations that serve full-time in the city, so they will be plugged into the things people are already doing to serve their neighbors.

Lorien said her goal for the youth is that they will have opportunities to serve others with the love of Christ in settings that may not be familiar to them. The hope is also that the youth not only learn from this experience, but to have fun and find joy in serving and to find ways in which they will continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus back in their own community.

"Fun Days" are always incorporated at the end of the youths' serving to decompress from the experiences they've had during their week of service, Lorien said. This year, the group plans to spend some time in St. Louis on their way home, likely catching a Cardinals baseball game and seeing some of local St. Louis sites.

Those going on the trip meet as a team several times before they leave. The purpose of the meetings is for team building, Bible study and other preparations. Youth are also asked to regularly attend worship services, Sunday School and Wednesday youth activities.

The youth will be hosting Easter Breakfast as a fundraiser for this trip. The youths' families provide all the food, setup, serve, and tear down. The Easter breakfast menu includes egg bakes, biscuits & gravy, fruit salad, pastries, orange juice and coffee. The youth also host Coffee Hour the first Sunday of each month and they have been selling Qdoba coupons and Rada Cutlery. In March they worked a concession stand at the Monument to help with funding for their trip to Nashville.



STEWARDSHIP MINUTE: Celebration

By Kevin Aker

*"They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."
Psalm 145:7 NIV*

The Psalmist David understood the power of a good celebration. He wrote in Psalm 145:7, "They **celebrate** your abundant goodness." Author Becky Harling wrote an article about the reasons that we celebrate. She said that while studying the meaning and origins of the word "celebrate," she discovered that it carries the idea of "boiling or bubbling up in praise like a fountain." In other words, when we remember God's goodness, joy and gladness are to bubble up inside us and play out in a grand celebration.

Too often, as adults we get busy and stressed, so we push celebrating to the back burner, believing the myth that we can't take time to celebrate. But this is a mistake because celebrating is good for us! The world is often heavy, yet we know that God is good. Celebrating can lift our spirits and bring an extra sprinkle of joy. Whether it is another trip around the sun or a milestone anniversary with our spouse, these events are worth celebrating and provide the opportunities for joy and praise to bubble out!

Years ago Zion encouraged us to celebrate our birthdays and anniversaries with a thank you back to God for this blessing. The fulfillment team would like to bring this back to everyone's attention! It works this way. Celebrating your 43rd birthday? That week you would donate an extra \$43, over and above your normal tithe, as an additional offering. Been blessed with 27 years of marriage? Simply give an extra \$27 that week as a way to celebrate His abundant goodness and share your joy! Simply mark it "Birthday/Anniversary gift" which then supports our ongoing Capital Campaign. So, let's celebrate together! Let us know if you have any questions.

<https://beckyharling.com/3-reasons-why-celebrations-are-important/>



DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS: Timeless Treasures: Zion’s “Retired” Volunteers

By Becki Aker

Reality: most of us spend a lot of our life looking forward to retirement. God has blessed each of us with a vocation and a purpose. He equips us with skills and talents we can use out in the world He created. Yet, most of us dream of the days when our time is our own. Finally, that day comes and we have a blank slate before us. We get to choose how we want to spend these precious hours! Zion is blessed to have a group of people who choose to spend a few of those hours here at school!

Our students and staff are very thankful for the gifts they bring us each week. They bring wisdom and knowledge, patience and experience. They also bring the gifts of relationship and attention. They share one of life’s biggest treasures with us... their time!

For example, walking through the hallway on Wednesday, you might overhear a boisterous math game being held during the lunch hour. You’d find a group of 4th grade boys and “Mr. Mike” (aka Mike Birnbaum) eating, laughing and attempting to practice some math skills. However, the math skills are the LEAST important thing going on during that lunch. That lunch provides these students the opportunity to talk, to tell stories, and to listen to some of the stories he has to share with them. It gives these students a chance to be seen, to be heard, and to enjoy the people God has placed in our life. These boys actually choose to give up a recess, so they have extra time to spend with Mr. Mike. Mr. Mike can also be found listening to students of all ages read. Practice is a lot more fun when you have a friendly face encouraging you!

Our library is also staffed entirely by volunteers. Pat Jessen and Roxi Withee spend numerous hours each week sharing their love of reading with our Zion students. While during their working years, both Mrs. Withee and Mrs. Jessen were teachers or preschool directors, they now spend their time reading, checking in books, and sharing their special memories with our students. Many generations of us knew Roxi as “Mrs. Withee”, the kindergarten teacher. Yet, our students today wouldn’t know who you were talking about if you used that name. However, if you ask them about “Grandma Roxi” all our students know who that is! Being a volunteer during your retirement years allows the best of both worlds. You get to be a part of the magic that surrounds young children and share their enthusiasm for life, but maybe on a slightly smaller scale than during your working years.



Pat Jessen helping check-out books in the library.



Mike Birnbaum with 4th graders during lunch.

Marsha Green used to be on staff here at Zion, but after she retired, she just couldn’t stay away. You’ll find her in the building multiple days a week. Sometimes she has a first-grade friend with her to practice their reading. At other points, she is stuffing Monday folders with all the paperwork that needs to go home to parents. Things like these are a big help to our teachers.

Our lunchroom also hosts a number of grandmas and grandpas each week! “Grandma Diane” (Graumann) currently has five grandchildren attending Zion, so she often helps serve hot lunch, and is even known to make cookies for the whole school hot lunch Friday treat! On any given day you may find Grandpa Richard, Grandpa Rick, or lots of other special people serving up sloppy joes and a smile!

So if you find yourself at a point in your life where you have the blessing of choosing how to spend your extra time, feel free to consider volunteering as a Zion School “grandparent”. If you have a little extra time and love to spread around, we will find it an extra special home! Simply talk to Mrs. Aker or Mrs. Solinsky if you have any questions!

SCHOOL FOCUS: Aftercare Program & Mrs. Leyden's Pre-K Class

Aftercare

By Hope Genzlinger

One unique feature that makes Zion Lutheran School and Preschool even more beneficial for families is our Afterschool Care program, which we call Aftercare. Our students can stay from 3:00pm to 5:30pm. Parents can pick up their children anytime in between. This program helps many of our families who have working parents. Our aftercare kids go outside together for an extended recess, usually around 45 minutes, and then come in for snack. The littles then play until their grown-ups arrive. The first through fifth graders have a time after snack to work on homework/reading before getting free time until pick-up. We can have anywhere from 40-65 kids each day in the aftercare program.

We have been blessed to have many great people work in the aftercare program these last 26 years, many of them high schoolers, college kids, and even some older adults. This school year we are blessed by Ms. Regan, who has worked at Zion a number of years; Mr. Dawson, a nursing student who will graduate this May; Ms. Savanna and Ms. Katherine, both high school seniors; and Ms. Sami, a parent also in college for middle school education.

Afternoon Preschool

By Danielle Leyden

Affectionately known as Pre-K. Every week we focus on a bible lesson, a letter, and social emotional skill. This is a starting point to introduce other subjects and topics about the world. We pair our natural curiosity with discovery in the classroom and at nature school. Experimenting with eggs and dropping them from different heights lets us practice guessing what will happen, and it is fun. The hands-on experience of smashing pumpkins to look inside or dig in the dirt or build a town with sticks and twine fuels our imagination and curiosity. Plus, we are learning to play together, share, and use manners. Whether in a classroom or outside, we are learning and practicing important skills in Pre-K.

Easter Thoughts with Mrs. Leyden's Pre-K Class...

Why do we celebrate Easter, and what is your favorite part of Easter?

Brody: Easter egg hunts.

Chase: Collecting eggs, Easter is for God.

Maddox: The golden egg sometimes has money in it, and you have to find it!

Kolton: Video games, and I don't know.

Noa: A bunny comes to your house, and I love finding his eggs and chocolate.

Robert C: For kids to find Easter eggs, which is my favorite part too.

Lucas: The Easter bunny drops eggs. I like chocolate eggs!

Daxton: Because we are celebrating Jesus' birthday. My favorite part is video games, like Mario Kart.

Owen: Because Jesus came to life. I like doing egg hunts. I like Spiderman ones. I like when the Easter bunny hides eggs.

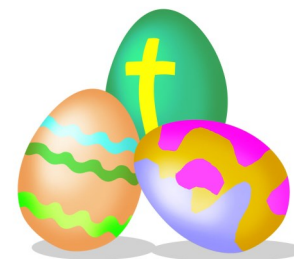
Chrystal: I like finding eggs and the golden egg and getting toys.

Brielle: I think it's about celebrating with friends and family. I love getting Easter eggs with candy.

Kasen: Because Jesus died on the cross. Getting candy is the best part; we go to Grandma's and Grandpa's and find eggs. I found the golden egg.

Willow: Jesus dying on the cross. Finding Easter eggs and spending time with Grandma and Grandpa.

Robert W: Because it's a celebration for doing fun things. My favorite part about it is finding Easter eggs. And once I found two golden eggs. The other thing that I like is hanging out with my family.



From the Principal's Office...

Volunteer Appreciation "New Horizons Band"

We would like to invite our many school and preschool volunteers, families, Zion Buddies, and congregation members to join us for a concert presented by the New Horizons Band on Thursday, April 9, at 9AM in the Multi-Purpose room. Coffee and donuts will be served afterwards.

Our students and staff look forward to sharing this event with all our wonderful volunteers and friends!

Special Events

Spring Book Fair

We will have our Spring Scholastic book fair March 30-April 1. It will begin after school on Monday and end after lunch on Wednesday. Tuesday and Wednesday will be Books-N-Lunch Together—we will not serve school lunch those days, so grownups are welcome to bring a special lunch and eat with their student(s) and shop the book fair.

Kindergarten Chapel

Kindergarten will lead chapel on Wednesday, April 1st at 2PM. Come and see Zion's kindergarten class reenact the Easter Story!

Easter Break

Easter break will be on April 2nd-6th. There will not be any preschool, school, or daycare those days.

Spring Music Programs

Ms. Paula Melloy's Zion piano students and band will be having a spring recital on April 17th at 8:30am. All are welcome to attend!

Grades 1-5 will be having a spring concert on Thursday April 29th at 1:30pm. The concert will include songs from around the world!

South Dakota State Assessments

Students in grade 5 will be taking the South Dakota State Science Assessment on April 17th. Students in grades 3-5 will begin taking the South Dakota Math and Language Arts Assessments April 20 -30. Please keep these students and their teachers in your prayers as they prepare and take these tests!

Read-A-Thon

We couldn't have done it without YOU! Because of your reading and fundraising, we raised \$5,378 and read 49,690 minutes together. We're so proud of what we accomplished for the Christ's Way: Continuing in Faith Capital Campaign and so grateful for every reader, donor, and staff member who helped make it happen.



School Registration

We were busy and screened 23 students for kindergarten on March 13. At this time we have 11 spots still available for kindergarten next year.

Current Zion K-5 students will need to submit their registration paperwork and first payment by April 1 to hold their spots for next year.

After Easter break, registration will open up to community members. If you know someone who is interested, please contact the front office to inquire about available spots.

Preschool Registration

Preschool registration was held in March, and we have filled all full-time daycare/preschool spots. There are a few openings for MWF morning class only and M-F afternoon class only. For more information, please contact Hope Genzlinger at 605-342-5749 or via email at hope.genzlinger@zionrc.org.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Caitlin (Matt) Bunge

By Kate Meadows

Matt and Caitlin Bunge are newly married, and Zion welcomed Caitlin as a new member this past year. Matt is a lifelong member of Zion. Both have deep roots in the Rapid City community.

Caitlin grew up in Rapid City and graduated from Central High School before attending the University of South Dakota and later finishing her degree at Black Hills State University. Today she works as a social worker for the South Dakota Department of Social Services, helping older adults determine whether they qualify for financial assistance for nursing home care. With nursing home costs averaging around \$9,000 per month, Caitlin helps families navigate a process that can be both complicated and emotional.

Music has also been a steady thread throughout Caitlin's life. She has played the cello since fourth grade and has been involved with the Rapid City Symphony since her sophomore year of high school. This year she is serving as the orchestra representative on the symphony's board, something she says has been exciting as she participates in conversations about the organization's future.

Matt, a mechanical engineer, works for Caterpillar, which recently established a new facility in Rapid City. He began with the company as an intern during college and has continued to grow in responsibility there.

Outside of work, Matt is deeply involved in mentoring local robotics teams and currently leads one that competes in regional competitions. Through livestreamed events and tournaments, teams earn points with the goal of qualifying for the world championship competition in Houston. The team Matt leads is currently the only one of its kind in South Dakota.

Although the couple attended Central High School at the same time—Matt a grade ahead of Caitlin—they didn't truly meet until years later.

After reconnecting, the two went out for ramen together and quickly discovered they enjoyed each other's company.

"I thought he was really funny," Caitlin said. The two were married Jan. 3 at Zion by Pastor Bryan.

These days, the Bunges spend much of their free time outdoors with their two dogs—an unlikely pair of a dachshund and a husky—often taking them along on hikes.

Both say they are excited to grow their involvement at church. Caitlin is interested in joining a Bible class, and Matt hopes to eventually serve as an usher. Looking ahead, the couple also hopes to raise a family and have future children attend Zion school.

Family is close by for both of them, and being connected to the community matters deeply. As Caitlin put it, "We're both pretty involved in our community."

The congregation is glad to welcome Matt and Caitlin as they begin this new chapter together.



March Events Recap...

Father & Son Breakfast

By Rev. Bryan Meadows

On Saturday morning, March 7, the men of Zion gathered at church for a time of fellowship. The morning began with a full, freshly cooked breakfast. Dr. Ken Anderson remarked, "We cooked for 60, fed 75, and still had leftovers. God is good!" We then heard from our two speakers, Zion's own Kevin Aker and Tim Malone. Kevin talked about the influence a father can have on his sons. Tim discussed the impact Zion has had on his life and the lives of his children. It was a great morning. Keep an eye out and join us for our next men's event!

Ladies Retreat

By Stephanie Schulte

Fifteen Zion women spent the last weekend of February at a women's retreat at Cedar Canyon Camp in Rapid City. We had a very nice time learning and getting to know each other better.

Friday evening, we were treated to a wonderful, educational presentation on Creation Science by fellow Zion member, Rich Stecher. Rich teaches biology at Rapid City Christian School. He treated us to his fun and informative style of teaching. All agreed that he's a great teacher! Time was also spent getting to know each other, and of course, eating some delicious snacks!

Saturday morning, we watched the video "The Privileged Planet". This video is a bit old, but it's still very interesting and gives some wonderful insight into how God has positioned our planet in a very particular place in the universe. After lunch we played a game called Hygge. In this game, you ask your neighbor a question which they then answer for the whole group. Everyone gets a chance to talk and to share their thoughts. The questions aren't intrusive but fun, like "what would you do if you had the entire world's attention for 30 minutes?" The retreat ended with a time of group prayer.

Plans are being made for another retreat toward the end of this summer. Please feel free to contact the Discipleship Board with any ideas and suggestions you may have. We'd love to hear them!

Young Adult Alert

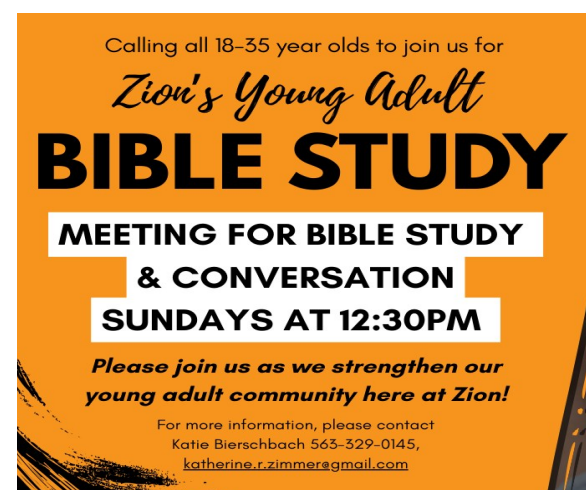
By Ken Palmreuter

Young adults, for this purpose are those members of Zion who are between the ages of 18-35. The Board of Lay Ministry has established a Young Adult Task Force to:

- 1) Update the contact information of the young adults in our congregation. This is in process.
- 2) Place all our young adults in their own household. This will entitle them to receive all the information from the congregation that other adults receive, including mailings, calendar, and other alerts. Since all communicant members 18 years old and above are eligible to vote, you will receive the voters meeting agendas and reports.
- 3) Receive communications directly related to Young Adult activities.

Already, we are advertising Zion's Young Adult Bible Study and Conversation which meets on Sundays at 12:30 p.m. (Contact Katie Bierschbach...565-329-0145 and katherine.r.zimmer@gmail.com)

Stay tuned. More to come from the Young Adult Task Force in future newsletters



Random Question with...Stephanie Schulte, Wife to Pastor Gary Schulte, Member since December 2023

Share Your Favorite Photo of Yourselves and Tell About it...

Our very first Mercy Medical Team in West Africa took place in Togo. Mercy Medical Teams (MMTs) were week-long clinics staffed by both American and African healthcare providers. At the beginning of each day, the local pastors would give a 10–15-minute devotion with a clear gospel presentation. Then, we would see several hundred patients a day, providing healthcare and medication for free. The best part of the clinic, though, was at the end: After people made their way through seeing a nurse for vitals and history, a provider for further investigation—which may include (very limited) lab work, then picking up their medications from the pharmacy, each person was prayed with by a local Lutheran pastor. We took teams into highly Muslim areas and never had a single person refuse to let the pastor pray with them. It truly was an awesome way to connect people to the local church and share Jesus! In this picture, our friend, Tchimbiandja, Gary's original Moba language helper who later became a pastor, is helping with translation as I talk to a mother and daughter. Tchimbiandja has since passed away from esophageal cancer, but what a blessing to know that he is whole and healthy with Jesus!



Upcoming Important Dates

- April 1:** Kindergarten Chapel at 2:00pm.
- April 2-6:** No school or daycare for Easter break.
- April 2:** Maundy Thursday Worship at 10:00am & 6:00pm.
- April 3:** Good Friday Worship at 10:00am & 6:00pm.
- April 3-4:** Prayer vigil at Zion from 7:00pm to 9:00am.
- April 4:** Youth set up for Easter breakfast at 11:00am.
- April 5:** Easter Worship at 6:00am, 8:00am, & 10:45am. Breakfast will be served by Youth families from 7:00am until 10:00am.
- April 6:** Office is closed for Easter Monday.
- April 6-21:** Pastor Bryan is out of the office for training.
- April 9:** New Horizons Band concert at Zion at 9:00am.
- April 12:** Youth Nashville meeting after late service at Zion.
- April 13-17:** Lindsay is out of the office.
- April 16:** Kindergarten/new Zion school families track meet meeting at Zion at 5:30pm.
- April 17:** Spring band and piano recital at Zion. Youth leave for retreat at Camp Judson at 6:00pm.
- April 19:** Youth return from retreat.
- April 22-28:** Pastor Gary is out of the office.
- April 24:** Final JAM event of the year at Zion 5:30-7:30pm.
- April 25:** Ladies' Tea at Zion at 2:00pm.
- April 26-29:** Lorien is out of the office.
- April 29:** Spring music concert at Zion at 1:30pm for grades 1-5.
- May 1:** K-5 school track meet at Rapid City Christian all day—No classes or daycare at Zion.

Holy Week Worship Schedule

Maundy Thursday, April 2: 10:00am & 6:00pm

Good Friday, April 3: 10:00am & 6:00pm

Easter Sunday, April 5: 6:00am, 8:00am, 10:45am

Easter Breakfast Served: 7:00am-10:00am



Women's Ministry

WICKS (Widows In Christ Know Salvation)

Join us for our next fellowship on Sunday, April 19, at 12:30 PM. We will meet at 4243 Wisconsin Ave in the community room. Bring a salad, main dish or dessert to share and your own drink.

Ladies' Tea

Join Zion ladies for tea on Saturday, April 25 at 2:00 PM.

LWML Meeting

LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION (LWML) will not be meeting in April.

