

# The Glory of Zion

*Christ's Light Shining Among Us*

Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church, School & Preschool

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December 2025

## ***“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.” – Job 19:25 (ESV)***

On April 5, 2026, we will gather in a darkened sanctuary. The lights will slowly rise on as we hear the verses of, “Were You There?” In full splendor, with light brightly shining, we will together sing the final verse. “Were you there when God raised Him from the tomb?” And the celebration of Easter will begin as our Savior, once crucified, is now alive. Christ, who was dead, is the first to be born again to eternal and everlasting life. And while you and I were not there ... we can rightly join with Job and proclaim that we know that our Redeemer lives. And because He lives, we shall live also!

Why am I going on about Easter as we enter Advent? Because this season of Advent is where it all begins. The empty tomb, the journey to the cross, the walking on water, the first miracle at Cana, the 12-year-old boy in the temple, the Babe in Bethlehem ... it all began with a world being made ready for His arrival.

That’s the whole point of Advent. Before we get lost in the lights and the trees, the around-the-clock Christmas music, the shopping and wrapping – before we get lost in Christmas – we need to prepare for what Christmas means. Not by writing a wish list, not with letters to Santa, but with taking time to prepare our hearts and minds for the arrival of our King.

We do this by looking back on His first coming. We see how the Father worked through John to prepare the way of the Lord. We see how the Father worked through Mary and Joseph to give our Lord a home. We see how the Father worked through David to give our Lord a lineage.

Now the Father is working through you, His sons and daughters, Christ’s brothers and sisters. He is working through you to again prepare a way for the Lord. He is working through you to prepare the world for Christ’s return. This Advent, we look to the *Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love* that our Savior brought with Him and will bring with Him again.

Please join us Wednesdays through Advent as we look back to when the Father first prepared the world for the arrival of His Son and as we look forward to when His Son, Our Redeemer, will return.

In the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love of Christ,

Your Servant,  
Pastor Bryan Meadows



## MINISTRY FOCUS: Christ's Way: Continuing in Faith Commitment Celebration



By Lindsay Reule

As many of you know, we are beginning our second three-year campaign for the expansion here at Zion. We are getting extremely close to being able to break ground this spring, but we need your help to make that happen! I'm sure you have been to one or two campaign events over the last three years, and I hope you will join us at the Commitment Celebration on December 14 at Best Western Ramkota at 11:00 AM.

We will have a special worship service with many of our musical groups providing special music. Zion's students will also be singing one of their Christmas program songs during worship service.

After worship service is over, we will be having a lunch buffet with the choice of two entrees: pot roast, which is gluten and dairy free, or chicken. There will be vegetables, salad, and a starch for sides. Coffee, water, and tea will be available. We will have a couple of dessert choices as well: New York cheesecake or double chocolate cake.

Once everyone has received their food, we will begin our presentation about our ministry expansion and provide updates on design plans and where we are at for our goal. Commitment cards were mailed out, but if you don't have one we will have extras available the day of the event. Everyone is invited to fill out their commitment cards and turn them in at the celebration event.

We understand this can be a lot for young children to sit through, so we will have another room available for the kids to do crafts and activities after they finish eating. If you have children that may make use of this opportunity, please be sure to let us know so we can make sure we have ample space.

The Commitment Celebration Committee and other volunteers have painted and created some holiday centerpieces for the event. Everyone is welcome to take a centerpiece home with them after the event. Thank you to those who helped create these beautiful center pieces: Lorien Petersen, Laure Anderson, Dianne Graumann, Anita Muelling, Amie Rose, Maraea Rose, Bambi Schweppe, Jenson Burke, Holland Burke, and Brynley Graumann.



Jenson Burke painting his first jar.



Brynley & Dianne Graumann painting.

We have invited everyone who calls Zion Lutheran Church, School, and Preschool their worship and/or school home to attend so we can celebrate the vision God has for us! We are asking everyone to make a prayer-driven commitment to bring that vision to reality. Pray to our Lord and with your family about the opportunity you have to give over and above your regular offerings, for a three-year period.

If you haven't already RSVP'd for this event, please do so before December 8. You may call the office, fill out the form in the Narthex, or use the QR code to the right.



## **DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS: Funeral Luncheon Committee**

*By Pat Valenti & Ann Woidtke, Committee Co-chairs*

When a family at or somehow connected to Zion experiences the loss of a loved one, there is a quiet but powerful ministry that steps forward to serve with compassion and care – Zion's funeral luncheon committee. The committee is called into service when there is a death and the family wishes to have a luncheon following the funeral service. This dedicated group ensures that every funeral luncheon is lovingly prepared and thoughtfully hosted.

For each funeral at Zion where a meal is requested, committee co-chairs Ann Woidtke and Pat Valenti handle the shopping, picking up tablecloths, paper products, lunch meats, cheeses, rolls, chips, pickles and condiments. Members of the congregation provide salads and desserts. The larger the funeral service, the more salads and desserts that are needed. A comforting meal comes together with the help of these faithful people, who are contacted ahead of time and kindly deliver their salads or desserts to Zion the morning of the funeral.

Many women of the congregation willingly donate their time to serve the funeral meals. In doing so they demonstrate their love for Jesus as well as their willingness to serve their neighbors. Providing service or food for the luncheon is also a way to show the family of the deceased that you share in their time of mourning. The committee always gives the family of the deceased a card.

Zion members are always welcome to donate food and/or serve on the funeral luncheon committee. Look for the sign-up sheet in the narthex: one for food donations and another for those who can lend a hand in the kitchen on the day of the service. The more participants we have the fewer we have to call upon any one member to provide food. Whether you're a seasoned cook, an organizer, or simply someone who wants to support others in their time of need, there's a place for you here.

Please prayerfully consider becoming a part of this important service at Zion. As the saying goes, many hands make light work.

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Join us at Zion Lutheran Church, School & Preschool  
for our midweek Advent Worship Services  
December 3, 10, & 17

Morning Worship  
at 10am

Supper at 5:30pm  
Evening Worship  
at 6:15pm

Advent  
Hope - Peace - Joy - Love

The flyer features a central illustration of four lit candles in holders, with green leaves at their base. The candles are blue, blue, pink, and blue from left to right. The text is in various colors: purple for the main title, blue for the times, and light blue for the word 'Advent' and the phrase 'Hope - Peace - Joy - Love'.

## **SCHOOL FOCUS: Meet Mrs. Mangione—Our Music Teacher**

*By Kate Meadows*

Zion Music Teacher, Larisa Mangione, represents the fourth generation of music educators in her family.

She found her way to Rapid City by a stroke of spontaneity.

Larisa grew up in Pike, NY, a tiny town in the western part of the state.

“I grew up in a county where there are literally more cows than people,” she said.

Her music teaching practice has flourished since 1998. She began teaching in a rural public school district in New York. When a career change for her husband resulted in a move to northern Virginia, Larisa opened a music studio there and continued to thrive, also teaching music in a private school. She continues to teach private piano and voice lessons today, and she runs a nonprofit called Native Voices. The focus of Native Voices is to provide free singing lessons to Native American students.

The Mangiones moved to Rapid City two years ago, after buying a home here in 2018. They purchased the home intending to retire here – or, as Larisa puts it, “to grow up here.”

Larisa’s connection to Rapid City goes back years, when she and her college roommate planned a “girl’s trip,” pulled out a map, closed their eyes and put a finger on the map. The finger pointed to South Dakota, so South Dakota is where the road trip took them.

“We did not realize it was smack in the middle of Sturgis,” Larisa said. “We were looking around and we said, ‘Oh boy, what the heck did we walk into?’”

Still, she fell in love with Rapid City.

Larisa teaches music at Zion on Mondays, and she said she is hoping to expand her role there.

“I love the school,” she said. “It’s the community of teachers who are there. It’s wonderful because everybody is there for the same purpose. It’s great to have colleagues who all have the same focus.”



## **Miss Leininger’s Kindergarten Class**

***The Wisemen brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.  
What gift would you give to baby Jesus?***

**Cooper:** A little baby toy because He’s a baby.

**Corbin:** I would give baby Jesus one hundred and a million gold so He could be happy.

**Stratton:** A School because then more people could learn about Him.

**Madison:** A stuffie so He could snuggle with it.

**Elsie:** A crown to show that He is the King.

**Evelyn:** I would bring all my baby toys because He is the newborn King.

**Margo:** A crown to show that He is a King.

**Hannah:** Gold because He was just born.

**Nash:** The power to make bad guys into good guys so the world would respect God’s rules.

**Radek:** I would want to bring Him a crown because He is the King.

**River:** I would give Him a crown with gold and sparkly gems because He is the King of the entire world.

**Steele:** A house so He can live in it.

**Huntley:** A flamingo toy because He is special.

**Jaxton:** A whole entire treasure chest full of gold.

**Jude:** I would give him a heart because I love Him.



## From the Principal's Office...

### Christmas Break

Zion's school and preschool will start Christmas break after classroom Christmas parties on Friday, December 19. There will not be any day care after school that day. School will resume after the New Year on Tuesday, January 6.

### Zion Lutheran School & Preschool Christmas Programs

This year Zion will be having two Christmas programs on Saturday, December 13.

The Zion Preschool, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade program will be at 11:00 AM. Doors for the Preschool, Kindergarten, and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade program will open at 10:40 AM. After this service we will ask for all visitors and family to leave Zion in order for the teachers and volunteers to set up for the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Grade-5<sup>th</sup> Grade program at 2:30 PM. Doors for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade-5<sup>th</sup> Grade program will open at 2:00 PM.

We are looking forward to celebrating the Christmas season, and the birth of our savior, Jesus!

### "God's Gift: A Joyful Retelling of the Christmas Story"

Zion's Preschool through 1<sup>st</sup> Grade classes invite you to join them in their Christmas Worship Service on Saturday, December 13 at 11:00AM.

We will share the story of Jesus' birth retold by our smallest of students.

You will hear carols such as "In a Little Stable", "Away in a Manger", "Angels We Have Heard on High", "Follow that Star", and "Joy to the World". Our songs will be presented through singing, bells, and fingerplays.

Come and worship with us as our little ones lead us to the truth of Christmas!

### "Gettin' Ready for the Miracle"

Our children in 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades invite you to join them on Saturday, December 13, at 2:30PM as they present the Christmas message in word and song.

This Christmas musical follows a choir as they practice for their upcoming Christmas program. They learn the true meaning of Christmas and how easy it is to lose the true meaning of Christmas with all the busyness of the holiday hustle and bustle.

Please join us to help celebrate the greatest gift of Christmas, given by the Father, His Son, Jesus!

### Girls' Basketball

The girls' basketball season will wrap up in December. Thank you for coming to watch and cheer on our players! They have really learned a lot this year! Thank you to our coaches Karla Harris, Brook and Michael Newell, and Zach and Kim Hague. Thank you to Rolando Wallace for being our home game referee!

Dec. 1- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 4PM @ Zion vs. St. Pauls'

Dec. 4- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 4PM @ Zion vs. Calvary

Dec. 4- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 5PM @ Zion vs. Calvary

Dec. 5- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 6PM @ Hill City

Dec. 5- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 7PM @ Hill City

Dec. 8- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 4PM @ Zion vs. St. Pauls'

Dec. 11- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 5PM @ Zion vs. Hill City

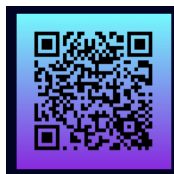
Dec.11- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade @ 6PM @ Zion vs. Hill City



*THE ENTIRE FACULTY AND STAFF OF ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, SCHOOL, AND PRESCHOOL WISHES YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A TRULY CHRIST-FILLED CHRISTMAS SEASON!*

## Beginning With Moses

Check out Pastor Schulte's YouTube Bible lessons by scanning the QR Code.



## LWML Meeting

Zion Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) will meet on Saturday, December 13, at 10:00 AM. We will be addressing cards for Zion's shut-in members.



## **NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Dan & Gaylene Godfrey**

*By Jan Meadows*

Ten families participated in Zion's fall 2025 New Member class. One of those families is Dan and Gaylene Godfrey, both lifelong LCMS Lutherans.

Dan and Gaylene are also newlyweds, joined in marriage by Pastor Schulte in July 2025 at Zion. Theirs is a modern-day romance; they found each other online.

Dan is a co-owner of Godfrey Brake Service in Rapid City. The family business started in 1955 by Dan's father. Dan has two daughters and a son, and nine grandchildren (six of whom are girls). Gaylene has two sons and three grandsons; there was no pink on her side until their families combined.

Gaylene was born in Madison, NE. She worked as a banker for several years in Rapid City before retiring to be a "granny-nanny" for her grandson. Her grandson lived in Colorado, and Gaylene made the move from Rapid City to Colorado, selling almost everything she owned. No sooner had she moved to Colorado than her grandson and family decided to move to Cleveland, OH. So, off to Cleveland she went. COVID hit, bringing drastic changes to everyone's lives. Several months after her second grandson was born, Gaylene decided to return to Rapid City.

Dan was born and raised in South Dakota. Except for a four-year stint in the Coast Guard, he has lived in South Dakota his whole life. He enjoys bird hunting and said he was eager to get in some pheasant and grouse hunting this year.

Gaylene enjoys hiking, needlework and reading. She has a new challenge in front of her now: a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle Dan gave her. She has been active in many church activities in the past, including LWML.

As a lifelong Lutheran, she said, "Missouri Synod Lutherans find family wherever they go." She even bumped into a Nebraska friend while traveling in Wittenburg, Germany, once.

Gaylene and Dan said they love seeing so many people of all ages at Zion involved in our Christian community.

Welcome to the Zion family, Dan and Gaylene!



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## **Banquet Summary**

*By Natalie Graumann*

This year marked our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Banquet to raise funds for Zion Lutheran School. The evening was spent dining together, enjoying fellowship, winning desserts/wine/baskets/etc. With over 200 attendees, we made approximately \$45,000 for the school/preschool. This evening wouldn't be possible without our Sponsors and Donors. If you see them, please be sure to mention how appreciative we are for their support! We hope to see you all there next year!

Thank you to our top sponsors (\$1,000): Anderson Dental, All American Roofing and Sales, Culver's, Hebron Brick, Newhouse Builds, and Rushmore OBGYN. Thank you to those who donated auction items: Adam Martin, Al Sutton, Amber Birkmire, Black Hills Blend, Black Hills Caverns, Chalkin Up Vintage, Culver's, Dan & Natalie Graumann, Eileen's Colossal Cookies, Elks Theatre, Freedom Mobile Wash, Pastor Gary Schulte, Guy Mann, Hart Ranch Golf Club, Jerry Jessen, Joe Werner, Joni Anderson, Kelly & Danielle Leyden, Kevin & Becki Aker, Kristi Gylten, Levi Veal, Lorien Petersen, Megan Weishaar, Old MacDonald's Farm, Paula Koch, Rapid City Rush, Roger Woidtke, Run Wild, Gaila Prill, Scot Dobbs, Someone's In The Kitchen, The Sour, Turn & Burn Custom Cuts, and everyone who donated desserts.



*Pastor Meadows leading us in prayer.*

## **CONGREGATION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Ted & Marty Schamber**

*By Patrick Fitzgerald*

If it's a secret, it shouldn't be: Ted Schamber is one of longest-standing and one of the oldest members of Zion. Zion has been his home church since he was born in 1938. He was baptized and confirmed at Zion. Ted's father, uncles and aunt were some of Zion's original members when Zion was founded.

Ted's wife, Marty, has been a blessing at Zion since 1966, when she accepted a call to Zion as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher.

Ted lived in the Canyon Lake area until age 8, when his family moved to the present location of their farm on the east side of town, just north of I-90. He attended country school and Central High School.

Marty was raised in Idaho Falls, ID. Prior to teaching at Zion, she attended college at Concordia in Seward, NE.

Ted is not shy about saying how thankful he is to God for sending Marty from Idaho to Rapid City, where they have built their lives together. The two married in 1967, in Idaho Falls. They have four grown children, all of whom attended school and were confirmed at Zion. Their children are now all faithful members of other Christian congregations.

Marty has always had a heart for teaching and says she loves watching children of all ages learn. She originally taught 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Zion but later taught the combined 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade class. She also taught in Rapid City, at the Douglas School District, Calvary Christian Middle School, and the Westside Preschool.

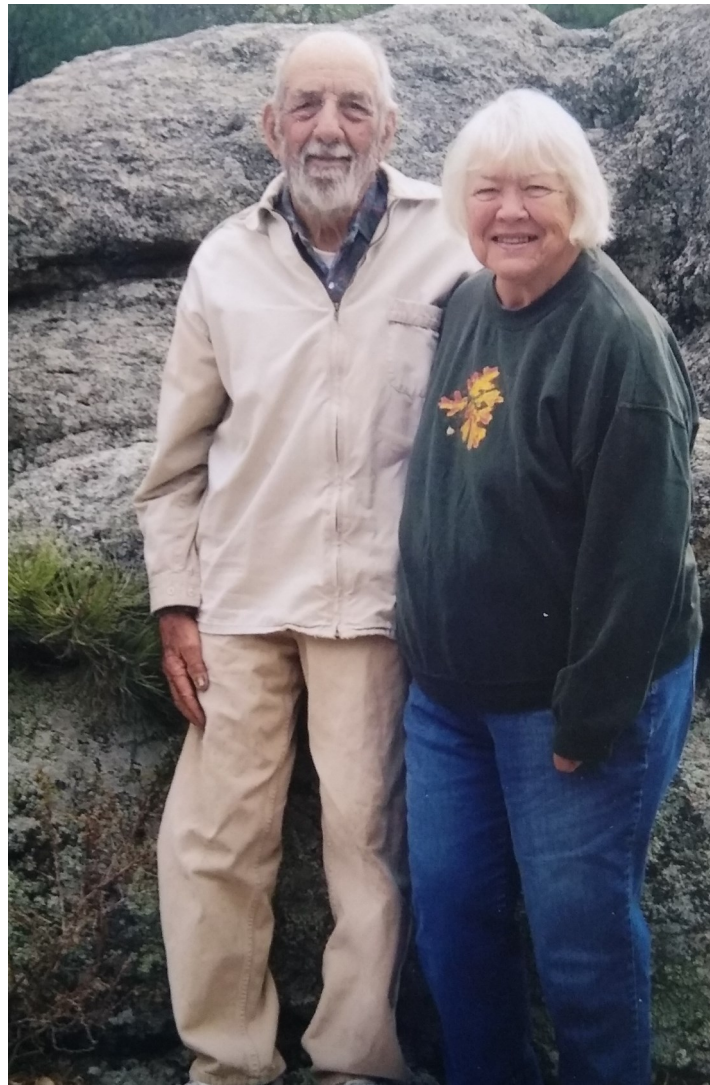
Ted has been a farmer most of his life. Originally his farmstead was dairy, but it transitioned to farming over the years. Ted also worked in well drilling on the prairies around Rapid City for over 20 years.

Ted enjoys gardening and sharing the bounty their gardens produce. He also enjoys bowling. Marty enjoys bowling, reading, puzzle books and Bible studies.

The Schambers have actively served the Lord at Zion for decades. Along with being a teacher, Marty has served as a school and library volunteer, Sunday School teacher, member of the choir, member/officer of LWML, funeral meal volunteer and banner committee member. Ted has served as an offering counter, member of the choir, trustee and Lay Minister. He has also read Scriptures during services.

Ted and Marty give God thanks for Zion's faithful pastors, who continue to bring God's Word to our Zion family. They also give God thanks for "our many Zion friends who have become family."

It is certain that all of us who have known the Schambers over the years give God thanks for them and all the love, friendship and encouragement they have given as our brother and sister in Christ. Indeed, their very special story is interwoven within our story at Zion and ultimately, intricately within God's divine story.



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### **WICKS (Widows In Christ Know Salvation)**

Join us for our next fellowship on Sunday, December 21, 12:30 PM, at Westhills Village.

Bring a salad, main dish or dessert to share and your own drink.

Also please bring a White Elephant gift to exchange.



## **Random Question with...Our Own Santa Claus, Mike Jass**

### ***The Legend of St. Nicholas: The Real Santa Claus***

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara in Asia Minor. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be venerated by Catholics and Orthodox and honored by Protestants. By his example of generosity to those in need, especially children, St. Nicholas continues to be a model for the compassionate

Widely celebrated in Europe, St. Nicholas' feast day, December 6th, kept alive the stories of his goodness and generosity. In Germany and Poland, boys dressed as bishops begged alms for the poor—and sometimes for themselves! In the Netherlands and Belgium, St. Nicholas arrived on a steamship from Spain to ride a white horse on his gift-giving rounds. December 6 is still the main day for gift giving and merrymaking in much of Europe. For example, in the Netherlands St. Nicholas is celebrated on December 5, the eve of the day, by sharing candies (thrown in the door), chocolate initial letters, small gifts, and riddles. Dutch children leave carrots and hay in their shoes for the saint's horse, hoping St. Nicholas will exchange them for small gifts. Simple gift-giving in early Advent helps preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

### ***Why am I Santa Claus?***

I want to carry on the traditions that St. Nicolas did, to give to those needy families a bit of joy and hope in a world that needs it. As Santa Claus, I am following what God has sent me through the Holy Spirit to do. He gave me a gift of joy. My goal is to provide that joy to everyone.

***In Corinthians 12:4-6, Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service. But the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but the same God who empowers them all in everyone.***

Always remember, Jesus is why we celebrate Christmas, and he is the joy of peace on earth and good will to men.



*Mike, as Santa, is often joined by his wife, Barb, as Mrs. Claus.*

## **CHRISTMAS WEEK WORSHIP**

<p style="margin: 0;"><b><u>CHRISTMAS EVE</u></b> 3PM W/ PRAISE TEAM 5PM TRADITIONAL 11PM CONTEMPORARY</p>	<p style="margin: 0;"><b><u>CHRISTMAS DAY</u></b> 10AM</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b><u>NO WORSHIP DEC. 27</u></b></p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b><u>HYMN SING</u></b> DEC. 28 @ 10AM</p>
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