

# The Glory of Zion

Christ's Light Shining Among Us

Newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church, School & Preschool

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February 2025



## The Perfect Kind of Love on Valentine's Day!

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8).*

In the darkness of the bleak cold winter, February is the month of bright love. Valentine's Day often brings to mind romantic dinners, heartfelt cards, and expressions of affection. While these are beautiful and fitting celebrations, they only scratch the surface of what love truly means in the Christian life. For us, love is not merely a fleeting emotion or human ideal but is grounded in the very nature of God Himself. As Lutherans, we understand love through the lens of sola gratia (grace alone) and solus Christus (Christ alone), where Christ is both the source and perfect example of true, sacrificial love.

John's words in his first epistle remind us that love originates in God. The Greek word agape, used here, signifies a selfless, unconditional love—a love that desires the good of the other without expecting anything in return. This is the love we see poured out on the cross, where Christ died for us “while we were still sinners” (Romans 5:8). In His atoning sacrifice, Jesus demonstrates the fullness of agape love: sacrificial, enduring, and redeeming. Our love for one another is not a means to earn God's favor but a grateful response to the unmerited grace we have received.

As Martin Luther taught, Christian love flows outward. In his *Freedom of a Christian*, Luther explains that faith makes us “perfectly free lords of all, subject to none,” but also “perfectly dutiful servants of all, subject to all.” This paradox highlights the tension and beauty of Christian love: We are freed from sin to love others freely, not for self-gain but for their sake. Such love is radical in its humility and service. It seeks to bear the burdens of others, just as Christ bore ours.

In our everyday lives, this kind of love is often expressed in small, unseen ways. It is the patience of a parent with a restless child, the forgiveness shared between friends, the provision of food for a neighbor in need, the listening ear given to someone in pain, the lavish love of a wonderful congregation poured out on a new pastor and his wife! These acts are not insignificant; they are the very embodiment of Christ's love working through us. As Luther emphasized, our good works are not performed to achieve righteousness but flow naturally as fruit of our faith in Christ.

On this Valentine's Day, let us remember that our love for one another is rooted in the love God has first shown us. We love because He loved us (1 John 4:19). Whether in marriage, family, friendship, or community, our relationships are sustained and sanctified by this divine love. Love is not always easy, nor is it without sacrifice. But it is precisely in the giving of ourselves for others that we reflect Christ, who gave Himself completely for us.

On this Valentine's Day, may the words of 1 Corinthians 13 ring true: Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends! (1 Corinthians 13:7-8). In Christ, this love is made perfect. Amen.

Love,  
Pastor Schulte



## **DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS: Blood Drive**

*By Roxi Withee*

Many of us like to begin our days in prayer, asking God to use us, as He sees fit, and to help us realize how He is using us. One way God can use you beyond what you could imagine is by giving blood.

My name is Roxi Withee, and I am Zion's current coordinator for our blood drives. Dave Heard coordinated our drives for over a decade, with Allison Flaherty taking over before I joined her. I asked Aubrey at Vitalant if she could look at Zion's history of blood drives, to find any information about our past giving. She was excited to compile the facts and share them with us!

Aubrey was able to go back as far as 2005. From 2005 until 2011, Zion had six blood drives a year. In 2012 we moved to three drives per year. This allowed those who give doubles to donate every time. (Blood donors who give doubles have to wait a longer period between donations than those who do not give doubles.) All told, Zion has hosted 75 blood drives, with the average drive bringing in 25 donors.

The most important number to digest: Our Zion donors have given over 1, 500 lifesaving units of blood!

Think about that! An hour of your time can help save lives. Some of our donors have given almost 100 units! In August of last year, two 17-year-olds began giving. Imagine how they can help over their lifetimes! We like to have our drives during the school year in hopes that it encourages parents of school children to give. And we love that the children see and learn how important giving blood is.

Another wonderful number that is growing is our donors per drive. Thirty donors gave during our August 2024 blood drive, and we didn't have enough room to fit in everyone who wanted to give. So, Aubrey has added slots and workers so we can accommodate more donors. Upcoming Zion blood drives are April 29th, and one on September 9th. Please consider giving, even if you haven't before. Call me at (605) 786-4237 if you have any questions!



*Roxi Withee with Kevin Aker at Zion blood drive on January 7, 2025.*

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## **Stewardship Minute**

*By Kevin Aker & Azure Summers*

With the Christmas season in recent memory, we can recall the beauty of the decorations, taste the baked goodies, and imagine the gifts as they lay wrapped beneath the tree. Gifts are the focus of this message; Christmas is an example of the ultimate gift. On Christmas, God gave us the gift of His son. He sent Him to the world, not wrapped in paper and ribbon, but wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. This baby would grow up to be the man who continues to give us gifts, like the gift of forgiveness, of life and of salvation. The gifts He gives us are beyond amazing!

Oftentimes when someone gives us a gift, we give them a gift in return. What could we ever give to our Lord and Savior who gave His very life on our behalf? The Bible tells us it isn't so much about what you give, but how you give. Author Connie Rowland suggests the following tips about giving.

1. Give cheerfully. Giving a gift is something we should do gladly and should bring joy.
2. Give without boasting. What you give and how you give isn't something to shout from the rooftops. It is personal, between God and the giver. Ultimately everything we have is a gift from God, so the glory should be His, not ours.
3. Give of yourself. Giving isn't simply about money. It is about giving things like your time, skills, friendship and compassion. We all have something to give, we just have to be willing to do it.
4. Be a blessing. She uses the line, "Blessed people, bless people." Jesus has called us to be a blessing, and this is one of the easiest ways we can shine His light out into the darkness of the world.

May you always remember the ultimate gift of Jesus Christ was given out of God's great love for us, a love we cannot comprehend. So, share those blessings, Zion! Always motivated by love as Christ first loved us.

Ideas from: The Gift of Giving 2nd Corinthians 9:7 Devotional <https://mastershandcollection.com/blog/the-gift-of-giving-2-corinthians-97/>



## **MINISTRY FOCUS: Ministry through Music**

*By Azure Summers*

“Sing praises to the Lord, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds!” –Psalm 9:11

The music ministry at Zion is a blessing of opportunity to serve and worship God, express praise, share biblical truths, and be encouraged in our faith through song.

Zion is blessed to have many talented individuals willing to share their time and gifts to make music happen at worship services every week.

The music ministry currently includes organists/pianists, a choir, a handbell choir, a praise team, and opportunities for special music by congregation members. Zion does not have a music director on staff. Therefore, it relies on members to play organ, participate in praise team, and direct and participate in choir and handbells. Pastor Meadows selects hymns that align theologically with each week’s readings and approves music suggested by the praise team.

“I love that we have different ways of worshipping and expressing our praise, thanks and joy,” said praise team director and special music coordinator, Kate Meadows. “Music is just one facet of a worship service, and no one style is more important than another.”

Zion’s choir recently put out a call for additional participants and now includes 18 members. Leadership of the choir is shared by Martha Palmreuter, who stepped into the director role two years ago, and Marilyn Herz, who makes the music selections. The choir is always eager to welcome new singers. The choir practices on Wednesday evenings.

The handbell choir was able to return with their musical praise in November 2024, after an ardent search for a new director. Mike Beason is the current director. There are currently 11 members. Practices take place on Monday evenings.

Zion’s praise team was restructured to one cohesive team after the COVID-19 pandemic. The praise team provides music at the Sunday 10:45 a.m. services at least twice monthly and generally includes musicians on

keyboard, guitar, drums, and vocals. The team currently has about 15 members who participate as fits their individual schedules.

“We’re always looking for more musicians,” said Kate.

A unique feature of Zion’s music ministry is the addition of special music during services. As special music coordinator, Kate has been very encouraging to congregation members who have an interest in sharing their musical gifts in service. All musicians, from beginner to seasoned orchestra musician, are invited to participate in the music ministry. During Christmas Eve services in December, six special music performances were shared!

About the increased participation of special music, Kate said, “It’s been really fun to see people stepping up. It’s special when someone takes the time to prepare a piece of music and shares it with their church family.”

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!” –Psalm 98:4



*Handbell Choir*



*Praise Team*

# **SCHOOL FOCUS: Kindergarten—Miss Leininger**

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## **Kindergarten Classroom**

*By Kayla Leininger*

A kindergarten classroom is a very busy place and ours is no different. This year as we have worked on our ABCs and one, two, threes we have also had the opportunity to share some special days together, including our counting carnival, our science quest days, our Christmas celebration, and penguins! This February our kindergarten classroom will be learning and exploring all about penguins, our classroom will even become the arctic for just a few days as we learn all about penguins and where they live. We will also be visited by a kindness penguin who will give us a kindness mission each day. We are excited to share the love of Jesus with everyone we know!

## **Meet Kayla Leininger**

*By Jan Meadows*

We here at Zion owe a big thank you to Daxton Kastner, a first grader in Mrs. Frerking's class. He's the one who asked his Aunt Kayla to apply to be a Kindergarten teacher at Zion. Kayla Leininger joined us at the beginning to this school year. I got to meet Kayla recently as we sat together for an interview, and I could quickly feel a connection with this lovely young woman. Thank you, Daxton! Kayla has three nephews: Daxton; Ryder (in Mrs. Leyden's afternoon preschool class at Zion); and Jhett, who is one.

Kayla was born in St. Joseph, MO, but moved at a young age, and she has lived in a number of different states. She grew up as the middle child in a pastor's family, with an older sister and a younger brother. Her mom was a stay-at-home mom before teaching 1st grade.

Kayla graduated from Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell, SD, and for the past 9 years, she has been a kindergarten teacher, most recently at Dakota Christian School near Platte, SD.

When she isn't busy with her kindergartners, Kayla has many other interests. She plays the violin and guitar, enjoys kayaking and loves reading. The kids at Zion will be thrilled to hear that she loves baking cookies and other goodies.

Kayla said one of the most memorable events of her life happened just last year when she accompanied her parents on a 10-day mission trip to Mozambique, sponsored by her dad's church, Calvary Assembly of God in Sioux Falls. They built churches, dug wells and served in villages and at orphanages. Kayla said one of the most impactful parts for her was at the orphanage when the children said, "Welcome to the home that God has blessed us with." They have nothing, they sleep 2 kids to every twin bed and yet they are so thankful for what God has given them. She carries that knowledge of being blessed in her heart.

I asked Kayla a couple of questions, one being, "What do you remember most about your own kindergarten experience?" She promptly replied that she remembers crying—every day! She must have had a lot of separation anxiety for a while, but she said that looking forward to wearing a special gingerbread dress for the Christmas program changed all that, and the rest of the school year was a lot more fun.

Who are you? This is the question Kayla wants each of her students able to answer as they graduate from her class. She has the sign posted just inside the classroom door, with the following lines below that question: "I am chosen," "I am loved," "I have a purpose," "God has a plan," "I matter" and "I am a child of God." Each day they talk about one of these aspects of, "Who are you?"

The last thing I asked Kayla was what she would like to say to you, the folks of Zion, and she said that she is gratified by the wonderful community support she sees here, people working together and being supportive of one another. Thank you to all our Zion family. And together, we welcome Kayla to our Zion family.



## Student Insights: Miss Leininger's Kindergarten Class

### What do you think love is?

**Charlie:** It means you care about someone.

**Rowen:** It means you love someone so very much. You give them lots of hugs.

**Amariana:** Love means I love you. I always give my mom a hug before I go to bed. Love is relaxing.

**Saylor:** Loving Jesus. Be respectful and help people when they get hurt. We are helpful and don't say bad things because that helps the people we love.

**Ira:** You love people. We love our family. Family is love.

**Charlotte:** Love means you love somebody. You can send a note that says, "I love you." Love is also when you love your mom. You can also say, "I love your picture."

**Kenadie:** Love is someone that you help. It is nice to say, "I love you." Love is really, really nice.

**Britain:** I love my parents. I hug and kiss the people I love.

**Aniyah:** Love is something your mom, dad, sister, or baby sister can say to you. They say, "I love you, Ani." You respect people you love.

**Carter:** Love is when you are kind to someone. People who love each other hug each other and help each other.

**Joey:** Love is when you like someone a lot. When you love someone, you get them things and be nice to them.

**James:** Love is caring. You care about the people you love. If you love someone so much then you love them so much.

**Josie:** Love means that you are loving Jesus and your family. You hug people you love and help them.

**Caspian:** Love is when you love your mom and you want to hug her. You smile at people you love. You hug them. You can sit beside people you love.



## February School Events

### Special Events for Our Parents and Students

- ⇒ **February 7th**—We will be celebrating the 100th Day of School. Classrooms will be having different activities to recognize this day. What a blessing to be able to celebrate being in school for 100 days!
- ⇒ **February 13**— 3-year-old Preschool will have their Valentine Party in the morning. Boys' basketball team will play at St. Paul's Lutheran at 4pm.
- ⇒ **February 14**—Valentine's Day Parties in classrooms.
- ⇒ **February 15-18**—There will not be school on February 17th in recognition of Presidents' Day. There will not be class on February 18th as all teachers and staff will be participating in professional development that day.
- ⇒ **February 20**—The boys' basketball team will play at Zion at 4pm.
- ⇒ **February 22**—PTL is sponsoring a movie at the Elks Theatre at 9am.
- ⇒ **February 26**—3rd Grade will lead chapel at 8:30am.

## Summer Care Registration

Summer Daycare registration will be on February 21, and will begin at 7am at Zion.

This is a first-come first-served basis, so if you are not able to make it this day, please be sure to send someone in your place to ensure you get your spot.

If you have any questions, please contact Hope Genzlinger at 605-342-5749 or [hope.genzlinger@zionrc.org](mailto:hope.genzlinger@zionrc.org).



## Upcoming Registration Dates

- ⇒ **March 10**—Kindergarten screening and registration begins.
- ⇒ **March 13**—Current Preschool Families can register for preschool.
- ⇒ **March 17**—Church & School Families can register for preschool.
- ⇒ **March 24**—Preschool registration opens to the community.

## **NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: The Aring Family**

*By Kate Meadows*

It was almost 4 years ago when the Aring family – Ashley, Kolton and daughter, Teagan – landed in Rapid City, courtesy of the U.S. Air Force. An all-military family, they knew how to thrive in a new community – jump right in and get involved.

That’s just what they did when they joined Zion Lutheran in 2023, when Teagan was in Mrs. Kettering’s Kindergarten class.

Ashley sings in the Zion choir, and both she and Kolton are active in school events as their job schedules allow. Both work as air traffic controllers at Ellsworth Air Force Base, though their job responsibilities are not identical. In 2025, Kolton will reach his 13-year mark with the Air Force. Ashley is about six months behind him. They met on the job, at Texas’s Shepherd Air Force Base, the first base where they each served.

For the Arings, the military is a way of life. At Zion, we feel the ups and the downs when we welcome military families into our congregation – and when we say goodbye to them.

Such will be the case later this year as Ashley transfers to Vance Air Force Base in Enid, Oklahoma. Teagan will finish out her first grade year at Zion while Kolton continues to work at Ellsworth. Barring any hiccups, Kolton and Teagan will join Ashley in Oklahoma this coming summer.

But while in Rapid City, Zion serves an easy and familiar fit for the Aring family. Ashley attended a Lutheran school as a child, and sending their daughter to Zion to begin her elementary school years was not a hard decision.

Zion, says Ashley, has been a perfect fit for Teagan.

“She took to it so well,” she said.

Ashley says she has already pinpointed a potentially good church home in Oklahoma. But in the long run, they have their eye on returning to Rapid City.

Time will tell. If they do come back, Zion will be waiting for them.



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### **Want to Join Our Zion Family?**

We offer new member classes yearly in October. We welcome you to worship with us Saturdays at 5:30pm or Sundays at 8am or 10:45am. If you have any questions about joining our family or about Zion in general, please contact one of our pastors or the front office at [info@zionrc.org](mailto:info@zionrc.org).

Pastor Meadows: [bryan.meadows@zionrc.org](mailto:bryan.meadows@zionrc.org)

Pastor Schulte: [gary.schulte@zionrc.org](mailto:gary.schulte@zionrc.org)

### **What’s Your One Thing?**

As we embark on a new year, it is a good time to consider new opportunities. The discipleship board would like to encourage every one, young and old, to find your one thing at Zion. What interests and talents has the Lord created in you? How could you use those to bless others and the church? A list of discipleship opportunities is available in the narthex. We encourage you to find your one thing and get involved! Make 2025 a year of knowing, growing, and serving!

## CONGREGATION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: The Bunge Family

By Peggy Hettick

The Bunge family's membership at Zion Lutheran Church goes back at least 5 generations.

Elizabeth (Kiehn) Bunge (1905-2009) was a long-time member of Zion. Many remember Elizabeth, also known as Betty, for her delicious pies, her crocheting and quilting, her African violets and for sharing her flowers and produce from her garden. She was also a long-time cook at Tally's Restaurant (now Tally's Silver Spoon). Elizabeth and her three sons, Merle, Darrell, and Glenn, attended church at Zion's first location, on the corner of 5th and Quincy. Merle, Darrell and Glenn were all confirmed at Zion in the 1940's. Merle (1929 – 1996) continued to attend Zion with his family over the years. Darrell and Glenn both moved away from Rapid City.

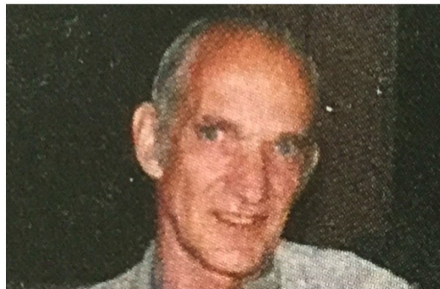
Merle married Marcene Paseka in 1954. Marcene says she remembers attending Christmas Eve services with the Bunge family during her high school years. As she and Merle were to be married, Marcene was baptized and confirmed at Zion. Marcene belonged to many Bible study groups and has helped prepare for and serve at funerals over the years. Merle and Marcene had three children: Wayne, Gene and Carol. All three were baptized and confirmed at Zion.

Wayne married Jan Weber (1954-2018) in 1982. They have three children. Wayne continues to be a member of Zion.

Gene and Karen (Andrick) were married at Zion in 1988. Their three children, Heather, Matthew and Audrey, were all baptized and confirmed at Zion. All three also attended Zion Lutheran School for their elementary years. The family continues their membership and worship at Zion. Heather and Zac Boysen were married at Zion. The couple has two children: Bailey (3) and new baby, Tate. Three-year-old Bailey attends Sunday school for preschoolers.

Carol married Don Turner in 1989, and they renewed their vows with Pastor Duley in celebration of their 26th wedding anniversary. They have one daughter, Melissa, who was also baptized and confirmed at Zion. She attended Zion Lutheran School for 5th and 6th grade. Melissa married Austin Kaul at Zion. They have two sons, Hunter (in Kindergarten at Zion School) and Brody (18 months). They are expecting a third child in May. They, too, worship at Zion, where Austin serves on the Board of Trustees and on the praise team.

Many family memories have been made over the years at Zion for the Bunges. A family favorite is the tradition of taking part in the Sunday school's Christmas Eve program, which Zion used to host regularly. The familiarity of the Christmas gospel recited by the children and the songs sung at these services will never be forgotten.



## Random Question with...

Pastor Meadows, Lead Associate Pastor

**Share a favorite photo of yourself and tell about it.**

In fall of 2004, I had just ended my time with the Navy and started at Purdue University. Dad had also just accepted a call to Pinedale, WY. That Christmas I traveled to the mountains to spend the holiday with my parents. On the five-hour drive from the Salt Lake airport to their new home, Mom and I talked about life. I told her that I was quite happy being a bachelor and would most likely stay that way. I wasn't against marriage or having a family, I just didn't see it happening. Little did I know that God was about to insert Kathryn Neely into my life, and that twenty years later life would be more blessed than I could have ever imagined. This picture reminds me of how short-sighted I was at 24, and further, how richly God gives His blessings. It was taken a year ago on a hike to the top of Harney/Black Elk Peak. In it I see how blessed I am to have such a beautiful and talented wife. I see how blessed I am to have these two remarkable (if not a little obnoxious) young men as my sons. And, I see how blessed we are to call the Black Hills our home.



## February Youth Events

**2—Youth Coffee Hour**—Bring treats before 9am and help serve!

**2—Higher Things Group Meeting** at 12pm in Narthex.

**5—Youth Board Meeting**—7:30pm at Zion. Come and share your input for what we do in Youth Ministry!

**6—Monument Concession Fundraiser**

Look for more information on the youth bulletin board.

**7-9—Winter Retreat**

Look for more information on the youth bulletin board.

**Join us for Youth Wednesdays 6-7:30pm at Zion!**

**SAVE THE DATE: King Cake production at Zion on March 1, 2025.**

## LWML Meeting

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (a.k.a. Lutheran Women in Mission) will meet on Saturday, February 8, at 10 a.m. at Zion in the Narthex to address Valentine cards for Zion's shut-ins. All women of the congregation are invited to join us.

## WICKS

Widows In Christ Know Salvation group will meet on Sunday, February 9, at 12:30pm in the narthex at Zion.

Please join us and bring a main dish, salad, or dessert to share.

If you have questions, please contact Priscilla Sayles 605-341-0505 or Sylvia Stoltz 605-431-3595.

