

# "Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"

(Hebrews 13:8, ESV)

And the countdown begins. There are only X number of days until school's out, or until graduation, or until summer starts, etc. Springtime (and May, especially), is a time of transition. And while this spring can be filled with enthusiastic celebrations, these times of transition can also be filled with the angst of the unknown.

Yeh! School is out for the summer! Vacations, lake and camp trips, baseball, and barbeques. But apart from the big events, what will summer day-to-day look like, with the kids out of school? Are they ready for the next grade level? Summer is also the peak moving season. What will life be like at a new school, a new town, a new house? What does tomorrow hold?

Yeh! Graduation! Celebrate the accomplishment! But that means that this season of life is over, and things are about to change. Transitioning out of Mom and Dad's house. Living on your own. Heading off to the military, trade school, or college – barracks, dorm rooms, roommates. Will you make new friends? Will you be able to stay close to your old friends? What does tomorrow hold?

Transitions can be times of celebrations. But they can also be rough. That's because you are going from the known into the unknown.

None of us know what tomorrow holds. But there is one thing we do know for sure. Whether you and your kiddos are simply moving up a grade or you're moving across the country, this much is sure: "Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Christ already went through the greatest transition ever — for you. He came from heaven to earth. The divine put on human flesh. He lived, then died, and now lives again. And He did all that so that you wouldn't have to worry about making the same transition. Because of His monumental transition, you don't have to worry about making the transition into an eternity away from your Creator God and Father. He transitioned from life to death and death to life so that you and I, by our baptisms, could join Him.

Yes, transition can be scary. And yes, it can be exciting. But thanks be to God in our Savior Christ Jesus, because no matter what transitions are to come, He remains our certainty. So, enjoy the summer. Enjoy the ride called life. Enjoy what is to come in Christ.

Forever and always your servant, Pastor Bryan Meadows



#### **MINISTRY FOCUS: Board of Trustees**

By: Azure Summers

While most of us understand that the Board of Trustees is responsible for grounds and property maintenance, they also handle a variety of essential tasks and details that may surprise you!

Operating under the oversight of the Board of Directors, the work of the Board of Trustees goes well beyond "grounds and property maintenance". In addition to that complex responsibility, they also make sure there are adequate storage facilities for church property. As good stewards of that property, adequate insurance policies must be secured and reviewed regularly. The grounds and buildings are continually monitored for fire and other hazards, and the Trustees ensure the alarm system is functioning properly. The Trustees negotiate service contracts and enlist work crews as needed for special projects and urgent needs, which can even include legal counsel necessary for the wise consideration of contracts, deeds, and similar documents. And, about those official church documents which require



**Photo:** Corey Sawatzky, Austin Kaul, and Jeff Summers installed the widened garage door in 2024.

safekeeping? You guessed it, it's the Board of Trustees who handle that, too!

Additionally, the Board of Trustees is the supervisory committee for the custodians. The Trustees determine and appoint, with the Board of Directors' approval, adequate custodial help and meet periodically with the custodians for discussion and collaboration. When Zion expands the building to nearly double in size through the Christ's Way Campaign, additional custodial staff may be required. But for now, Zion is blessed with two very capable and valued custodians. You can read more about them on the next page!

Some of the larger accomplishments of the Trustees over the past year include replacing the garage door with a wider door; parking lot repair, chip seal, and painting; sprinkler line repairs; new sewer pump installation; and replacement of the main coffee pot, which many of you know is in fact very important!

The Board of Trustees has seven members who regularly attend the monthly board meetings. Nine members are considered a full board, so a few more members would be welcome. Specifically, members who have construction, engineering, custodial work, plumbing, electrical, or other property maintenance expertise could provide useful insight to the Board of Trustees.

Regarding suggestions on how the congregation can help and support the Trustees, Austin Kaul, current Board of Trustees chairman, said, "Any members who may have interest in being a trustee are welcome to find me and talk with me about it! We would like to plan a few workdays on the grounds of Zion with a few different projects. Any help the congregation can give on those days is appreciated! More hands equal less work."

The Board of Trustees members give of their time and talents to make our church and school a safe, inviting, and comfortable place for our members, staff, and school children. Thank you to all who are serving, or have served, in this noble function.

# 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.

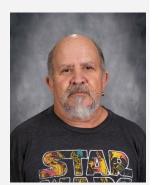
Pastor Meadows: bryan.meadows@zionrc.org

## Zion's Custodial Staff

We all know the dreaded words, "chairs must come up!" Even though many of us help put away chairs on Sunday mornings, those chairs get arranged and rearranged multiple times every week. Did you know that our custodians are responsible for the setup and removal of chairs for worship services and other events? The custodians' primary duties include keeping our church and school clean and maintained. Thank you, Mr. Grueschow and Mr. Klewicki!

#### Roger Grueschow

Mr. Grueschow has been working as a Zion custodian for 40 years! He says what he loves most about his job is the kids—they're always high-fiving or asking questions about the work he's doing. One of his fondest memories at Zion is when Priscilla Sayles, former Zion principal, would bring him mango iced tea for a



treat. It was also very special to Mr. Gueschow when Ann Solinsky, current principal, brought a cake for him and the kids that read: "Have a good year, Mr. Grueschow!" His favorite activity outside of work is riding his bicycle on the Mickelson Trail or Rapid City bike path.

#### Mark Klewicki

Mr. Klewicki has been a custodian at Zion for about 3.5 years. His favorite part of the job is "100% the kids!" He also enjoys working with the Zion staff and people of faith. In addition to his custodial work, Mr. Klewicki is a photographer, Pro-Am disc golf player, and an artist! For Zion, he takes photographs of



school life throughout the year, including at special and sporting events. At the end of the year, he blesses students and staff with a look back over the year video. As an addition to the P.E. program, he teaches the kids how to play disc golf and takes them to a course. And, he uses his artistic talent to bless the kids and staff by painting special rocks for them.

#### **DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS**



#### MAKE IT A SUMMER OF DISCIPLESHIP

Oh, how you can KNOW, GROW, SERVE!

Find YOUR 1 THING (or more!) among the smorgasbord of options to build your faith and engage with your Zion family through the summer months!

Stop by the Discipleship Fair table May 3 & 4 to pick up information and/or sign up for specific events like hiking fellowship, VBS, campouts and our free family photography event! Or, visit with a member of the Discipleship Board anytime. Look for us in our bright blue shirts during the month of May!

#### Information/Sign-Up For:

Softball (men & women 16+) Motorcycle fellowship rides "Jog with Jesus" 5k Picnic & hike fellowship Vacation Bible School Family campout Summer Bible study Hills Alive volunteering Adult camping retreat Mickelson Trail bicycle ride Biker Breakfast during Sturgis Rally Men's Ministry Retreat Zion store Christ's Way banquet **Instant Church Directory** Raise Right app Vanco giving app Zion website Family photography event

#### Free Family Photo Event May 17-18:

Don't miss this opportunity to secure your timeslot for family photos May 17 & 18! Your photo may be utilized for the church directory, and you will have the option of purchasing the digital file and/or printed photos at a very reasonable rate. Photography is being offered by Jackie Rausch, former Zion member and professional photographer. Pick up more information at the Discipleship Fair table!

## SCHOOL FOCUS: Second Grade—Mr. Dobbs

## **Second Grade Classroom**

By Scot Dobbs

This year second grade has been full of learning, growth, and fun! In math, students have been working hard on mastering three-digit addition and subtraction. They've been learning strategies to solve problems accurately and confidently. In reading, we've focused on understanding how to use text evidence to answer questions, helping students become more thoughtful and engaged readers. In writing, our second graders have learned to write complete sentences using proper punctuation and grammar. We've explored parts of speech and practiced writing neatly with attention to handwriting. Throughout the year, we've read some amazing books that have sparked our imaginations and led to great discussions—favorites include *Little House in the Big Woods, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and The Boxcar Children*. These stories have helped us build reading comprehension and develop a love of literature. From small group work to independent practice, second graders have had many opportunities to apply their skills in fun and meaningful ways. Whether it's solving word problems, writing stories, or diving into a new book, our class has learned how to take what we know and use it across all subjects. Second grade had such an exciting year filled with new challenges and accomplishments. We are so proud of all we've achieved and how much we've grown!

## Hi! I'm Mr. Dobbs

By Scot Dobbs

My name is Scot Dobbs. I was born in Rapid City and grew up in Black Hawk. I have two brothers—an older brother, Jakob, and a younger brother, Tony. We all attended Black Hawk Elementary, Dakota Middle School, and Central High School.

My love for teaching was sparked by my elementary school teachers, who were outstanding educators and inspired me to follow in their footsteps. I'm still working toward that goal, even after 11 years of teaching—I'm still young! I attended Black Hills State University, where I earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education. After college, I moved to Casa Grande, AZ, where I lived for two years before returning to my home in the Black Hills. I was hired at Zion, where I've taught second grade for the past nine years. Teaching the next generation is a rewarding career, and I genuinely love what I do.



During high school, I volunteered with Black Hills Community Theater (BHCT), where I met a future boss and mentor, Amy McClure. Over the years, we worked together on various projects, and during that time, we jokingly created "McClure University for Technical Theater," where she mentored kids about the technical side of theater. I still work with her in many ways. I'm currently a stagehand for the Performing Arts Center of Rapid City and The Monument, and I continue to volunteer for BHCT and Flutter Productions, a part of the Black Hills Works family. I love working behind the scenes in the production world.

In my limited spare time, I enjoy being outdoors and exploring the beautiful Black Hills. I love hiking, camping, kayaking, and hammocking—soaking in God's glory in nature. I also enjoy curling up on the couch with my dog and watching TV. My family is very important to me. I have three nieces and three nephews, and we love spending as much time together as possible.

## Student Insights: Mr. Dobbs' Second Grade Class

If you could have any animal, real or imaginary, as a pet, what would it be and what would you name it?

**Kinley:** I would have a kitten and name it Rossadel.

Natalie: I would have a puppy and name it Snickers.

**Sawyer:** I would have a squirrel and name it Violet.

Autumn: I would have a unicorn.

**Beau:** I would have a hamster and name it Re. **Eden:** I would have a wolf and name it Snowflake.

**Brenna:** I would have a Husky because they are fast, and I would name it Swedy.

Maycie: I would have a Kitty and name it Sunset.
Charli: I would have a horse and name it Swischees.
Ramsey: I would have a dog and name it Lonu.

**Reese:** I would have a baby monkey named Charlie.

u nave a won and name it Snownake. ould have a Husky because they are fac

Speedy.

Cullen: I would have an axolotl named Star.

Olivia: I would have an owl named Pigwigen.

Samuel: I would have a chameleon named Sp.

**Tylie:** I would have another puppy and her name

**Isabella:** I would have a pet cheetah and name it

**Samuel:** I would have a chameleon named Spy. **Clayton:** I would have a bear named Rojer.

**Zane:** I would have a dog named Bob.

**Joshua:** I would have a small three headed black dog

**Cody:** I would have a pet dire wolf and its name would

named Dogo.

be Ripjaw.

would be Areonna.

## **May School Events**

#### Special Events for Our Parents and Students

**May 2:** Track Meet for K-5. No classes, preschool, or daycare. Students are expected to participate in the track meet and have a guardian present.

May 5-9: Teacher Appreciation Week

**May 5:** PTL Meeting after school at Zion.

May 6: Culver's Fundraiser for Destination Imagination.

May 9: End of Year Dance 5:30-7pm at Zion.

**May 14-16:** 5th Grade at Outlaw Ranch.

May 16: Kindergarten Circus at Zion 2pm.

**May 17:** Preschool family event at Vicki Power's Park at

May 19: 5th Grade Graduation at Zion 7pm.

**May 21:** Chapel followed by Preschool Graduation at 8:30am. Last Day of School—Dismiss at 11:15am.

May 26: Office Closed for Memorial Day May 27: Summer Daycare Begins at 7am.

May 31: "Jog with Jesus" 5K at Old Storybook Island

# SUPPORT SIMPLY TOO MUCH ZION'S PESTINATION TEAM

JOIN US MAY 6 AT



Feel free to share and invite your friends and family. All purchases support our trip to the Global competition in Kansas City in May 2025!

# Zion Destination Imagination Team Heading to Kansas City!

All three DI teams did an amazing job competing at State Competition on April 5 in Pierre. One team, "Simply Too Much", will be heading to Kansas City to compete in May! Simply Too Much is managed by Sarah Sawatzky and made up of seven team members: Carter Sawatzky, Piper Muck, Lainey Bouma, Jenson Burke, Beckett Harris, Ethan Meruga, and Elliot Majeske. They will be having a fundraiser at Culvers on Mt. Rushmore Rd. May 6 from 5-8pm. Join them for supper and support them in their journey to Global Finals! Congrats, Simply Too Much!

#### **NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Mike and Ronda Graf**

By Jan Meadows

Mike and Ronda Graf are lifelong Lutherans who came to Zion after they moved from San Diego, CA, to the beautiful Black Hills. After visiting Ronda's brother, Kevin Thom (Pennington County Sherriff from 2011-2022) here several times, they decided Rapid City was the place to which they wished to retire. You might say they sent their son, Andrew, and his wife, Elise, on ahead to scope the area out for them, as the couple moved from California to Rapid City ahead of Mike and Ronda in 2022.

The moving trip here for Mike and Ronda must have been memorable, traveling with their three dogs and four exotic birds in a pickup truck—but that's a story I'll let them tell you.

The Air Force brought Mike and Ronda together. She was born and raised in Minot, ND, and Mike met Ronda in 1981 while he was stationed there. In 1983 they were married. They had two children—daughter, Ashley, in 1985; son, Andrew, in 1988. Ashley and her husband,



Chris, has triplets, Isabella, Wyatt and Sophia, who are 14 years old. They live in Hillsboro, OR.

In 1989, Mike and Ronda moved their family to Escondido, CA. This brought the family back to Mike's old stomping ground. Mike and Ronda both began careers in manufacturing. Mike started at Unisys. Ronda started at Sony. After 5 years, Mike joined Ronda at Sony. Ronda was there for 16 years and Mike for 11 years. Ronda then began a career in the biotech industry, where she worked for nearly 19 years. After Sony, Mike went to work for HM Electronics, where he worked for 17 years.

Ronda was always active in church, serving in many capacities as the children grew. I couldn't begin to list her many talents, but I'm sure that our various boards here will want to be talking to both Mike and Ronda about all they have to offer here at Zion.

As happens in the life of many young people, Mike had fallen away from the church in his late teens, and upon returning to California, he hadn't found his way back to the church. His former youth leader, Bob, was instrumental in bringing Mike back into the fold. Bob called Mike to invite him to attend a Men's Bible study. Mike said it had to have been the Holy Spirit that made him say yes to the offer.

After both Mike and Ronda completed successful careers, they finally were able to follow their hearts and retire to South Dakota in 2023. Ronda worked remotely for a year and a half, traveling to CA frequently. In September 2024, she completely retired.

Their first visit to Zion was not a happy one. Not one soul spoke to them. Fortunately, some weeks later they decided to give it a second try and were warmly welcomed by the pastor and many others. Perhaps that was God giving us, the family of Zion, another chance to show His love.

Mike and Ronda both feel God's presence in their lives, in truly miraculous ways, as well as in daily, simple, practical ways. Mike sings in the choir and Ronda is playing handbells. They both attend the Lifelight Bible study on Tuesday mornings at Zion. Ronda has enjoyed getting involved in LWML. They have wonderful stories of life to share with us. I'm sure you will enjoy getting to know them just as much as I enjoyed interviewing them. As we concluded our conversation, I asked if they had a message to give to the family of Zion. They replied: "We look forward to continuing to grow as Christians through our involvement at Zion. We truly enjoy the church services, Sunday school and the various groups we have become involved in. We are truly blessed."

## **CONGREGATION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Jerry and Pat Jessen**

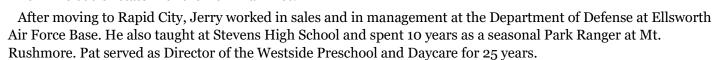
By Phyllis Martens

Longtime Zion members Pat and Jerry Jessen were blessed with parents who believed strongly in a solid Christian upbringing. For Pat, much of that upbringing occurred in the same church that she and Jerry have faithfully attended for the past 40 years. Pat was baptized at Zion the same day her father was confirmed at Zion.

Pat is a daughter of the Zion congregation. Jerry grew up in Mapleton, Iowa, and Colorado Springs. The two met at Concordia Teachers College in Seward, NE, with loosely the same career goal: both aspired to be teachers. They were married at Zion.

Their teaching careers took them to California, Washington and Hawaii, where they taught at Lutheran schools before moving to Rapid City in 1984. Back in Pat's hometown, it only seemed natural to transfer their membership to Zion.

The Jessens raised two children, Jill and Jay, both of whom live out-of-state with their own families.



At Zion, Pat and Jerry continue to honor Pat's family legacy within the church by regularly attending worship and serving in a variety of capacities. Pat plays the organ and accompanies for the choir. She also plays piano for Sunday school and interacts with Zion's school kids in the library as a volunteer librarian. She is a member of the Board of Education, serves on Altar Guild, and participates in LWML.

Jerry serves as a lay minister and teaches adult bible classes and other classes when needed. He participates in the Tuesday prayer breakfast. For the past two years he has used his incredible artistic talent to help the confirmands make ceramic crosses and dedication banners. He has also served on numerous boards and committees across Zion.

In so many ways, Zion is woven into the Jessens' lives. Zion wouldn't be the same without them!



# Register Now for Upcoming Christ's Way Events!





## Random Question with...

Ann Solinsky, School Principal

What's the most random fact you know?

I don't proclaim to be good at trivia or jeopardy, but I do seem to know a lot of random facts. Many of those facts involve animals! I grew up on a dairy farm with lots of animals



and we currently have a variety of farm animals at our place now. So here it goes. Did you know that penguins take about 10,000 naps each day with each nap being only a few seconds? Giraffes sleep about 20 minutes each day. Koalas sleep the most during a day (approximately 22 hours) and snails can sleep for up to three years. Dogs can sleep about 10 hours each day, but I don't know if my dogs know that as they seem to sleep a lot during the day and night. They do like to get up really early in the morning and let me know it is time to wake up and take them outside!

#### **LWML**

#### The Lutheran Women's Missionary

League will meet on Saturday, May 10, at 10:00 a.m. at Zion. There will be an opening devotion and a brief meeting. We will meet at Minerva's Restaurant at 1:00 p.m. for lunch. All women of the congregation are invited to join us. No refreshments will be served at this meeting. Ann Woidtke will be Co-President with Ruth Kudera. The installation of LWML officers will be on May 25 at 8am service.

# **Change in Worship Times**



## **May Youth Events**

**May 4:** Senior Graduate Recognition during worship services & Youth Coffee Hour.

**May 7:** Catechism/HS Bible Study. 5th grade students are invited to check out Youth Group at Zion at 7pm.

May 14: Catechism/HS Bible Study

**May 16:** J.A.M. for grades 3-5 at Zion 5:30-7:30pm. **May 18:** Confirmation Service Projects will be displayed during fellowship between services.

**May 21:** No youth events.

May 28: Youth Group meets at 6pm at Zion.



VBS June 2-6, 2025. Registration coming soon!

You are invited to

#### Pastor Randy Sturzenbecher's Installation as District President

Sunday, May 4, 2025 7 pm Worship Service

At

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church and School 7308 Wedgewood Dr., Black Hawk, SD 57718

Please join us to celebrate our new District President as he starts his new Adventure!

H'orderves will be provided from 4:30-6:30 pm for fellowship time.

Please RSVP to Divine Shepherd by April 21, 2025 at 605-787-6438 or email at dslcsecretary@divineshep.org