

Zion Lutheran Church & Preschool
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Larry Wright and Jesse Greenhagen, Pastors

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"For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." - 1 Timothy 4:8

Training in Godliness

The value of physical training is visible. This month is the Super Bowl, a time when those who have exhibited extreme bodily exercise now showcase the fruits of their work before hundreds of millions of people. The Super Bowl claims every one of the top-ten most televised events in history. The two competing teams have excelled beyond every other team in the NFL in bodily training and team coordination.

It's also a new calendar year. Many of you have committed to healthier ways of living. Perhaps your New Year's resolution had a component of daily exercise. Maybe you want to complete your first 5K in 2025, or lose weight to feel better. February is the time of the year when we are confronted with the challenges of keeping up with our commitments that were set at the beginning of the year. The fire we once had to fulfill these commitments may now be wearing down. Bodily exercise is challenging in the moment. It is hard to commit to bodily training day after day to achieve something that is off in the distance and uncertain.

These NFL players have been training day after day for year after year with the hope of winning the Super Bowl. Their hard work and training did not guarantee their presence at the Super Bowl... But now they made it. And their efforts are visible before everyone to see.

But our personal fitness is not what gains the favor of God. "He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy" (Psalm 147:10-11). As profitable as we find bodily exercise for the purpose of feeling good,

becoming accomplished, and being fulfilled, God desires first and foremost *godliness*. The exercise of godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

If you have made some New Year's resolutions relating to the exercise of godliness, February is a great time of reminder not to give up. If you haven't made commitments to exercise yourself in godliness, now is also a great time to consider how you might reorient your life to be in alignment with the Word of God.

But before we commit to godly living, we are first and foremost reminded of our ungodliness. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:10-11). The LORD takes pleasure, as our Psalm declares, "in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy." Our resolutions and commitments do not please God apart from His mercy. Our training is fruitless apart from the fruit of the cross. There Jesus fulfilled our unfulfilled commitments to godliness.

And the LORD doesn't stop there. Jesus now helps us fulfill our commitments to godliness right here and now. By His Spirit we are enabled to strive toward godliness. These football players trained for something that was uncertain. How much more we are enabled to train in godliness, knowing that the victory of our "spiritual Super Bowl" is certain. We know that the victory has been won. We know that we are going to see our Savior in paradise.

How are we so certain? Every time we come to Church we are reminded of this victory. Every time we receive the Sacrament of the Altar we taste this victory. We receive the body and

the blood of the One who underwent training in godliness and won this victory. Jesus' victory is not something that is far off in the distance or uncertain. It is something that has already taken place on the cross, and we receive its benefits here in Church.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Godliness may not be visible in the same manner as the Super Bowl, but it is eternal and it is certain. Thanks be to God.

In Christ, Pastor Greenhagen

Early Childhood Center News

Please keep the Zion Lutheran Church congregation, Pastor Christopher David Beck, and Faith Lutheran Church (Bloomington, IN) in your prayers. Zion has extended a Ministerial Call to Pastor David Beck to fill the role of Senior Pastor at Zion/CTK Lutheran Church. Please pray for the Holy Spirits guidance on Pastor Beck as he considers this Divine call.



The childcare center will be closed on Monday, February 10, for our annual Professional Development Day. Please mark your calendar.

Registration for the 2025-2026 school year continues this month. Open enrollment applications will now be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis beginning Thursday, February 1. Children must be four years of age on or before September 1, 2025, to enroll in the four-year-old class. Children attending the three-year-old class must be three years of age on or before September 1, 2025, to enroll in the three-year-old class. Parents may choose from two days up to five days of morning preschool. Preschool childcare is available again this year. Enrollment Link:

<https://schools.procareconnect.com/form/a6a61d2f-3b98-47b2-a8e1-b8f0941460dc>

Toddler Care is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Toddlers are accepted from 16 months to 36 months. Our Toddler Care currently has a waitlist. If you are looking for toddler care in the future, you would want to place your name on the waitlist as soon as possible. Enrollment Link:

<https://schools.procareconnect.com/form/6892bb32-470d-4bda-acd4-1c690e084d74>

We will celebrate Valentine's Day in our classrooms with a simple Valentine exchange. Mrs. Skorna's class are invited to create their own mailbox at home with the help of parents, grandparents, or older siblings. Feel free to have fun creating and decorating a small mailbox using tissue boxes, cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc. Valentines should be brought to school anytime the week of February 11. Mrs. Barton's class should bring your valentines to school any time the week of February 11.

Preschool Parent-Teacher talks will be held March 6 and 7. Parents will be able to sign up for an in-person parent teacher talk. Parents will be receiving an email with a Goggle link for signup.

Registration for our Summer Camp program will begin February 1. Summer Camp will operate from June 9 to August 15. Enrollment will be available through the link below:

<https://schools.procareconnect.com/form/62ca0983-9097-43bd-b3fd-c4247eefc90b>



The life of a child is a never-ending education. "Have I been here before?" "What do I know about this?" Every new experience can be a "thinking outside the box" moment. Unfortunately we all too often lose our sense of wonder on the road to becoming grown-ups. God's world surrounds us with His boundless creativity. Reading the Bible with your kids taps into that tremendous imagination, power and love that He has shown us so far in history. Not just fiction, but true-life epics that really happened, all the more remarkable because of that!

From the awesome six days of creation, through the awful fall into sin, the flood, and God's further promises to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and on through the Old Testament, then on to the epic incarnation and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. No human-inspired fairy tale could begin to equal God's biography of the human race! But it's not over yet! We are still living the Bible story! When our Lord Jesus returns for us, He has promised to those who believe (Matthew 25:34) that He has prepared for them a mansion, a kingdom, a glorious place (John 14:2). John describes a bit of it in the last two chapters of Revelation. Tell your children of 1 Corinthians 2:9; "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of men the things that God has prepared for those who love Him." Put your child's imagination to work on that. God has prepared a glorious eternity for His redeemed family!

Brad Coulson

Sunday School Superintendent

February Mission of the Month



*Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
University*

Zion Lutheran Church Foundation

What? You have not heard of our Foundation? It was established in 1991 to provide a place where tax-free contributions, members and non-members, could make a gift for the purpose of maintenance of all Zion properties or leases. Only earned interest may be used for maintenance projects over and above those considered to be normal and routine. Our annual budgeting process does not have a line item designated for future maintenance projects. What about replacement of current equipment, or other unforeseen projects not budget for? Here's what you can do—designate the Foundation as your beneficiary in wills, estate plans, insurance policies, and memorials. Simply make it to Zion Lutheran and identified as Zion Foundation. Only the interest is used. Call the church office at 989-772-1516 or the Foundation president, Dale Gust 989-506-6489 with questions..

*"[Jesus said] Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them,
I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house,
who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock.*

And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built."

Luke 6:47-48

In the past few months, we at Zion have been blessed with many visitors, new members, special services, and social events. It is a sign that the faith of the members here at Zion Lutheran Church is alive and is being shared with our neighbors just as we have been called to do. It is wonderful to take pride in what has been done here and to let others know of the wonderful things that are going on at our church. It's especially heartwarming to hear from the parents and families of our Early Childhood Center how much they appreciate our teachers and staff. These unsolicited compliments are a wonderful reflection on the people who are engaged with the community of this congregation. The members of Zion can be very proud of your outreach and efforts and for the students and community at Christ the King as well.

But care must always be taken when speaking of pride, because pride can make our hearts swell in an unhealthy way. I was reminded of this recently in a writing from the resource, The Treasury of Daily Prayer (TDP). This resource was first made available in 2008 and includes daily scriptural readings, a word on hymnody, a prayer of the day, and a writing which connects to the daily reading. I highly recommend it if you're looking for a good resource for daily devotions. Here below is a writing from the TDP by Dietrich Bonhoeffer that aptly frames Christ's work and our work.

"It is not we who build. [Christ] builds the church. No man builds the church but Christ alone. Whoever is minded to build the church is surely well on the way to destroying it; for he will build a temple to idols without wishing or knowing it. We must confess-He builds. We must proclaim-He builds. We must pray to Him-that He may build. We do not know His plan. We cannot see whether He is building or pulling down. It may be that the times by which human standards are times of collapse are for Him the

great times of construction. It may be that the times which from a human point of view are great times for the church are times when it is pulled down....Pay no heed to views and opinions. Don't ask for judgments. Don't always be calculating what will happen. Don't always be on the lookout for another refuge! Church, stay church! But church, confess, confess, confess! Christ alone is your Lord; from His grace alone you can live as you are. Christ Builds."

These words are like sweet honey to the ears of Lutherans because they point to Christ for what He has done for us. We also see in the Bonhoeffer quote some of our greatest pitfalls, which effectively demonstrate a lack of faith in Jesus Christ and His work of salvation He won for us. In this New Year, as we emphasize the outreach opportunities for us here in this community and beyond, we must also take care to view this outreach with the proper perspective. Meaning that our outreach is focused upon the sharing of the Gospel and to always recall that it is Christ who builds the church.

Our doubt of Christ's work leads us to questions like: will the church ever get bigger, why am I sick, when will we get a new senior pastor, why is there such a great loss of Christians in this community and world? Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the quote above admonishes us to, "Pay no heed to views and opinions." We rejoice that Christ does have a plan of His salvation for each one of you. We can rejoice knowing the foundation laid on the chief cornerstone of Jesus Christ is deep, and it shall not be shaken no matter how the winding streams of your life may wander to and fro. Rejoice! You know the ending of your story it is written by Christ and your salvation is sure. Because of what Christ has done for you, you can all rejoice in hearing the call to help your neighbors, in this place, in this community, in this state, in this country, and to the ends of the earth. Jesus Christ has built His plan well for you and "from His grace alone you can live as you are", that is forgiven and redeemed and welcome in His eternal house, even to eternal life. Rejoicing in the Lord,
Pastor Wright

Youth & Family Life



Spaghetti Dinner

Friday, February 7

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

@Zion

This wonderful event returns! Those who have attended know what a treat this is. There will be a freewill offering with proceeds going to our Zion youth and family life programs. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex at Zion as well as CTK, or you may call the church office at 772-1516 to sign up. Join us for some Italian cuisine, fun, trivia, entertainment and fellowship. Please sign up in advance to help with proper planning. Thank You.



Let's Go Bowling! Saturday, February 22 at Riverwood

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

\$5 per person

Everyone is welcome to join us for some fun and fellowship. Following the bowling we will have some pizza at CTK! Signup sheets will be out soon at Zion and CTK.



Welcome to our newest Zion members !

Joanne Kinzinger
Kevin Spicer-Torres
Anita West
Charles Zalud

NURSE'S NOTE

Wouldn't it be nice to have a place where families could bring their mobile loved one, who can not be left home alone, for a few hours while they run necessary errands?

1 Peter 4:10-11 KJV ... *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

This place would be a safe, welcoming place with activities, interaction and worship. Zion has the capability to provide such a place. This is what an Adult Day Care/Respite Care Ministry would look like and this type of place is extremely hard to find in the Central Michigan Area.

We envision starting with 4 hours a week for no more than 6 to 8 individuals. We are looking for volunteers to form a committee to get this off the ground. We need to research and write necessary policies. This service would be provided on a donation basis and staffed with volunteers.

Please contact Phillis Daws: 989-621-8583 or email: zionparishnurse@gmail.com

Thank you in advance. If you can not volunteer please pray that God guides us and we find our path easily.

God Bless,

Phillis Daws BSN, RN



Are You Able?

Calling all Talent

The volunteer work at Zion never ends. What's the problem? Various boards don't know who to call for help with a specific task. For example, Sunday School teachers, painters, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, all age singers, instrumental players, communion setup, funeral dinner helpers, ushers, cooks, contribution counters, telephone callers, etc., or whatever you may want to do. Just leave a message with Kathy Tice at 989-773-5050 or email at ksn48617@outlook.com and leave a message. She will compile a list for use by all boards.

Gladiators, Leaders, Mission, Vision, & More

In the December 2024 Reporter (official newspaper for the LCMS), the following was taken from the International Church Relations Conference held in Wittenberg, Germany.

Janis Vanags, retiring archbishop from service to the LELB (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia), commented in his last sermon to the ICRC in his role. He expressed the sentiment of the gathering: **"The 21st century reminds me of a scene from that movie, 'Gladiator.' Maximus stands in the middle of the arena for the battle and says to his comrades, 'Whatever comes out of these gates, we have a better chance of survival if we work together.'** Dear sisters and brothers, that is ... why we are here. However, to work together, we need someone to lead and hold us together. It can only be Christ, the resurrected and living One."

Let's apply that same Gladiator thought to our current Zion church leadership. We depend on Christ holding Zion together and we also depend on our pastors and leaders working together to fulfilling our responsibilities. We are thankful to our Lord for the past progress made at Zion and our leadership. Our leaders continually introduce and face more challenges. **Much remains that could be done at Zion—regaining our in-active members, keeping our youth involved, seeking a Music Director/Kantor, outreach to the unchurched, expansion of our Early Childhood Center, reviving choral and instrumental music in our worship services, campus outreach, plus more.**

We are constantly in need of new leaders as current ones rotate out for any number of reasons. Our congregation has many young, middle age, and older members who could serve on one of our seven boards or in other non-board tasks. Please, with the upcoming April voters meeting, we need a slate to present. Twisting arms is not our choice. **YOU must be willing to volunteer. The phones are ringing. Is one of them YOU?** CALL 989-506-6489. (Dale Gust, Executive Director)





Daughters of the King: Sarah –
God's Time or Mine?

In the Word

(Sarah's Story: Genesis 17:15-21)

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?"... God said, "... Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac" (Genesis 17:17, 19a).

Of the Word

Have you ever prayed long and hard for something you believe was good and right for you? How long did you pray? A week? A month? A Year?

Can you imagine praying for decades? When Abraham and Sarah were young they prayed for a child. God answered, "Wait." They waited. They prayed. Years passed, and – humanly speaking – Sarah's child-bearing years were over. But finally, it was time for God's "Yes!" In His time – not Abraham's, not Sarah's – God gave them the son they had longed for.

Sarah's story is much like women's stories today. Ups and downs; joys and frustrations. God asked Sarah and He also asks us, "Is anything too hard for Me?" A faithful heart knows that God is all powerful. A faithful heart asks to be able to wait for His timing and His answers.

Walking with my Lord

Dear Lord, I am sometimes impatient, frustrated, and fearful. Forgive me and fill me with Your love, Your power, Your strength. Give me faith to trust Your timing for my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Calendar of Events

HOT ITEM: MITES, MITES, MITES: DO YOU HAVE POCKETS OF CHANGE? REMEMBER OUR MITE BOX IS LOOKING FOR LOOSE CHANGE

New Item: Did You Know?

There are new flower calendars posted on the bulletin boards at Zion and CTK. We need people to sign up for flowers to be delivered each Sunday by "Three Wishes Floral," to beautify our altar. If someone does not sign up for the flowers, the LWML pays for them out of their treasury and it gets to be expensive. The flowers cost \$35 and you may take the flowers home after the service. Please make checks payable to the Zion Lutheran Women's Guild and leave in the church office.



Ladies Luncheon – Friday, February 22

Our luncheon this month will be at Pisanello's, at 11:30 a.m. It is located on Main Street in Mt. Pleasant.

Pie Tasting – Sunday, February 16 – Bring a favorite pie of yours to have everyone taste to see what they think. Pies will be served at the fellowship hour at Zion before Adult Bible Class and also after the late service at CTK. If you are attending the early service, bring your pie at 8:30 a.m. to Zion. If you are attending the late service bring your pie at 11:00 a.m. to CTK. This is open to all the ladies and men of the congregation and not just LWML.

Executive Committee and General Meeting – March 8 – 9:15 a.m. EC meeting

10:00 a.m. - General meeting/Brunch potluck. Please bring a dish to pass. We will be having brunch at 10:00 a.m. sharp with devotion and Bible Study to follow. See the March newsletter for details of our speaker.

Orphan Grain Train - Continue to place clothing that is clean and in good condition in the containers at Zion. Please put items in small bags or garbage bags. However do not overfill large bags. Mike Walton and Dale Gust delivered all of our Orphan Grain items and the quilts last week to the Orphan Grain Train.

"Serve the Lord with Gladness-" Psalm 100:2