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Larry Wright and Jesse Greenhagen, Pastors

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*In the seasons of the Church year when the weight of sin and death are most emphasized and we are most poignantly called to penitence, the Church would have us receive even more of*

### **MIDWEEK SERVICES IN ADVENT AND LENT**

Over the years, when people ask how often must we go to church, the response they receive is, "How much Jesus is too much Jesus?" It is the question one of my seminary professors asked of me, and of all of his students throughout his many years of teaching. It is a question worthy of our consideration.

In Scripture, the Church is called the "Body of Christ." Paul uses such imagery many times. And anyone who's taken not more than a middle-school level biology class knows the basics of how the all the parts and processes of the body are equally needed to keep the body healthy and strong and functional. They also know that if any part of the body is denied the nutrients that come from breathing and blood-flow, that part of the body will die. And when the body becomes sick, those systems which deliver such nutrients work all the harder in the areas affected by illness or injury in order to bring healing.

So it is that the Body of Christ, in seasons such as Lent and Advent, which are often called "The Penitential Seasons," it is right to keep the tradition of mid-week Church services as a source of an extra dose of the holy-healing medicine of Christ and His Word.

Granted, there is no biblical mandate for midweek services in Advent or Lent, or any time for that matter. In fact, the tradition of holding midweek services is a very new practice which was inherited by Lutherans from American Protestants. But given that the penitential seasons are designed to remind us of our sickness in sin, it is indeed "good, right, and salutary" that the Church create more time for us to ponder the source of our healing.

Advent reflects upon the darkness of the world apart from Christ even as it looks back upon the

time of waiting for the Messiah's first coming, and looks forward to Christ's second Advent. Thus Advent themes are focused upon Scripture which point to Christ's imminent arrival, both as a babe in Bethlehem 2 millennia ago, and in glory on the last day for which we wait in joyful hope.

Lent reflects upon the darkness of our sin, and so Lenten themes tend to focus upon Christ's passion and move us toward the observance in Holy Week of his betrayal, suffering, and death. As a people sick with sin, Lent points us to the one by whose wounds we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). As the human body receives special medicines and activates certain processes (such as the work of white blood cells) to aid in healing when part of all of the body is ill or injured, so too it is good that the Church sees to it that the Body of Christ is given even more of the good gifts in Christ and His Word in such seasons of the Church year as Lent and Advent.

So, to answer age old question, "How often MUST I go to Church?" First know that this question is often asked from a desire to meet some minimum requirement for being a Christian and misses the whole point of Christianity. It isn't a formula for getting right with God. It is all about Christ for us who makes us right with God by His death and resurrection. So, how often should the Christian go to Church? As often as they are able and as often as the opportunity is present. It goes back to that same great question, "How much Jesus is too much Jesus?"

I'm looking forward to seeing you at Church on Wednesdays this Lent. Ash Wednesday is March 5, and our Mid-Week Lenten Series will have the theme, "Our Father in the Passion of Christ", stemming from the Lord's Prayer.

Rejoicing in the Lord, Pastor Wright

## Early Childhood Center News

How quickly our school year is speeding by! It is hard to believe that the season of Lent is arriving this coming week and soon spring will be here too. During our Jesus Time, we will witness many of the miracles that show us His true nature as the Son of God. We will also reflect on the steps Jesus took on our behalf on the way to Jerusalem to suffer and die on the cross for us.

Just a reminder that Parent Teacher Talks are scheduled for March 6, and 7. Teachers still have room on their sign-up sheets so grab a spot. The teachers are looking forward to talking with all our parents. Toddler care and preschool childcare will remain open on these two days.

Zion preschool will have their spring break from March 24-28. Toddler care and preschool childcare will remain open all week for their normal hours from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Open enrollment continues for the 2025-2026 school year. 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. Preschool childcare is available again this year. Enrollment is filling fast so do not hesitate.

Toddler Care is available year-round. Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Toddlers are accepted from 16 months to 36 months. There is an extensive waitlist so you will want to plan. Contact Mrs. Roe to be placed on the waitlist several months before you need care.

Summer Camp enrollment has begun. Summer Camp will operate from June 9 to August 15. The camp is available to children from 3 to 12 years of age. Children do not have to be enrolled in our Preschool and Early Childhood Center to attend. Full and half-day camp options are available. Summer Camp may be utilized every day or may be used throughout the summer as needed. Brochures are available or visit our website for more information:

On-line enrollment for all of our programs may be found on our website:

[www.zionlutheranpreschoolecc.com](http://www.zionlutheranpreschoolecc.com)

Raising a family is always challenging. Sooner or later a child will look at the world around them and begin to ask difficult questions. One of the toughest is often put forward



by adults as well: if our God is a God of love, how can he allow such pain in the world? Why doesn't he just do away with suffering and hate? First of all, we need to turn to Genesis 3 and realize why the world is under the curse of sin.

God's creation - all of creation - was made perfect, and intended to last forever. No sickness, no pain, no death. Humans were created in God's image. We were intended to be at His side, caring for the rest of His creation forever. But sin separated us from Him and ruined that perfection. God told Adam and Eve He would send a Savior to remove our sin and restore His perfect creation, especially His most special creation, the human race.

When God became human, He lived a completely sinless life. Jesus is the only human who never sinned. He came to be our Savior. His death on the cross was a perfect sacrifice to remove the curse of sin.

But of all the suffering and pain in the history of the world, nothing we can experience can hurt as much as Jesus did on the cross. He is God, but He was separated from His Father while He hung there. He took all the pain, all the guilt of everyone's sin who has ever lived or ever will live from Adam, to the end of time.

God made the ultimate sacrifice of His only son, and wants everyone to have the chance to accept His saving grace. Even through the worst times we can imagine.

Jesus is now with His Father, offering His hand to take us to be with Him forever. All we have to do is say: "Yes, Jesus! I am a sinner! Please forgive me!".

We are all His children, whether we are three or ninety-three. He wants to take us all in His arms, forever! This is the greatest gift any parent could ever give their children.

Brad Coulson  
Sunday School Superintendent

# STEWARDSHIP NEWS

## God's Instruments, God's Stewards

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)*

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8–9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn't stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors,

more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward — the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

## Mission of the Month

**PRAY FOR OUR  
★★★★★  
MILITARY**

## LCMS Armed Forces Ministry

In 1862, Rev. Friedrich W. Richmann volunteered to serve the 58<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Ohio Volunteers in the American Civil War. By doing so, he became The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod's first military chaplain. The world has changed dramatically since then, and so has our nation's armed forces. To support military personnel as they provide for our nation's defense, the LCMS established Ministry to the Armed Forces to: provide military chaplains to serve on the field; provide chaplains for veteran's hospitals; maintain records of pastoral acts; work with pastors and civilian congregations to provide for the spiritual welfare of their members in uniform; and to provide spiritual resources to LCMS members serving in the armed forces through a “Ministry-by-Mail Program.”



**Daylight saving time begins on  
March 9**

## Youth & Family Life



### Euchre Night



**Friday, March 14  
5:30 p.m. at Zion**

Our second Euchre Night of the year will be Friday, March 14. We now have traveling trophies for the top two finishers! Congratulations to Brian Tice and Todd Grashow who were first and second at our January event. Will Brian be able to retain the trophy or will his luck run out in this St. Patrick's themed event? Plan to join us for a good time and some great fellowship! Wear some green and feel free to bring your favorite snack to share. Note the start time of 5:30 p.m. LCMSU students are always welcome.

**Thank You** to everyone who helped to make the Spaghetti Dinner a wonderful event! Thank you also to everyone who attended and donated to help fund upcoming youth conferences and family life activities. It is much appreciated!



**Tuesday, March 25  
12:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.  
Zion gymnasium**

For information or to schedule an appointment visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) – sponsor code Zion, or call 1-800-733-2767.

### NURSE'S NOTE

*What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

*James 2:14-17*

To date, no one has come forward to volunteer to help with the Adult Day Care / Respite Mission. I do know how hard it is to step forward out of our comfort zones, or think that "where will I find the time", "I am not qualified" or "someone else will be better at this". Please contact me and find out what this is about, then decide if you can help. This mission is desperately needed in our community. We have the facility, we just need the manpower. *"Here I am, Lord, send me"* Isaiah 6:8.

### Apple-berry cobbler

(Serving size: about 2/3 cup calories 119)

#### Ingredients:

**For the filling:** 1 cup fresh raspberries

1 cup fresh blueberries

2 cups chopped apples

2 tablespoons turbinado or brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon lemon zest

2 teaspoons lemon juice

1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch

**For the topping:** Egg white from 1 large egg

1/4 cup soy milk

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1 1/2 tablespoons turbinado or brown sugar

3/4 cup whole-wheat pastry flour

#### Directions

Heat the oven to 350 F. Lightly coat 6 individual ovenproof ramekins with cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, add the raspberries, blueberries, apples, sugar, cinnamon, lemon zest and lemon juice. Stir to mix evenly. Add the cornstarch and stir until the cornstarch dissolves. Set aside.

In a separate bowl, add the egg white and whisk until lightly beaten. Add the soy milk, salt, vanilla, sugar and pastry flour. Stir to mix well.

Divide the fruit mixture evenly among the prepared dishes. Pour the topping over each. Arrange the ramekins on a large baking pan and place in the oven.

Bake until the filling is tender and the topping is golden brown, about 30 minutes. Serve warm.

God Bless,

Phillis Daws RN,BSN

989 621 8583 or [zionparishnurse@gmail.com](mailto:zionparishnurse@gmail.com)

## LENT SERVICE SCHEDULE

## Forty Days of Fasting



### Ash Wednesday Divine Services March 5

4:30 p.m. at Zion

5:30 p.m. Pancake Dinner at Zion

7:30 p.m. at CTK

both services with imposition of ashes

Our Lenten theme will relate the Lord's Prayer to the Passion of Christ. Beginning on Wednesday March 12, all services will be held at Zion.

**Services will begin at 5:30 p.m. and be followed by a dinner in the gymnasium**

March 12 "Our Father"

March 19 "Thy Kingdom Come"

March 26 "Thy Will Be Done"

April 2 "Our Daily Bread"

April 9 "Lead and Deliver Us"

### Thinkers and Innovators Wanted

A Social Media Consultant has agreed to meet with our members to share how and what Zion/CTK needs to do for implementation of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other digital media platforms. The consultant will walk us through on how we can share our message with the community as to what we believe, teach, and confess. I need at least 5-10 volunteers and maybe the Pastors and secretaries. We need to charge forward with this venture. Please let Dale Gust, 989-506-6489, know that you definitely want to be a part of this discussion so that a time may be established.

### Attention Zion Women Singers

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have an a cappella women's choir sing a special hymn or an anthem for Easter? Please contact either Kathy Tice or JoAnn Gust if you are interested. Hopefully we can get enough voices and meet during the daylight hours to practice. Thank you!



Have you ever wondered what the season of Lent is all about? After all, why would the Church choose to observe such a sad and dismal season? Didn't Jesus rise from the dead? Isn't He with us now? Aren't we supposed to be filled with joy? So why does the Church make itself suffer for 40 days? Lent is a season of 40 days, corresponding to the 40 days of fasting and temptation that Jesus experienced in the wilderness. Amazingly, we are told that it was the *Spirit* that led Jesus into the wilderness. It wasn't the Devil. Jesus went into the wilderness willingly.

Similarly, the Church willingly brings itself into the season of Lent. We can even say the Church is led by the Spirit in this time. It is the custom of the Church to fast during these 40 days. The Church fasts to empty itself of the worldly junk it has become accustomed to consuming. Rather than feasting on the things of this world (perhaps juicy steaks, beer, or chocolate bonbons), the Church feasts on the Word of God. For this reason, the Church has long offered extra services throughout the season of Lent. This is a great way to practice fasting, giving up free time and being filled instead with the Word of God and the Sacrament. In this holy food, the Spirit of God is given out freely. The Spirit does lead the Church in this season of Lent. Although the Church is found fasting, it does not fast without a hope. It is not in despair. In fact, if you counted the days from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, you would find that there are 46 days in Lent. That is because the 6 Sundays in Lent are not considered days of fasting. Rather, they are counted as mini "Easters." This means that in the midst of Lent, Christ's resurrection *is* found. And when Easter Sunday finally comes on that 7th Sunday, Christ's resurrection is celebrated in full force.

Jesus has conquered the Tempter. The temptations, trials, and Spiritual discipline of fasting shall not weaken the Church but strengthen it. Because of Jesus' temptation, we are told, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus was tempted just like you and me, and He has given us the same Spirit that led Him into the wilderness. May His Spirit only strengthen you throughout these 40 days of Lent.

In Christ, Pastor Greenhagen

## Zion Lutheran Women's Guild

Daughters of the King:  
Hannah – Promise Made,  
Promise Kept



**In the Word** (Hannah's Story: 1 Samuel 1:1-28)  
*For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord* (1 Samuel 1:27–28a).

### Of the Word

How good are you at keeping promises? We all have the best of intentions when promises are made, but sometimes “stuff” gets in the way: an unexpected appointment, an illness, even a traffic jam.

When tearful Hannah went to the house of God, she earnestly prayed for a son. And she tacked on a promise, “I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life” (1 Samuel 1:11b). Imagine a childless woman making such a promise!

In due time, God blessed Hannah with a son. As she nursed him and cared for him, she must have pondered her promise. We can only guess whether or not she had second thoughts. But when young Samuel was weaned, she took him to Eli the priest. God gave her the strength to leave the young child there, thus keeping the promise she had made.

### Walking with my Lord

Heavenly Father, guide my thoughts and words as I serve You. Help me make and keep promises that bring glory to You. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

### Calendar of Events

**HOT ITEM: MITES, MITES, MITES:**

*We are behind in our Mites.*

**REMEMBER OUR MITE BOX IS LOOKING FOR LOOSE CHANGE**



**New Item: Did You Know?** New flower calendars are posted on the bulletin boards at Zion and CTK. People are needed 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. These bouquets have been beautiful with lots of roses. Please make checks payable to the Zion Lutheran Women's Guild and leave in the church office.

## Ladies Luncheon – Friday, March 14

Our luncheon this month will be at Cheers, at 11:30 a.m. It is on the corner of High Street and Bradley, in Mt. Pleasant.

### Executive Committee and General Meeting at Zion, Saturday, 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.

**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.

*“Serve the Lord with Gladness-” Psalm 100:2*

### Men's Breakfast Brainstorming Summary

At a recent men's breakfast, they engaged in a brainstorming session focused on what Zion should do now and into the future. Here is a brief summary of some of the doable items.

- Welcoming visitors or first-time attendees is great.
- Focus on how our church can be more visible within the community.
- Mt Pleasant Homeschoolers could use our facility as they meet sometime.
- Social media development is essential, including enhancing the web page, using twitter, Instagram, Facebook. This is a must for starting now. Be willing to pay someone to get it going.
- We need to share with the community what we believe, teach, and confess.
- Provide periodic child care for parents who desire a night out.
- Develop an ongoing database of pictures for use with the web page.
- Use our 40 acres for 5K, auto shows, brat-fest, etc. all on the same day to bring the community to our location.
- Our mission needs to drive the budget—not the opposite. Recruit more leaders.
- Expand our Early Childhood Center (ECC) to consider adding another facility.
- Clean up our directory and recall the inactives.