

The Zion Herald

Proclaiming Good News

December 2016

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Sunday Evening, November 27: Advent 1

Dinner at 5:30 p.m. hosted by the Chancel
Lessons & Carols Service at 6:15 p.m.

Sunday Evening, December 4: Advent 2

Dinner at 5:30 p.m. hosted by the Council
Preparing for Christ/Preparing for a New Pastor at 6:15 p.m.

Sunday Evening, December 11: Advent 3

Dinner at 5:30 p.m. hosted by the Youth of Zion
Our Celebration of Chrismons at 6:15 p.m.

Sunday Evening, December 18: Advent 4

Dinner at 5:30 p.m. hosted by the Men of Zion
Carols from around the World at 6:15 p.m.

On Saturday Evening, Christmas Eve:

Family Friendly Service at 6:30 p.m.
Zion's Choral Concert and Carol Sing to begin at 8:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion, 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 25: Christmas Day

Traditional Service at 9:30 a.m.



.... to grow in love and serve by grace

My Very Best to You Dear Friends in Christ,

In the beginning was the WORD

. . . and the WORD became flesh and dwelt among us

To make this happen, God did some mighty acts

He selected a young and willing virgin named Mary to bear His Son.

He dispatched Angel Gabriel from Heaven with the power to conceive a baby in Mary's womb.

He again dispatched Angel Gabriel from Heaven to stop Mary's engaged-to-be married husband Joseph from divorcing her. ·

He timed it all so Mary would deliver her baby in Bethlehem according to prediction by directing Caesar to call for a census in which everyone had to register in his town of birth. ·

He sent legions of angels to announce His Son's birth. ·

He placed a star in the sky to guide the Wise Men's way to the newborn baby. ·

He warned the Wise Men not to tell King Herod where Jesus was, thus saving Jesus from being slain by this insane and jealous mad man. ·

He warned Joseph in a dream that he had to flee to Egypt to escape Herod's plan to slaughter all the new born boys in the area.

Only an all-powerful and all-knowing God could carry out such a precise, predicted, complicated, and delicate plan as this. At Christmas, we celebrate and give God thanks for sending His only Son.

These are special times... it's **God's time** and **God's special people** take, or make, the **time** to gather and faithfully worship him each Lord's Day. It may **take time** from family gatherings, (invite and bring them with you), or **take time** from sleep, and still for others it will take time from events, sports, and other activities that **take time**.

These are terrific times to invite others to thank God as we remember that he came to earth as our Savior, suffered, died, and rose from the grave in victory over sin, Satan, and death!

This is an opportune time to seek and ask others to come with you to worship, celebrate. and give thanks for God's unconditional, awesome, incomprehensive, and amazing love in Christ our Lord.

I invite you to **take time** to begin a practice of discipleship by joining us Sunday mornings at Zion Lutheran Church at 8:00 and 10:30 for worship and at 9:15 for Sunday School. Especially join us on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 6:30 and/or 8:30 for worship, or on Christmas day at 9:30 a.m.

I look forward to seeing you at our exciting worship services with a smile on your face, a Bible in your hand, and a friend by your side whom you brought with you!

God bless and love you abundantly,

Pastor Hal

Sharing Our Faith
is True Friendship
Our Christmas Celebration
“STILL REAL, STILL RELEVANT”

A poll of a cross-section of people about how they came to faith and participation in the church indicated the approximately 90% will say, “I was invited by a relative, friend, or neighbor.” Friends do invite friends to Jesus!

Today we live in the midst of a large number of people who are yearning for spirituality. The mission field is no longer overseas. It is in our neighborhoods and schools, our workplaces and homes. The hurts and hopes of a stress-filled, fast-paced life contribute to a hunger for answers and meaning.

As members of Zion we can be a community of hope and healing in a hurting and need-filled world. You are invited to invite and bring a friend to worship with you at Zion this Christmas.

Many people shy away from faith sharing because they fear standing on their own. Our friendship is an effort in which we simply invite and bring others, if needed, to worship with us. The Holy Spirit will work a powerful witness through Zion’s members inviting and bringing others to worship, to hear the message, the music, and experience the community of God’s people.

His fiancée was pregnant by someone else.

Imagine finding out your fiancée is pregnant by someone else.
Imagine the difficult decisions and the heartache.

Now imagine you are Joseph, engaged to Mary who was soon to be the mother of Jesus. The Christmas story is about people in situations much like those many of us face today. Zion Lutheran church is a place where you can come and invite a friend to find love, hope, acceptance and help for situations you face everyday.

Visit with us this Christmas season. Hear the Christmas story. Jesus came to bring you joy, peace, and the power to live with courage whatever you may be facing.

VISIT WITH US THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON.

HEAR THE CHRISTMAS STORY.

COME WORSHIP WITH US

CHRISTMAS EVE

AT 6:30 OR 8:30 P.M.

OR

CHRISTMAS DAY AT 9:30 A.M

President's Message Advent 2016

I love Advent! It is one of my favorite Liturgical Seasons. I hearken back to my youth group days collecting pine boughs and decorating my little New England church. I think about my time as an acolyte and crucifer. Certain Christmas carols still raise the hair on the back of my neck and I feel Christ coming into the world yet again.

Advent is the time to prepare for Christ coming back into the world. It is also our time to start to think about the process moving forward to call a new pastor. We have started that process:

- We, as the lay congregation have started to take greater responsibility for our community.
 - ◊ Yes we forgot to get German Dinner Tickets out until the last minute, but we still raised more than \$2,000. So we learn something and move on.
 - ◊ We are updating the computers in the office. Both Vicki and the Pastor will have new desktop units to make their jobs easier.
 - ◊ Tenants are in the parsonage, they love the house and it has never looked better. Thanks to Chris Thomas and Brian Walters.
 - ◊ We have pared the church membership rolls by about 100 folks. These were all folks who have either moved or have not been active for at least seven years and do not have family who are active. This is about being practical about the size of our congregation.
- Home-bound Eucharist is another way that Lay folks are stepping up to welcome Christ back into the world. There will be another workshop on Saturday, December 10th, to train folks to deliver Communion to shut-ins. I hope you will join us.
- Many of the hymns we are singing and some of the Prayers are coming from the new Red Hymnal. Sometime in the future we may decide it is time to catch up with the rest of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and switch hymnals.

It is also time to look toward our Next Steps. In order to effectively reach out and serve others we have to know ourselves. The "Call" process involves a lot of self-study. Where is our congregation now? Where are we strong? What can we do better? This is the first task of the Call Committee; to build a congregational profile. We need to define what kind of pastor we are looking for. Are we looking for a great orator? Do we want someone who is great with kids? Do we want someone who can raise money? Do we want someone who has counseling experience? Until we define our needs we cannot find someone to fill them.

Advent is the perfect time to talk about preparation. **Sunday, December 4th**, the Advent Evening Service will focus on a "discussion" between Pastor Hal and myself as we outline the call process. Listen as we begin to sort through some of these issues.

While visiting my Dad last month, I attended the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in South Carolina. The Bishop's Sermon was titled, *"How do we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"*. His message focused on how to grow their community in times that feel strange and different. It was very powerful. It made me think about our "feeling our way through the wilderness" as we figure out what our community is going be and what it will need. So my Dad, Rev. Alastair Votaw, will be a Guest Pastor on Sunday, January 15th. Also, I am hoping to have an evening program (depending on his travel arrangements) to allow for a group discussion and fellowship. I cashed in both birthday and Christmas presents for this so I want to work him hard. (lol) Stay tuned for more details on this.

Continued on Page 11

Caring Ministry

Statement of Purpose: To provide a nurturing, healing and caring environment in which members can live and share God's love.

Responsibilities: The Caring Ministry Team shall:

- A. Work closely with the Pastor in extending pastoral care to individuals in and outside the congregation.
- B. Encourage the congregation to help the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and the bereaved.
 - 1. Special emphasis shall be given to visiting those members who are shut-in, hospitalized, confined to nursing homes and lonely.
- C. Establish programs and activities that demonstrate our striving to live by faith active in love to those in need of special care.
- D. Demonstrate member care by monitoring worship attendance to determine if absence of several weeks is indicating a special need or hurt and report any special circumstances to the pastor.
- E. Encourage an active prayer life among the members of the congregation.

Supporting Ministries:

Visitations
 Transportation
 Health Ministry
 Prayer Chain
 Funeral Reception Meals
 Blood Program
 Comfort Givers
 Fellowship

Peace,
 Ron Tvorik

Parish Life Ministry

Be sure to join our Sunday evening Advent dinners and services. They are filled with delicious

food, fellowship and beautiful heartwarming services. You are encouraged to invite friends, family and neighbors to participate in Zion's holiday festivities. I look forward to seeing you there and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

God Bless,
 Heather

Resource Ministry

Our Treasurer's Report for the month of October, 2016 brought more good news concerning our efforts to finish the year with a budget surplus for the 15th consecutive time. Extremely generous giving in the month of October, 2016 enabled us to eliminate the year-to-date deficit and enter the month of November, 2016 with a surplus for the year-to-date. The traditionally high rate of giving we experience in the months of November and December, coupled with the fact that we now have tenants for the Parsonage, make us extremely confident that we will meet our goal of a budget surplus at the end of the year. We are grateful for the generous support of the Congregation.

Jim Fidler
 Resource Elder

ZION'S FINANCIAL FACTS IN OCTOBER 2016

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| October Income | \$ 17,225.06 |
| Income through October | \$154,587.94 |
| October Expenses | <u>\$ 12,486.98</u> |
| Expenses through October | \$154,152.47 |

October Surplus **\$ 4,738.08**
2016 YTD Surplus **(\$ 435.47)**

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Food Pantry Fund | \$ 9,410.79 |
| Zion's Youth Fund | \$ 8,165.81 |

We thank you for your generous support!

The Chancel Guild

The Chancel Guild members met to clean the Sanctuary and be updated on upcoming worship service events.

What is a Chancel Guild and what do they do?

Chancel Guild members are dedicated volunteers who assist behind the scenes to make worship services run smoothly. Preparations to assist the Pastor, lay ministers, acolytes, deacons, ushers, and the congregation are a group effort.

The Pastor informs ahead of time instructions for communion, baptisms, weddings, or any festival Sunday events.

Lay ministers are assisted by having sacraments prepared and placed on the credence table. They then reset the elements on The Lord's Table for distribution to the congregation.

Acolytes are served by having candle lighters properly cored, offering collection plates available, their robes and stoles spotless.

Ushers, deacons, and the congregation are inclusive of help in some manner.

Chancel Guild follows a seasonal church year calendar. We are now starting the season of Advent. We have assigned work groups, duties, and special times to serve. At the present, we have three work groups, which serve every four months. Their schedule will be on Saturday, Sunday morning early, between services, and clean-up after the late service.

Those who have committed their time and ability to serve their Lord in this worthwhile manner are Shirley Cary, Juanita Cignetti, Corlene Coulter, Kay Davis, Carolyn Elsass, Jane Fairman, Joyce Gibeaut, Helen Heller, Susan Heyard, Mabel Kolarik, Darlene Milavickas, Evelyn Moore, Mary Jo Robbins, Carol Rossbach, Jayne Schrader, Edna Smith, Linda Smith, and

Betty Tracy. This year we are welcoming four new members Heather Hoffman, Connie Riffle, Beth Shaheen, and Janet Slease.

An Open Invitation to My Zion Friends

On December 15th at 1:00 p.m., I will be performing the three Gershwin Preludes at the McDowell Music Club meeting at the Cable Recital Hall in The Cultural Center in Canton. Also, a student and I will play an exciting duo. Other performers are Bohdan Subchak, faculty member at Mount Union, violinist and Ken Kramer, retired faculty, bass-baritone from Kent State Stark. A tea will follow. You are all welcome.

Carole Singer

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Class has just completed a study of the first five books of the Old Testament or the Books of the Law. In these books we examined the various laws that God gave to the people of Israel as they finally entered the promised land of Canaan. Paramount among these many laws are the Ten Commandments; a theme that will run through many of the 39 books of the Old Testament. The class will now begin a study of the history of Israel and its twelve tribes. Our concentration now will be on the pre-exile and post-exile history of Israel.

News from Zion's Youth

Upcoming Events – Mark your calendars!

Saturday, December 10th: Dress Rehearsal for Children's Christmas Program – 10:00 am
Saturday, December 10th: Pizza Party and Giving Tree Gift wrapping – 11:30 am
Sunday, December 11th: The Children's Christmas Program at the 10:30 service
Sunday, December 11th: The Youth of Zion will host the Advent dinner at 5:30 pm
Sunday, December 25th: No Sunday School Classes for the youth
Sunday, January 1st: No Sunday School Classes for the youth

Sunday School Pre-K thru High School

This December we will combine our Sunday School lessons with practice for this year's Christmas program. We will involve all of our youth, including those in Catechism and High School, with many different roles. This year's program, *A Capital C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S*, is an alphabetic journey where each letter in the word "Christmas" is designated to represent a key word in the Christmas story. We will also enjoy scripture readings along with some familiar Christmas hymns during the program.

The Program will be performed at the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 11th. We will have dress rehearsal, our annual Christmas Pizza Party and wrapping of the Giving Tree gifts on Saturday, December 10th. Rehearsal will start at 10:00 am and pizza & gift wrapping at 11:30 am.

There will be no Sunday School on Sunday, December 25th or Sunday, January 1st for all of our youth. We will resume our normal Sunday School schedule at 9:15 am on Sunday, January 8th.



Words of Thanks

Thank you to all of our youth and Sunday School leaders for the great job they did decorating this year's Thanksgiving bags and making special Thanksgiving cards for the Siffrin House in our community and our Food Pantry families. The youth from ages 3 to 18, along with help from our Sunday School staff, worked really hard to beautifully decorate 90 grocery bags this year. We would also like to thank all of the Sunday School families that donated boxed mashed potatoes and boxed stuffing to help the Pantry.

The youth and Sunday School staff would especially like to thank the leaders and volunteers of Zion's Food Pantry and Clothing Closet for all of their time and hard work in making such a big difference in the many lives of those in need. You are all greatly appreciated!

Acme Receipts Reminder

Just a quick reminder that we are collecting Acme receipts to help Zion's Youth. This year Acme's Community Cash Back Program concludes at the end of December this year. A collection jar is located in the Narthex. **Please bring in your Acme receipts dated between August 11th and December 31st.** Thanks for your support!!!

Christmas is a Season of Giving

The Youth will again sponsor the Giving Tree this Christmas season for several families in our community who are in need. The Giving Tree (located in the Narthex) has tags with gift suggestions for these families. We are also hoping to help **all** of our pantry families by giving them Christmas dinner so we have placed tags on the tree for a \$15 Acme gift cards to help each family in addition to the gift tags. Please take one (or more if you are able) tags, purchase the item and bring the gift, **unwrapped** with the tag attached, to church by the date listed at the bottom of the tag (Friday, December 9th). The youth will be getting together on Saturday, December 10th after dress rehearsal to have pizza and then wrap the giving tree gifts so they can be delivered to the families before Christmas day. Please help our youth to help these families have a Merry Christmas and feel God's amazing love through this great service project.

Also for our pantry families, the youth and their families are being asked to donate some items that are greatly needed to help these families as they are home over the holiday season together. These items are cereal, peanut butter, canned fruit and spaghetti sauce. Any donated items can be placed in the red wagon in the Narthex or given to your child's Sunday School teacher.

Thank you for all of your support! The Zion family is a truly wonderful family full of loving and giving people. This especially rings true during the Holiday Season, and we are so grateful for all that everyone does!

Advent Youth News

Advent has arrived along with our wonderful Advent dinners and services. On Sunday, December 11th the youth will host the Advent dinner. We are planning a delicious dinner finished off with lots of great desserts! We will be contacting the youth and their families about donating items for dinner, helping to set up, serve and tear down for that dinner. We will need all of the youth at church by 4:15 pm to get ready for dinner which starts at 5:30 pm. This is always a great dinner and we appreciate everyone's help to make it happen!

The youth will also be helping with the Advent Service on Sunday, December 11th which starts at 6:15 pm following dinner. We will be doing our Chrismon Service and will need volunteers to help with the service. We will need readers and children to carry and hang the ornaments.

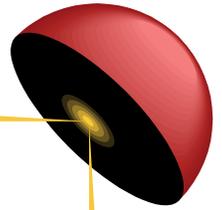


The Zion Sunday School Staff would like to wish all of our families a very Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Happy New Year!



Youth Spotlight

Question of the Month



What is your favorite thing about Christmas day?

LJ Brown - Opening presents

Mason Howes – Getting new toys

Ben Keith – Getting new toys

Drew Keith - Opening big presents

Savannah Schrader - Getting to see what Christina Marie and Mittens are doing each day (similar to Elf on a Shelf)

Amelia Milek - Celebrating Jesus' birthday

Weston Milek – Getting a break from school

Christopher Thompson - Visiting family

Justin Dague – Waking up in the morning

Jeremy Fox – Being at Pop Pop's house with our family

Cassie Frank – Spending time with family

Chrissy Nicholson – Waking up in the morning and then getting my brother, LJ up

Emma Parkomaki – Having the whole family together

Jacob Parkomaki – Opening presents

Marcus Rhodes – My sister coming in from Boston

Casey Walters – Getting together with my family

Eric Dague – Spending the day with family and friends

Nathan Fox – Our French Toast breakfast and then being with my family at Pop Pop's

Carley Frank – Seeing family

Summer Heller – Eating pancakes and bacon Christmas morning

Kathryn Milek – Getting an extra-long time to stay in p.j.s and eat breakfast

Mallory Rhodes – Watching my older brother suspiciously searching for his present that is only a series of boxes leading to a gift card

LUTHERAN SERVICES IN AMERICA TOPS LIST OF NONPROFITS AGAIN

CHICAGO (ELCA) -- With more than \$7.6 billion of income the Lutheran Services in America (LSA) topped The NonProfit Times' list of the United States' 100 largest nonprofit organizations. The publication released the "NPT 100" Nov.1, with the National Council of YMCAs listed second and the American Red Cross third.

Based in Baltimore, LSA is an alliance of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and their 280 social ministry organizations. The independent health and human service organizations serve more than three million people in 3,000 communities across the United States and the Caribbean each year.

Jill Schumann, LSA's president and CEO, said in a recent speech to Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio, Columbus, Ohio, the size of LSA is due in part to a multiplication of care that spans more than a century. "Each Lutheran social ministry organization can tell a series of stories of faithful people, who, refreshed by the wellspring of Christ's love, directed that care to others," she said.

"Whether the need was for a place to care for aging people in a rural community or for services for those marginalized by city life, Lutherans simply responded with little fanfare," said Schumann.

Schumann cited statistics for Lutheran health and human services organizations: about 105,000 people were in residential care; 2,768 children were placed in adoptions; 127,672 children were cared for in foster care; 780,708 people received social services; and the incomes of 64 percent of clients receiving social services were below the federal poverty level.

The LSA is one of the best kept secrets in our land. It is also true that one in 50 people in this country have been served by a ministry of LSA.

The "incredible work" of Lutheran social ministry organizations "is reflected in the number of ELCA congregations involved in their service programs. This church is grateful to God for their ministry of witness and service."

Affirmation of Baptism includes a vow to continue in the covenant with God to "serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth." How wonderful it is to see this example of service and striving for justice through the work of Lutheran Services in America.

The NonProfit Times recorded LSA's total income at \$7,654,955,732. The YMCAs had \$4,123,080,000, and the American Red Cross had \$2,711,606,718.

The top 10 of the NPT 100 included Catholic Charities USA, United Jewish Communities, Goodwill Industries International, Salvation Army, Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and American Cancer Society.

The NonProfit Times reported the sources of LSA's income as \$2.8 million from program services, almost \$2.8 billion from government, about \$1.75 billion from public support, more than \$218 million from "other" and \$90 million from investments. It listed \$25 million as "in kind" contributions.

LSA expenses totaled almost \$7.57 billion, according to The NonProfit Times. It said LSA spent more than \$7.03 billion on programs, about \$510 million on administration and about \$22.5 million on fund-raising.

Something to think about

Imagine this happening to you:

One Sunday morning during service, a 2,000-member congregation was surprised to see two men enter, both covered from head to toe in black and carrying sub-machine guns. One of the men proclaimed, "Anyone willing to take a bullet for Christ remain where you are."

Immediately, the choir fled, the deacons fled, and most of the congregation fled. Out of the 2,000 there only remained around 20. The man who had spoken took off his hood, looked at the preacher and said "Okay Pastor, I got rid of all the hypocrites. Now you may begin your service. Have a nice day!"

And the two men turned and walked out.

"FUNNY", ISN'T IT?

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God ... and then wonder why the world's going to hell.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.

Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says. Funny or is it scary?

Funny how someone can say, "I believe in God" but still follow Satan (who, by the way, also "believes" in God). Funny, isn't it?

Funny how someone can be so fired up for Christ on Sunday, but be an invisible Christian the rest of the week.

Funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me.

Are you thinking? or Are you laughing? or Are you crying?

Received the above in my e-mail: Pastor Hal

Continued From President's Message, Page 4:

Finally we are looking to have several "Cottage Meetings" to have more intimate discussions. The purpose is to hear everybody's voice on a range of topics to give the Call Committee the information they need to call a new pastor. We talked about these in the fall but did not do a good job of explaining why they are important. We will be looking for a few folks to host simple get togethers. Pastor and Council will conduct the discussions. We will have a couple at the church. We want enough venues so that everyone is comfortable and we get some real feedback.

As we move through Advent and Christmas, preparing for Christ's coming into our world and into our lives, now is the time the real work begins as we prepare our community to make the next big decisions.

Thank you for all of your support. Happy Advent! Merry Christmas!

Yours in Christ
Mark Votaw

Zion Lutheran Church
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An ELCA Congregation

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JOIN US: SUNDAY EVENING ADVENT DINNERS & DEVOTIONS
THERE WILL BE TWO CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES THIS YEAR
And one on Christmas Day at 9:30 a.m.

Worship Services

Sunday Morning: 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship
Sunday Morning: 10:30 a.m. Contemporary Service

Sunday School Classes

(Adult Discussion) 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.
(Classes: All Ages) 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Interim Pastor: The Rev. Hal Robarge 330-499-3913
Church Office Secretary: Vicki Givler 330-499-3909
Church Office Secretary E-Mail: vicki.givler@yahoo.com
Praise Team Leader: Suzanne Walters 330-497-8996
Christian Ed. Director: Debbie Fox 330-966-2433
Chancel Flowers: Jayne Schrader 330-904-8300
Church Office Fax Number 330-499-0801
Prayer Chain: Kay Davis 330-494-6267
Prayer Chain: Email stitchandsewk810@sbeglobal.net

www.ZionEvangelicalLutheranChurch.org

