

ZION NEWS

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

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DECEMBER 2022

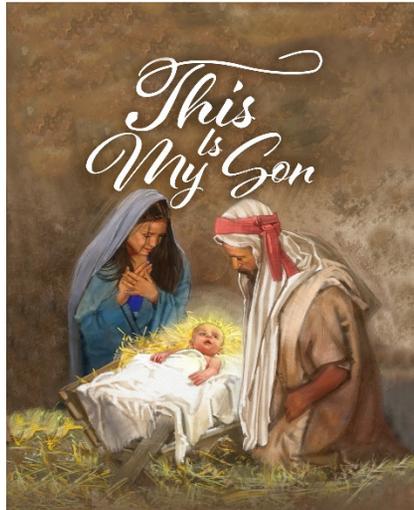


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December 2022

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;” Isaiah 9:6a

This passage is read every Christmas in Children’s Christmas Eve programs or during Advent worship services. It is the title of the Lutheran Hour Ministry’s Advent devotions for this year. It also ties in with our Advent series *This is My Son*. It is a treasure. It is the promise of God given to His people that one will be born who will return to reign on the throne of David forever. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace are the titles which will be used for Him. These passages are familiar and beloved by us because we now live in the fulfillment of them. Christ was born of Mary in Bethlehem. Our King and Savior has come.

While studying for this passage, I was drawn to the beginning verses of Isaiah. Isaiah 9:2 reads, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.” This verse tells us who Jesus came to save and rule; “The people who walked in darkness... those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness.” This word translated “deep darkness,” poetically, is translated “death-shadow.” For instance, it is the same word used in Psalm 23:4 translated “shadow of death.” The Bible tells us we are a people “dead in our trespasses.” (Col. 2:13, Eph. 2:1) Those people dwelling in darkness and under death’s shadow are you and me. Because the Light of Christ has come we can rejoice! The Light of Christ shines through the darkness of today upon us.

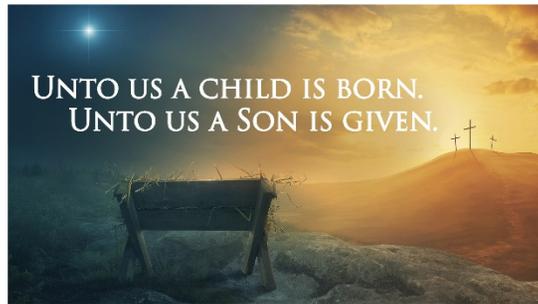
Light is amazing. Go into a dark room, light a candle and be amazed at how bright it becomes. No matter how dark it is the darkness just cannot overcome even the small light of that little candle. That is part of the reason we decorate our homes and yards during Advent. We seek to break the darkness of the bleak mid-Winter with our twinkling tree lights. They remind us of the Light of World, the Son of God, born that first Christmas.

We have faced many changes this past year. Some have been good, some brought disappointment. You may have wondered why so much “bad” has happened. At times it may have felt darkness was winning and the light going out. I get that. I may have thought that during the past year and a half, too. But remember, darkness can’t overcome the Light. Through the darkness of today we have one constant Who does not change or disappoint. That is Christ. “For to us a Child is born, to us a Son given.” When the world looked darkest, Jesus Christ was incarnate as a small babe in a manger. Upon His love and light we build our future! I don’t know exactly what tomorrow will bring. But I do know we can look forward to the New Year with hope and confidence as we continue to move forward, triumphantly proclaiming Christ. That is what we are called to do. We can be sure He will continue to shine brightly to guide our way. May we all grow in Spirit and Truth to reflect His light and love to our community and the world.

May our Lord continue to bless you!

From my family, and Pastor LaMie and his, Merry Christmas!

Pastor Stein



THANK
YOU

CHRISTMAS DECORATING: COLOR IT “DONE!”

A small group of members gave of their time to decorate our church (inside & out!) for Christmas during the last weekend of November. **Thank you** to everyone who gave of their time to prepare the Lord’s house for Advent and Christmas worship services. A hearty “thank you” also goes to those who prepared a nice lunch for the workers! *(The new Christmas tree was purchased by the Dorcas Society in memory of Vivian Bramstaedt and the new Star Tree Topper was given in memory of Betty Jean Ohlendorf by her family.)*



MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICES

2pm @ Zion & 6:30pm @ St. John
Wednesdays: Nov. 30th, December 7th, 14th, & 21st
(NO Monday evening services during Advent)

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

SATURDAY, DEC. 10TH AT 6PM

This year we will again hold a special "Service of Remembrance". Its purpose is to help those people who have lost loved ones to get through this festive time of year – but now without those who are missing from their lives.



Please remember that this is for both our own members AND anyone within our area. Please spread the word to your friends and family. Perhaps through this effort, we can help many people find more joy at this time of year.

Special WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- Wednesdays, **Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th, 14th, 21st**, Midweek Advent Worship (**2pm @ Zion & 6:30pm @ St. John**)
- Saturday, **Dec. 10th** Special Service of Remembrance (**6pm @ Zion**)
- Sunday, **Dec. 18th** 8am @ St. John & 10:30am Worship w/Children's Program
- Saturday, **Dec. 24th** Christmas Eve (**2pm @ Zion, 6pm Children's Service @ St. John, 8pm @ Zion**)
- Sunday, **Dec. 25th** Christmas Day (**8am @ St. John & 9:30am @ Zion**) (NO Christian Ed. Hour & NO Monday evening service)



SURVEY AND GUIDING STATEMENT MEETING

The Vision/Mission Committee has made available a survey to help us understand and define our core identity as a congregation. Surveys were emailed or are available on the table in the narthex. Please **prayerfully**

complete the survey then return it to the office by Wed., 11/30.

Then on **Saturday, Dec. 3rd from 9-Noon**, we will hold a meeting to discuss the survey questions and get insights into who we are **in Christ**. We will use the information gathered from the surveys and the meeting to help form our guiding statement.

We value your input so please prayerfully complete the survey and return it by 11/30, then plan to attend the Dec. 3rd meeting to share your insights.

VOTERS MEETING

Sunday, December 4th after church.



Zion's current constitution specifies that brand new voters may not vote at the first meeting they attend. You must come to a meeting, express your desire to become a voter, and at the end of the meeting you will be accepted as a voter and sign your name to the existing constitution. You are then eligible to vote at the next voters' meeting. **What this means is that if you are not already a voting member and want to vote yay or nay at the Special Voters' Meeting to be held on or before January 8th, you must attend the December 4th voters' meeting and join the voters' assembly. It will be the last chance to do so before the critical Special Voters' Meeting that will take place on or before January 8th.** Copies of the "council-approved" 2023 Zion Budget to be sent for voter approval are on the table in the narthex for your review before the December 4th meeting.



Once again Zion Stewardship will be offering **GIFT CARDS** for purchase **Monday, November 14th through Sunday, December 4th**. Order forms are available in the narthex.

Great idea for the upcoming holidays! Please make checks out to "Zion Lutheran Church". (*Idea: Buy Amazon gift cards and give them along with our Zion smile.amazon.com charity link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-2480851> and it's a win/win for Zion!*)

Revenue & Expense Report		
Recap Month – October 2022	This Year	Last Year
Beginning Balance	\$1,737.63	\$30,903.60
+Receipts	31,318.54	97,172.42
-Expenses: Payroll, Taxes	7,801.28	36,775.95
Bills Paid	4,442.00	77,736.68
Ending General Fund Balance	\$20,812.89	\$13,563.39
Loans, Payables Due	0.00	0.00
Current Status of General Fund	\$20,812.89	\$13,563.39



ANGEL TREE wrapped gifts with the angel attached on the outside need to be brought to church no later than **Sunday, December 18th**. Thank you!

ALICIA'S HOUSE TOY DRIVE

Collecting NEW coats, hats, gloves, mittens, and (unwrapped) toys for children in need! Please bring your donations to Zion by **Sunday, December 4th**. Your items will be donated to Alicia's House Food Pantry for their "Letters to Santa" drive. Letters have been submitted through local schools and they currently have over 400 children. To provide a gift for a child and not have to shop, simply visit <https://bit.ly/3G15uGx> to donate or look up *Alicia's House Food Pantry* on FaceBook for info.



"You can make Christmas bright for foster children. Your donation will put gifts under the tree for the children in our care. Foster parents will receive money specifically to buy Christmas gifts for each child – assuring they receive what they want and need. This is a real blessing to the families we serve!"

Donate at [LCFS.org/ChristmasDrive](https://www.lcfs.org/ChristmasDrive) Questions? Contact [Mandy Widtfeldt@lcfs.org](mailto:Mandy.Widtfeldt@lcfs.org) or 630-470-3853. Mail donations to: Attn: LCFS Christmas Drive, 1 Oakbrook Terrace, #501, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181





**ZION DORCAS SOCIETY ANNUAL COOKIE WALK
SAT., DECEMBER 10TH – 8:30AM TO 11:00AM**

The Dorcas Society's Annual Christmas Cookie Walk is a great way to stock up for the Christmas Season. The entire congregation bakes their favorite homemade Christmas cookies which will be on sale for a few hours on Saturday morning. An email has been sent asking for donations of one batch of homemade cookies. (Please label anything made w/peanuts or peanut butter.) Donations of cookies from members of St. Paul's or St. John's would be greatly appreciated! Donations can be brought to the kitchen door on Friday, December 9th from 8am - 3pm. *Thanks for your help!*

ZION MIXED CHOIR (grade 7 through adult). Join us on **Thursday evenings at 7:00pm**. We will be singing for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany services.



The **HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR** had its first practice on Saturday, November 26th. The choir plans to play bells and chimes on Christmas Eve at Zion Lutheran Church. If you were unavailable to attend our first practice, mark your calendars. We will continue to **practice** on the following **Sundays, December 4th, 11th, and 18th, @ Zion at 11:45am**. Our hopes are to be able to continue practicing and be able to play again on Easter Sunday, if not sooner. Please feel free to join us. If you have questions, contact Bridget Garling at Bridgetarogers@gmail.com or James Radtke at 708-295-1387 or jjradtke2@gmail.com.

Please support Zion Lutheran Church when you shop online with Amazon Smile.
smile.amazon.com



Zion's "Smile" link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/36-2480851>

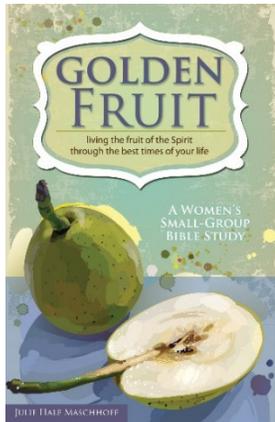


**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15TH
DORCAS SOCIETY AND SENIOR WORSHIP
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Dorcas Ladies and Senior Worshipers – you are invited to attend the Communion **Worship Service at 11 am** followed by the **Christmas Dinner at 12 noon** in the Parish Hall. Plan on attending! You will be amazed at the wonderful food they prepare for this special occasion. Following the dinner, you are invited to stay for games with prizes. Dorcas members, you are asked to bring a dish to share. Hostesses: Annie Janota, Ginny Peterson, & the Senior Worship Committee.

Visitors & Guests are always welcome to attend.

St. Paul's Ladies Aid, with an assist from Zion's Dorcas Society would like to send every member of the **military on our weekly prayer list**, a snack box and card. If you have a loved one on the military prayer list, please give their military address to Tammy Braun tbraun3.16@gmail.com **Deadline is Dec. 2nd.**



LADIES BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday morning Ladies Bible Study will not be meeting for the month of December. We will resume on Wednesday, January 4, 2023, 9:30am to 11am in the conference room at Zion.

The book we will be exploring is: *Golden Fruit: Living the Fruit of the Spirit through the Best Times of Your Life* by Julie Maschhoff. Each session focuses on one Fruit of the Spirit and considers how the lives and stories of nine biblical women convey that characteristic.

If you are interested in joining us or have questions about the group, please contact

Nancy Hamilton @ nancylou252@aol.com.

Please let me know by Dec. 18th, if you're interested as I will need to order books. The cost of the books will be around \$12.00 but don't let the cost keep you from attending! Thanks and hope to see you in January! *Nancy Hamilton*

We are looking to create a
TRI CONGREGATION TECH TEAM.

This team will look into our current livestreaming and possible future livestreaming options. We are in desperate need of video/livestream operators. Many homebound members rely on FaceBook and YouTube livestreaming to watch church on Sunday mornings. This is an important part of our Worship Services! Please contact the church office (zionbeecher@comcast.net or 708-946-2271) if you can help and join this vital team.



Wanted: Your Wishes! Please bring us your ideas for mission work, especially local, that we can do bigger and stronger together in the months ahead. Please put your ideas in the box on the table outside the sanctuary, and they will be gathered into a list for discussion/implementation. *We need to know who feels inspired to help with what, so if you would include your name it will help!*

PLEASE REMEMBER

Our next newsletter will be a combined edition containing the news for January and February. We expect to publish it in mid-to-late January. (The idea of publishing a newsletter toward the end of December is beyond what our limited resources allow us to do and still keep our sanity. ☺)



**CIRCUIT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE
SYNOCDICAL CONVENTION**

The Called and Lay leaders met at St. Paul's, Chicago Heights on 10/22, to elect the circuit's representatives to the Synodical Convention to be held in Milwaukee July 29-August 3, 2023. The officers elected Pastor LaMie, St. John's, Beecher to be the Pastoral Delegate, and Pam Meyer, St. Paul's Chicago Heights as the Lay Delegate. The back up delegates will be Pastor Holyer, Trinity, Lansing, and Will Strenge, Zion, Beecher. Thank you to everyone who will represent our circuit at the convention.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF FALL INGATHERING

Thank you to everyone who donated items for LWR School Kits this fall and for donations of material (yard goods, sheets, pillow cases, drapes, table cloths) for quilts. *475 Quilts, 15 School Kits and 33 Health Kits were delivered to the LWR Fall Ingathering in Valparaiso on Saturday, October 29.* From Valpo, they are headed to the LWR warehouse in Minnesota; then shipped around the world. Many thanks to Arlene Leodler & Roy DeGroot and Janet & David Guritz for transporting all these items to Valpo. Also, thanks to Arlene and Janet for working year round to make so many quilts!

DAKOTA BOYS AND GIRLS RANCH

Honey Sunday we collected a total of \$280 in donations & 21 honey bottle orders. Thank you for your support! *Kay Bunte*



**ART, PAINTING, FELLOWSHIP ~ PAINT A SLICE OF ST. PAUL'S
3PM SUNDAY, DEC. 11TH & 10AM MONDAY, DEC. 12TH**



Please come join us at Zion. We will be painting a picture of St. Paul's on your choice of a slice of salvaged wood from the fire of 9/18/21 or canvas. We will be using a stencil for the shape of the church to aid in the process. The cost is

\$10/each. Any questions, please contact: Kate Lindemann at 708-707-0031. *Sign-up sheets are on the table in the narthex.*

GRIEF SHARE SUPPORT GROUP

A new 13 week session of Grief Share will begin on **Tuesday, January 17th @ 10am.** If you have any questions, please contact Pr. Stein 618-204-0378.





Did you know the use of a Christmas Tree in the Sanctuary began in America from the LCMS?

The custom of Christmas trees in the home is attributed to Martin Luther. The story goes that one Winter evening whilst walking home he was overcome by the beauty of the star light twinkling through the branches of the forest. He brought a tree into the house (which I imagine raised the eyebrow of his wife, Katie) and lit small candles on the branches to try and recreate the beauty of God's Light given at the birth of Jesus; the One who overcame the darkness.

It was an LCMS pastor, Rev. Heinrich Christian Schwan, of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1851, who is credited with making the custom of Christmas trees in the sanctuary a welcome tradition here in America. The tree caused quite a stir in the community though. A story on lakewoodobserver.com tells us, "Within a day or two, Schwan's Christmas tree was the talk of the town, and the talk was not good. A prominent local newspaper called it "a nonsensical, asinine, moronic absurdity, besides being silly." It editorialized against "these Lutherans . . . worshipping a tree . . . groveling before a shrub." Worse, it recommended that the good Christian citizens of Cleveland ostracize, shun and refuse to do business with anyone

“who tolerates such heathenish, idolatrous practices in his church.” Over the next year Rev. Schwan was able to educate the people of the true origins and meaning of the Christmas tree. They weren’t “groveling before a shrub,” but rather using the Christmas tree to teach about Jesus. The evergreen tree reminds us of life flourishing in the midst of death like Jesus rose from death. The triangle shape reminds us of the Trinity. But mostly, the decorated tree reminds us of the Light of the world, Jesus, who came to save lost humanity.

So, America has an LCMS pastor who helped spread this wonderful tradition across the land. Rev. Schwan went on to become the third president of the LCMS.

There is a half hour clip from a 1950’s program that helps explain Rev. Schwan’s story. If you’re interested it can be watched at: <https://archive.org/details/OurFirstChristmasTree>



REMINDER: Please remember to fill out an attendance card or sign the attendance sheet if you come to any worship services. We keep this information for church statistics that get sent to the LCMS/Northern Illinois District. *(Please mark if you are from St. John or St. Paul and the cards will get to your church.)* Thank you.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

ALTAR FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS



Poinsettias will be available again this Christmas season for \$9.00 each through the Christian Growth Committee. The poinsettias will decorate the Altar through Christmas



Day. You may take your plant home following the Christmas Day service. Due to limited space on the altar, only 50 poinsettias will be ordered. Reserve your flowers early to guarantee having a plant to take home.

Thank you for your support!

If you are placing this/these plant(s) in someone's memory or for another occasion, please note below. Please print clearly. This information will be printed in the bulletins on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Plant 1. _____

Plant 2. _____

Plant 3. _____

Plant 4. _____

Plant 5. _____

Number of Plants _____ x \$9.00/plant = Total: \$ _____

Amount enclosed: _____

Your name: _____

**Please Make Checks Payable To:
ZION CHRISTIAN GROWTH COMMITTEE**

If you choose to participate, any amount over the cost of the poinsettias will be given for the support of Seminarian Oliver LaMie.

FROM:



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To:




Fröhliche Weihnachten