

Advent Matters

What follows are the Gospel readings for the Church's season of Advent.

Read Mark 13:24-37 – Sunday, November 27

This portion of Scripture is usually called Mark's Little Apocalypse. It may seem to some that the Advent readings are inappropriate just before Christmas. At its best Advent is two things: a look back, and a look forward.

An apocalypse is a story of a showdown. The battle is on between good and evil, between God and the Devil. Jesus brought salvation the first time. When Jesus comes back, evil will lose for the last time, and, God wins.

So the Church says: May he come soon.

Read Mark 1:1-8 – Sunday, December 4

These first few verses of Mark's Gospel feature John the Baptist, whose whole ministry was to "Prepare the way of the Lord." It is important to know that the religious people of the time were not ready for Christ to be born in Bethlehem. It is for us to be ready for Christ to come again.

So the Church says: He is coming, soon.

Read John 1:6-8, 19-28 – Sunday, December 11

These first few verses of John's Gospel echo the first few verses of Genesis. In Genesis God spoke to create. In John God speaks to redeem. Once again John proclaims now to us that Christ is coming. We're supposed to get it. The people of God John spoke to originally were not in fact ready. We are the people of God now, who are being prepared now, who look forward now.

So the Church says: May he come soon.

Read Luke 1:26-38 – Sunday, December 18

Jesus came the first time in a completely mistakable way. Born to poor parents, in an obscure town, in a stable no less. The second time will be more obvious, especially to those who are ready and looking. May he come soon.

So now the Church tries to do what John the Baptist did: Prepare the way of the Lord.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas day one part of Advent is over; one part remains.

Blessed Christmas to you and yours,
Pastor John Golv

Christmas Schedule

Sunday School Program Practice: Saturday, December 3

- 10:00-10:30 – Little Lambs through Grade 1
- 10:30-11:00 – Grades 2-5

Sunday School Programs: Sunday, December 4

- 8:30- Little Lambs – Grade 1
- 19:30 – Grades 2-5

Choir Concert – Sunday, December 18 – 10:30

Christmas Worship Schedule

- **Christmas Eve**, Saturday, December 24
 - 4:00 – Candlelight Service
 - 6:00 – Silver Creek Service
 - 10:00 – Candlelight Service with Communion
- **Christmas Day**, Sunday, December 25
 - 8:30 – Worship Service
 - 10:00 – Silver Creek Service

Sunday School – No Sunday school December 25 or January 1

2011 Offering Reminder

Offering for 2011 must be in the church office by noon on Friday, December 30 or postmarked no later than Saturday, December 31. Any offering turned in or postmarked January 1, 2012 or later will go on 2012.

Annual Reports

Board Chairmen, treasurers, etc. of organizations, please have your annual reports into the office by January 6, typed and ready for printing.

Church Directories

- Pick up submitted directory pictures in the church office.
- Pick up church directories in the church office.
- Church directories are on sale for \$25.00.

Leisure Fellowship

Wednesday, December 7 - 2:00

Program: Christmas Trilogy – John Hulteen

December – Food Shelf Month

December is Zion's Food Shelf Month. Grocery carts are located in the narthex and by the northeast door for collecting food. Donations may be placed in offering plates on Sunday morning or dropped off in the church office

Zion's Crèche

Have you stopped to view the crèche in the Narthex? The crèche has a long history not only in Zion but also in Germany. In 1978 the crèche was given to Zion by Pastor Walter and Babs Pedersen. Pastor Pedersen served Zion from 1943-1961 and again in the late 1970's as a visitation pastor.

The crèche had previously been the property of St. Stephen Church in Chicago, Illinois. St. Stephen merged with Grace Lutheran Church of Chicago to become Grace-St. Stephen Lutheran Church in 1969. When the two churches merged, St. Stephen wanted the Pedersen's to have the crèche since there was no historical tie of the crèche to Grace.

The crèche dates back over a hundred and twenty-five years. It was made in Germany and predates Berta Hummel nativity figurines.

THOUGHTS

Snow, creeping silently down the side of a bluff.

Pushed gently by a small gust of wind.

Some flakes small but significant.

Clinging tightly to an ancient rock.

Each flake like no other,

Yet all from the same cloud.

Then, in a crowd, a thousand faces,

Some large, small, some white, brown, yellow, black.

All forming a part of life.

Each one different, yet each wondrous.

And all from the same garden.

By John Hulteen

Grief Support

As we all know, the holidays can be very stressful and lonely for people; the "rat race" has picked up it's pace and we seem to be chasing our tails and burning the candle at both ends. What is suppose to be a peaceful, serene time, can be packed with statements such as, "I hate holiday time", so much money is being spent, so commercialized, if only, I wish, why???

We at Zion have started a grief support group, we meet once a month in the lounge and it's a time to get together with others that are experiencing the loss of a loved one; it could have happened lately, or years ago. We talk, we listen, we cry, we laugh. You can share or just quietly sit back and listen as people share how something or someone has helped them get through their grief.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve and also no time limit. Also, there is nothing wrong with anger and frustration or just plain "why".

We cordially invite you to come to our next meeting on December 13th at 7:00 in the church lounge. We would also like to invite any that have suffered a loss, you may have some stories to share with those that are recently going through the holidays for the first time; you will be able to share how you got through those "firsts" and what helped you.

We are not professional at grief counseling, but we have been there, we share a common bond. Our loved ones will be with us for as long as we are on our earthly journey, we may not be able to physically see them with our eyes, but we can see them each and every day in our memory and heart. You being with the group may make a difference in someone else's grief process. We love to hear the stories, share those precious memories and give you a hug. We share over the Scandinavian custom; coffee and goodies.

Remember, you are not alone, we deeply care about each and everyone and the door is always open, you don't even have to knock. As they say each communion Sunday, it is Christ that is welcoming you; come, all is ready. Christ is in the midst.

Judy Melby



Zion Lutheran Church
Parish Planning Council Minutes
November 15, 2011

The Parish Planning Council was called to order by President Connie Hamre at 7:00 P.M. In attendance: President Hamre, Pastor John, Pastor Ale, Bonnie Yost, Ginny Armstrong, Lyle Paulson, Sarah Harper, Deb Holtan, Amber Holtan, Deb Howe, Barb Champ from Silver Creek and Karen Thygeson.

Devotions were read by Bonnie Yost. Next month devotions will be given by Marijo Nabben.

Ginny Armstrong moved to accept the secretary's minutes as printed, seconded and carried.

Glenice Johnson reported for the funeral committee. An additional item would be added to the established menu for funerals. The committee recommends catering the main dish with the balance of the duties left to the Monthly Sharing Servants group. A list of caterer's along with the updated menu would be shared with the groups soon. Amber Holtan moved to accept the funeral committee recommendations; seconded and carried.

Treasurer Ginny Armstrong assisted by Winton Forsberg presented and discussed the upcoming budget and the financial statistics. Financial obligations can only be met with the help of all members of Zion. Bonnie Yost moved to accept the treasurer's report as presented, seconded and carried.

Fellowship Board: Bonnie Yost reported a pot luck had been served to welcome new members. They are preparing for the Spirit of Giving. They are planning on an activity between services on February 12th in recognition of Valentines Day.

Stewardship Board: Plans are being made for Fall activities.

Properties Board: Lyle Paulson discussed the vandalism problem in the men's bathrooms. He also noted the Christmas tree will be put up on November 26th.

Evangelism/Lay Ministry Board: Deb Holtan stated new members have been welcomed into Zion. Still working on ideas to make the upstairs brighter and more welcoming as we enter the church.

Christian Education/Youth Board: Amber Holtan reports 35 boxes have been prepared and ready for shipping for Operation Christmas. December 4th will be the Christmas Program for the Sunday School children.

Public Relations Board: Deb Howe reports there will be extra church directories for sale soon for those that did not have pictures taken. The board is in the process of updating the history of Zion.

Worship Board: The committee is in the process of making changes to the traditional second service.

Silver Creek: Barb Champ reports a successful Fall dinner and thanked those that had helped.

Youth Director: Sarah Harper is organizing the +70 Thanksgiving Dinner to be served on November 20th. Flapjacks for Faith will be this coming Sunday. She noted that between services on December 18th, she and Chris would be entertaining with coffee and cake in honor of their recent wedding.

Pastor Ale: Reminded us that Thanksgiving Service will be held at Redeemer Lutheran Church at 7 P.M. Bibles have been presented to the second graders.

Pastor John: Adult Education began. Thursdays at 2:00 P.M. Because of the flu season, we will not have handshaking at church from now through April. In the process of searching for an alternative type of worship for the second service.

Deb Holtan presented several pictures that the Moyer's stated could be used to hang in the church. Ginny Armstrong moved we accept and place the pictures on display on the Narthex wall; seconded and carried. Lyle Paulson stated they would have lighting placed above the pictures.

Deb Holtan moved to accept a baby grand piano; seconded and carried.

A wish list will be prepared for those that have memorial funds they want to give to the church.

Ginny Armstrong moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 P.M. followed by the Lord's Prayer. Next Parish Council Meeting will be December 20, 2011 at 7:00 P.M.

Karen Thygeson, Secretary



President's Message

Connie Hamre

"For unto you a child is born, for unto you a child is given"

For me, Christmas is always a special time of year. I treasure getting together with family and friends, and yes the food. Yes, the food is so interesting. It seems within each culture, there are different specialities. Of course, we had turkey and ham, with all the trimmings. But also the sandbakkels, and rosettes, pies and cakes. As a child, on Christmas eve, we had an early dinner, church, and then open presents. Then on Christmas Day, we had all the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. It made for a festive house full and fun times. Now, with so many blended families, there are new traditions. The salads with all their variety, and the foods that are from other countries that were not available back in the day and are now with modern methods and are in abundance in our local markets. Last year, as we had our family celebration on Christmas eve, and one of the grandchildren wanted to know why we forgot the pizza!

Of course, we know we have the reason for the season. To celebrate each in our own way, the birth of Jesus. Our church is planning, many activities for us to help with that celebration. There will be the Christmas program by the youth. A special singing service, lead by the choir. We just finished with Operation Christmas. The Spirit of Giving will be held the first weekend in December. And one of my favorites, caroling.

Our future is looking brighter, with our Sunday school getting larger and larger. The Youth board is looking at to large class sizes, what a wonderful problem to have. A special thank you to all the parents for entrusting those children to the church. And huge thank you goes to the people who take the time to teach and to work with children. There are so many people that donate their time to the workings of our church, and in this season of thankfulness, I would like to tell you how much I appreciate their help. **THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS!**

As you may know, we have formed a board, and are looking at starting a contemporary service. We have been going to other churches in town, and in other areas. We are getting other ideas, from those churches, and pooling our observations, To make a recommendation to the council, with a proposed new service. We plan to start that, in January, at the second service, on Sunday. Speaking of the council, we had our November council meeting. It is the time when we get the current state of the budget, and the projected budget for the new year (2012). I am sorry to say

that the report was quite bleak. We are "in the red" and are projected, not to be able to pay all the bills for 2011. This in spite of the fact, that we started out this year with a good surplus. The projection for next year, was even more sad. The last year we were "in the black" was when we had only one pastor and one Sunday service. If it is necessary to go there again, our future would be somewhat dimmer.

We have a lot to be thankful for, especially family and good friends. And especially for the gift from God, in sending his son to us as a child on Christmas. However, you celebrate that event, I hope for you a blessed day. HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!

Courage in Christ, Connie Hamre, President

Holiday Train

The Holiday Train will arrive in Thief River Falls on Wednesday, December 14, at approximately 8:00 PM, at the Depot/City Hall, marking another year that the train has taken to the rails for local food banks with its message of hope and community support.

On that day supper will be served at the Heritage Center from 5:00-6:30. Cookies and hot apple cider will be served at the Depot. A free will offering will be taken at both places, plus nonperishable food items will be collected.

**Have a Blessed Christmas and a Healthy
Happy New Year!!**