



Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. To you is born this day near the city of David a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:10-11

Christmas is a time of joy and good will, a time when people everywhere celebrate God's love. In Ethiopia, where I was born and grew up, this is the way we used to celebrate Christmas in our little village. When the day approaches, we would go into the woods and look for a little tree that is bent at the bottom. We would cut it down and take it home. Then, we would polish it and try to shape it into a hockey stick for the game we would play on Christmas day.

On Christmas morning we would get dressed up in our nice costumes and go to church. After church, we came home and ate a nice traditional Christmas meal with our family, not only at home, but we would go from house to house and enjoy a meal with our neighbors. Then in the afternoon, all the people of the village would go out to the field to play or watch a hockey game between the villages. Usually the men played while the ladies and little children watched and cheered for their village or team. Then there would be a celebration and dance. That was how we used to spend Christmas day in Ethiopia when I was a little boy.

This is quite different from the way people celebrate Christmas here. In our little village, we didn't have Christmas trees to decorate, no gifts to exchange and no Christmas lights decorating our houses. Yet Christmas was a happy occasion, a time when the family and community came together to celebrate the day.

It seems that, even though we celebrate Christmas in different ways, we all have one thing in common. We all celebrate God's love and enjoy the blessings of the season. Thanks be to God for His Christmas gift of Jesus Christ our savior.

May this Christmas season bring us closer to Him and to our families.

Have a merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Pastor Ale



- December 6 – Holy Communion – Home communion packets may be picked up at the church
- December 20 – Holy Communion
- December 20 – Christmas Drive Through Nativity with Redeemer and Trinity – 1:00-3:00
- December 24 – Christmas Eve worship – broadcast only – Time TBA





President's Message

Laura Rude

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

2020 has been a year we will not soon forget, even though we may want to forget parts of it! The unbelievable circumstances, tough decisions, sacrifices, tests of our faith, will and patience. Through it all God has never wavered in His love for us. What an amazing reflection! As we enter Christmas, I'm reminded how God sent us hope in the form of little baby Jesus. Hope. That is something we all need. Hope. Without it, we have no purpose, no faith. We all need Hope. We need Jesus. God's gift of Hope to us is the best gift of all. There's a saying that I love, "If God is all you have, you have all you need!" How true! I pray you find hope this Christmas and share that gift with all those around you. With Christmas activities at a slower pace this year, this gives us time to focus on the Reason for the Season. Let us never forget that Hope came down to save us all.

While things may be a little different this Christmas, many things will remain the same. Our church will continue to serve others; our mission to share God's word will not change, and our love for our brothers and sisters will remain strong.

My sincere gratitude to everyone at Zion for your commitment to keeping our church resilient. What a miracle you all are. Thanks be to God!

We will continue to have church in person as long as possible. However, the Christmas Eve service will be broadcast only. There will be no Sunday School program, but we are working on an outdoor event on December 20th in conjunction with Redeemer and Trinity weather permitting. We are asking that you continue to keep Pastor Ale, Linda, Madison and the church leaders in your prayers. My prayers for health, happiness and an unwavering faith in the Hope of Christmas to you all.

Merry Christmas!

Laura Rude
Zion President

Parish Nurse Ministry



Thankfulness is Happiness. We are blessed and thankful for the little things and all things that God has given us. God's love to all!

We have some masks still available, so if needed please leave your name and telephone number in the office for me or Darlene, and we will contact you to meet your needs if possible. Thanks to all who are doing their part to keep safe and keep others safe as we work to keep our schools, churches and businesses open. This is a great public health challenge, but we can meet this challenge by following public health guidelines that will minimize a viral surge like we are seeing with our neighbors most recently.

The Inter-County Community Council is now accepting applications for the 2020-2021 heating season. This helps pay a portion of home heating and electric bills after qualifying. You can contact the ICCC office at 218-796-5144 ext 4 or toll free 1-800-778-4008 or E-mail at eap@intercountycc.org for more information. There is also information with income guidelines on a poster by the north entrances of Zion. Applications are also available on line at www.intercountycc.org. If you need help with this, please contact the Parish Nurse.

Parish Nurse

Sandra Knutson



Worship Together in the Sanctuary

Zion – 8:30 - Silver Creek – 10:00
Wear your favorite mask and follow guidelines.



Worship Online

If you choose to worship from home, take advantage of the alternatives to in-house worship.

- KTRF radio – 1230 AM at 8:30
- Cable TV – Channel 3 – KTRF
- Log into Zion's Facebook page – *Zion Lutheran Church – Thief River Falls* - and watch a livestream through Facebook Live.
- Log in to Zion's webpage – ziontrf.org and listen to the service over the internet.



Zion's Spirit of Giving Cancelled

Due to the increasing numbers of Covid 19, Zion is cancelling its Spirit of Giving outreach this year.

As we navigate these uncertain times, it is Zion's prayer that God grant us His protection, wisdom and patience. May He give us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern and acts of service. May God surround us with His sheltering wings and keep us healthy and safe.

This year when gathering together is not always possible, Zion's wish is that each of us find a way to reach out to our neighbors in need and be persistent in prayer for each other's well-being.

May God grant us His blessings today and always.

Madison Crane

Director of Children, Youth, and Families
Zion and Redeemer Lutheran Churches
rzyouthfam@gmail.com
608-535-9151



Grace and Peace to you, Saints of Zion!

November has come to a close and we are in the season of preparing for the arrival of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This year has taught me that preparing means many different things like having multiple plans, communicating early and often, and working with different perspectives. The term "PIVOT!" has been expressed many times this past month and looking ahead to what we may be doing in the future.

I've found myself reaching into the stash of Hershey's Chocolate Kisses quite often lately, and I think about how many different ways there are to use that sweet treat. From cookies to a holiday decoration staple, the Kisses are useful. The little tag that sticks out from the wrapping says "KISSES." The first four letters remind me to: **Keep It Simply Simple**. What is the reason for the season? No, it's not about the gift-giving/getting, the perfect recipes, or having the picture-perfect holiday card. It's quite simple: Jesus. Jesus is the reason for the season.

Jesus is the point. No matter how many times we pivot, Jesus is the message. As the confirmation students have been serving, reading, and discussing many topics, it's incredible to hear where they see Jesus working in the world. As you may see Hershey Kisses differently, may you remember the sweetest gift of love from God, when Jesus was sent to us on Earth in the lowly manger to show us that it's not about us, but simply about love.

It's been wonderful to reflect on the blessings of this year, such as appreciating when students were able to gather together, trying new things, and learning to appreciate connecting- especially connecting through Christ!

Looking forward in preparation of the season of Christmas -

There will be a community Christmas Drive Through Nativity on Sunday December 20th, 1:00-3:00pm. Redeemer, Trinity, and Zion churches will be hosting scenes of the Christmas story in their parking lots that vehicles may drive through, and listen to the Christmas story recording that will be on Redeemer's YouTube channel (or bring your Bible to find the scripture that correlates with the scenes. Details will be shared on Redeemer's website as they are available.

May you remember the reason for the season, and always, it's about Jesus,

Dates to remember:

December 2 – 6:00-7:00 - Confirmation Classes – Zoom

December 6 – New Sunday school video posted

December 9 – 6:00-7:00 - Confirmation Classes – Zoom

December 13 – New Sunday school posted

December 13 – 9:30 am – 6th and 7th grade devotional – Zoom

December 16 – 6:00 – 7:00- Last Confirmation classes until January 6 – Zoom

December 20 – New Sunday school video posted

December 20 – 1:00-3:00 – Drive Through Christmas Nativity

December 27 – 9:30 am – 7th grade devotional – Zoo

Silver Creek

Preparing our hearts for Christmas isn't just another thing on our to do list. This time of year is a good time to pause, to breathe and to capture those special moments in our life. Those simple moments could be as simple as a smile, the smell of cookies baking, the laughter of children, the ringing of bells, and the soothing sounds of the music we hear only once a year. Observing Advent helps us to focus on what is most important in our lives. It deepens our experience of Christmas.

We are fortunate that our doors at Silver Creek remain open for worship. During Advent we will be able to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ at Bethlehem and look to the future when Christ will come again.



Our plans are to continue services at our regular time of 10:00 AM during the month of December. We will not be having a Christmas Eve service this year but instead encourage families to attend services either the Sunday before or Sunday after Christmas. This will help to keep our numbers down to meet our requirement of 25% capacity.

Our weekly services have been going very well with attendance between 12 to 20 parishioners. Our masks and social distancing seem to be working, and we appreciate being able to worship. We will try to keep you posted of any changes in our schedule.

Thanks to the ladies who have volunteered to help decorate the church for Christmas. It is always special to see how festive the church looks during this season.

Have a most BLESSED CHRISTMAS!



**Zion Lutheran's Parish Planning Council Minutes
Via Zoom
November 17, 2020**

The Parish Planning Council meeting was called to order by President Laura Rude at 7:03 pm.

In attendance were Laura Rude, Pastor Ale Tulu, Madison Crane, Tim Numedahl, Barbara Overbye, Mike Spears, Glenice Johnson, Sharon Jorde, Teri Forsberg, Penni Nelson and Deb Holtan.

Pastor Ale led the council in prayer.

The September and October Secretary's reports were presented. A motion was made to accept the minutes from both meetings as presented. The motion was seconded and approved.

Discussion was held on a backup for Linda if she is not able to come in to the office to help with printing of the bulletins and making the deposits. A question on what is the latest on the PPP (Payroll Protection Plan) as to what percent of the payback will be forgiven. There has not been a notice as of yet with an ending date for the pay back. Also discussed was a form of recognition for the many volunteers that make all the behind the scene things happen here at Zion. Several different ways were brought up and it was stated this would be another way to talk about Stewardship all year round. Laura and Teri will work on this idea. Madam President stated that it is also up to us as individuals to say "Thank you". Madam President also asked that each board forward any names of individuals to help with this. Pay back of the loan that was taken out from savings a few years back was tabled until next months meeting.

The Treasurer's Report was filed for audit.

Pastor Ale reported that area ELCA pastors met. Many of them are doing the distance worshipping. Many are feeling the financial burden. Thanksgiving Eve service will be hosted by Zion with a broadcast only service that will go out over the radio, cable and other social media. The service will be led by area church leaders. Pastor Ale expressed his concern about not being able to meet with any of the boards, but understands that this is because there has been no activity for the boards to meet about.

Madison Crane reported that there were 14 second graders that received their bibles at the 8:30 service October 25th, 15 students were confirmed at a special 10:30 service also on that Sunday. Eleven sixth graders received their first communion at a special service on November 1st. Tenth graders have been helping with the assembly of the Sunday School kits. This year's confirmation students have been able to meet in person so far with social distancing. These students have also been given the opportunity to help with delivery and distribution of the pie slices for the 65+. Zion, Redeemer and Trinity are working on a Christmas program option for the community.

Penni Nelson reported that she thought their council was meeting this week. She asked to keep them up to date on the upcoming holiday services.

Glenice Johnson reported that all the fleece blankets for this year graduated seniors are in Madison's office. Notes have been sent out to the students to come and pick their blanket up.

Reporting on WELCA happenings, Glenice stated that the Sharing Servants and circle booklet printings are on hold. There will be no annual Christmas caroling, and the SAIL group is also on hold with the Covid-19 numbers on the rise.

Sharon Jorde reported that Worship Board has not met. A thank you to Millie for all she has done helping during the Sunday services, and to Carol Narverud for lining up the readers.

Mike Spears reported that Properties Board is lining up people to get the Christmas trees up.

Barbara Overbye reported there will not be a Spirit of Giving this year. With the case number on the rise there is no safe way to handle the donations let alone with the distribution of items. Madam President asked that Publications be notified to put an announcement in the Times and the church's newsletter stating the cancellation and also the Thanksgiving Service schedule.

Discussion was held on whether or not to continue with "in person" services. A motion was made to continue with the services the way they are. The motion was seconded and carried. The council voiced that if necessary, a special council meeting will be held if there's a need to reverse this decision. This will be revisited in two weeks.

Christmas Eve services are tentative, as of right now there will be no in person worship with a broadcast only through all the outlets that are available, and only a 4:00 service. Thoughts will be discussed about incorporating the 4:00 and 10:00 services and possibly involving other churches such as Trinity and Redeemer.

Most weddings have been postponed or pushed out to future dates. Funerals will at this point be limited to 75 people with **NO** food services allowed afterwards and Zion's guidelines will be emphasized and **must** be followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm following the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by
Deb Holtan, Council Secretary

Sunday School News

Tis the Season! Becky and Davina want all of our Sunday School kids and families to know just how much we miss you! We hope to see everyone again sometime soon! Since we can't be together now though we would LOVE to see pictures of all of you!! The pictures could be of the students watching/completing the weekly Sunday School lesson or they could be of the students reciting their favorite Prayer/Bible Verse or even a drawing representing their favorite Bible Story! We would love to see it all! Please help us fill up our Facebook page with pictures!! These pictures and videos can be text to Davina at 218-689-4965.



Reminder:

Every Sunday Becky & Davina will post a NEW Sunday School video with that week's lesson. The lesson will be up from Sunday through the following Saturday, so families have time to review it as many times as they want! The previous week's lesson does have to be removed prior to us posting a new week's lesson (due to copyright laws) so make sure you watch the video while you can!

Our videos will be shared via a YouTube link on both our [Facebook Page](#) as well as [Remind](#).

Parents – Please make sure you like our Zion Sunday School Facebook Page as this is where all Sunday Class Videos will be shared!!

- **Facebook:** Zion Lutheran Church Sunday School – TRF

If you don't have Facebook, please make sure you sign up for Remind!

- **Remind:** @ziontrfss

All updates & information will be shared via these two options.

If you have any questions about Sunday School, please let Becky (218-686-5563) or Davina (218-689-4965) know.