

From the  
Pastor's  
Desk



December

2021

No. 10



## Pastor Mark's Missive

### Advent

I have a confession to make; I am terrible at waiting. This makes me an especially lousy Christmas shopper. Whether you're at a fine department store or just grabbing some chips from Pennington Main, chances are you'll be waiting in line during the month of December. And, if you're like me, inevitably you'll end up right behind somebody who needs a price check or some sort of special assistance. You will still have to wait if you purchase something online – you wait for the package to be delivered.

This sort of thing can just about ruin the Christmas season for me, because waiting makes me grumpy. I don't like waiting for an elevator; I don't like waiting at a red light.

A few years ago, I was waiting in a long line at Target. In spite of my best efforts to find the shortest line, of course, I ended up in the slowest moving line. As I stood there, I could feel my blood pressure rising. The more I waited, the more frustrated I became. Words I never say (well, almost never) filled my mind, and I'm not referring to the new politically correct "Happy Holidays." "Why do I always get in the slowest line?" I asked myself. "*And why is this taking so long?*" I grumbled under my breath.

Then, all of a sudden, it dawned on me; I had an epiphany. (Epiphany in Advent – who would have thought?) I had one of those moments of grace, in which God managed to slip a word into my consciousness. As I stood in line at Target, I was waiting. *Waiting!* I was doing exactly what Advent is all about. Of course, I wasn't waiting for Christ to save me, or anything momentous like that. I was simply waiting to buy something and then to get out of there and go home. But, nevertheless, I was waiting. I was forced to experience something that is at the very heart of Advent.

So, I decided, right then and there, in line at Target, that I was going to use the experience of waiting in line as an Advent reminder. In that moment, and in similar moments yet to come, I was going to remember what Advent is all about. I was going to put myself back into the shoes (or sandals) of the Jews who had been waiting for the Messiah. And I was going to remember that I too am waiting for Christ to return.

As I decided to let the experience of forced waiting be a moment of Advent reflection rather than a cause for grumbling, I found my tension draining away. Waiting in line at Target became, not a trial to be endured, but a moment of grace. And get this: I even found myself thanking God for the chance to slow down a bit. This was, indeed, a miracle. By the time I got to check out, my heart was peaceful, even joyous. I also had grace and joy enough to share with the woman who ran the check-out. I felt as if I had discovered a treasure.

In the last few years, what I hate most about the days prior to Christmas – waiting in line – has become a quasi-sacrament, a time to experience God’s grace. If you’ve never tried this, it may sound to you as if I’ve lost my mind. By experiencing waiting in line not as a difficulty to be endured, but as an opportunity to wait peacefully, you’ll find a bit of grace, hidden and ready to be discovered.

I invite you to be a part of Christmas at Zion; the Christmas Eve worship will be at 4:00 pm, with a candlelight communion service at 10:00. Silver Creek will worship at 5:30.

## Merry Christmas

Pauline and I wish to extend to you our wishes for a blessed Christmas. Let us remember the meaning of Christmas and the peace that Christ brings. Let us prepare to celebrate the greatest Christmas present of all time - the gift of Jesus Christ.

As we prepare for and anticipate the celebration of the birth of the Lord, let us remember “to God alone be the Glory!”

Pastor Mark



- **December 5** – 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Gingerbread House Contest – during Sunday school hour – 10:00
- **December 12** – Silver Creek Christmas Program during 10:30 worship
- **December 14** – WELCA Christmas Tea – 2:00
- **December 19** – Sunday school program – at 9:00 worship
- **December 19** – Faith and Fellowship (formerly Flapjacks for Faith)
- **December 24** - 4:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship, 10:00 Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion Worship
- **December 24** – 5:30 Silver Creek Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- **December 26** – no worship service at Silver Creek

**BOARD CHAIRS, TREASURERS, ETC.** of organizations — please have your annual report in by January 11, typed and ready for printing. You can email them to Linda at [ziontrf@mncable.net](mailto:ziontrf@mncable.net). Thank you!

**Contributions** - Reminder – any contributions for 2021 must be into the church office by noon, Friday, December 31. If mailing, please mail early so it is received by December 31. Contribution statements for 2021 will be printed and mailed the 1<sup>st</sup> week of January. Any contributions received after January 1, 2022, will go towards 2022 giving.

**ENVELOPE BOXES** will be available to pick up soon. Those who receive boxed envelopes should note that they have been renumbered for 2022. Most contributors will have a new contributor number in 2022. Please do not use the 2022 envelopes until after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**Christmas Poinsettias** – if you would like to share a poinsettia for our Christmas worship, in honor or in memory of a loved one, please call or email the church office by December 18. They will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. If you wish to take your poinsettia home, (please put your name on it), you may take it after the 10:00Pm Christmas worship.

**Call Committee** After Zion completed the Ministry Site Profile that describes our church setting, activities, and priorities, the MSP was posted with the synod and ELCA. Synod staff are now encouraging possible candidates to read the MSP, and if someone is interested, they will forward names to us. They have been diligently searching "high and low" but so far have no possibilities for us. During this waiting period we are all encouraged to pray for pastoral candidates to consider Zion in Thief River Falls.



## **President's Message**

### **Laura Rude**

Hello Zion Church Family-

In looking back at this past year, all I can think is WOW! We lived it. We lived through it. We rose above! We are a resilient, talented, and hard-working church family. I personally want to thank you for all your understanding, patience and support this past year. I am so extremely grateful to be part of this church family. I hope and pray that we continue to bless and care for each other to continue God's Work with Our Hands.

December brings us many opportunities to serve in Jesus's name. I'm very excited that Zion's Spirit of Giving event is back on year. Please check out how you can help in making this event a special one for the ones who need it most. Also, I'm looking forward to our Sunday School Christmas Program on December 19th. Our little ones bring us so much joy, so I encourage all to attend and support them as they share the Christmas Story in readings and song.

Time goes by so fast and at times we may not have the opportunity to savor the moments. As you personally reflect on this past year I hope you find many wonderful memories to cherish, some life lessons learned and friends that you treasure more than you did before. Also, let our hearts and minds be open to the story of God's promise. *"Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* What a wonderful gift to us all!

Merry Christmas and God's Blessings for a wonderful New Year!

In Christ's Service,

Laura Rude, Zion President



## WELCA

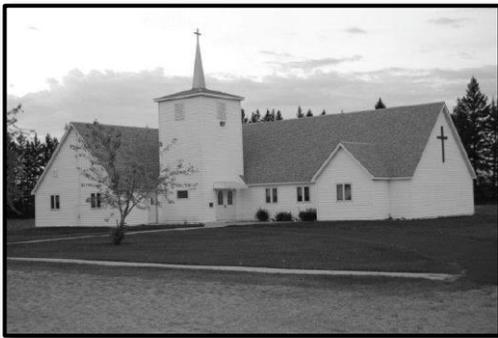
WELCA continues to meet monthly on the second Tuesday at 10:00. All women of Zion are welcome to attend for refreshments, fellowship, and Bible study. In addition to the general WELCA meeting, there are four circles at Zion and all women are invited and encouraged to join in one of them. The circles, usual meeting times and contact persons are:

Anna - 4th Wed., 9:30 a.m., Glenice Johnson - 681-4472  
Dorcas - 4th Tues., 9:30 a.m., Sharon Wagner - 681-2473  
Sarah - 4th Wed., 1:30 p.m., Patty Schob - 681-6937  
Rebekah - 4th Tues., 1:00 p.m., Judy Melby - 681-7194

Circles enjoy meeting for further Bible study, working on mission kits, or other activities for Zion WELCA.

## WELCA "Christmas Tea"

The December WELCA session has a different schedule. We meet for the annual "Christmas Tea" at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14. Each member is asked to bring 6 cookies or bars to share. Bible study from the *Gather* magazine will be done. Hostesses are Ruth Ostby, Sandy Knutson, and Vivian Knutson. Board will meet at 1:00.



## Silver Creek

Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ but too often we get caught up in what we think the holidays should look like, and we lose sight of the true gift of Christmas. Take some time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas this year.

December 1, at 9:30, we will be decorating the church and encourage volunteers to come join the fun.

Our Christmas program will be held on December 12, during our regular church service at 10:30. We were able to find a program that includes lots of carols as this is something we always hear that we don't get to sing enough Christmas carols. Following the program, we will join in a potluck with a free will offering which will go to help **Pennington County Christmas**. Our traditional candy bags will also be handed out.

A Christmas Eve candlelight service will be held at 5:30 PM. Note: this is a time change from previous years. The service will not include communion this year. Also, there will be no service on Sunday, December 26.



The church council will meet after services on Sunday, December 19, following services.

Bev Rupprecht

## Lay Ministry/Evangelism



- Home communion is on hold for now because of COVID. We will be encouraging family members to pick up communion from the office to serve their family members.
- Zion will be checking on homebound shut ins and single members during this time. Tracee Bruggeman will be making phone calls from the church so that members will see that it's a phone call from Zion.

- Pastor Mark will be presenting information on our Lutheran doctrine during fellowship hour after January 1.



- Name tags will be worn on the 3rd Sunday of every month for the next few months. Now that we have only one worship service and see unfamiliar faces who may have worshiped at another service, we need to connect with those we don't know.

Deb Holtan/Marijo Nabben

## THANK YOU



to everyone that participated in Operation Christmas Child! A total of 85 boxes were delivered from Zion, and shipping costs were covered by generous donations from the congregation. The 10th grade confirmation class alone packed 52 boxes



## Zion Lutheran's Congregational Council Minutes November 14, 2021

The Congregation Council meeting was called to order by President Laura Rude at 4:03 pm. In attendance were Laura Rude, Pastor Mark Helgeland, Tim Numedahl, Denny Minks, Judy Melby, Deb Fulton, Marijo Nabben, Glenice Johnson, Penni Nelson, Deb Holtan and guest Sandy Knutson.

Pastor Mark led the council in prayers.

The Secretary's report from October 19, 2021, was presented. A correction was made in the report as follows; the new door lock was on the Youth Office, not the Youth Room. A motion was made to accept the minutes with the correction. The motion was seconded and approved.

The Treasurer's Report was filed for audit.

The duties of the Treasurer are being fulfilled until the Annual meeting by Barbara Overbye. She is still tracking a credit on the church utilities billing that is not corresponding on the statements.

Pastor Mark will be gone for the next two Sundays. November 21st Shawna Spears will deliver the sermon. November 28th which is the first Sunday of Advent Madam President stated she ordered a DVD on the first Sunday of Advent from Paul Oman. Pastor Mark reported he has been kept very busy!

Penni Nelson reported from Silver Creek that they had their All-Saints Sunday last week. Their potluck dinner will be held Sunday December 12th. Their annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday January 16th. Christmas Eve services will be at 5:30 on the 24th. Penni stated she would get back to Laura as to whether they will have a service on Sunday December 26th.

Sandy Knutson expressed her thank you to all for the appreciation given in her honor. The last meeting she led with the Parish Health Committee was held in October. She would like to see the Health Committee continue so there is a need for a chair for this committee. Sandy also stated there is a great need not only for the physical health of our church but also the mental and emotional health. The present members are Patty Schob, Eileen Rhen, Yvonne Pederson, Mary Morken, Pastor Mark and the Chair from the Evangelism/Lay Ministry Board which at the present is Marijo Nabben. New members to the committee are Marcia Sandahl and Darlene Wiseth. Sandy stated that she would do everything she can to help whom ever steps up to take the Parish Nurse position to help them succeed in fulfilling the requirements for that position. A motion was made to keep the position of the Parish Nurse, which was seconded and approved. A request was also made that a representative from the Health Committee come to the council meetings to help with communication between the two groups. This representative would be a non voting member.

**Stewardship:** Discussion was held to wait and see what the results are with this years' pledges, as to how to handle next years Stewardship plan.

**Worship:** Deb Fulton reported that the families are being contacted for the Advent Wreath readings and lightings.

**Properties:** Linda has given the board a list of repairs around the church that need to be done. The Christmas trees will go up the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Information on the outdoor sign will be revisited. Tim Numedahl stated that there have been pledges and money donated for the sign.

**Call Committee:** Tim Numedahl reported that there is nothing more for this committee to do at this point. The call has been put out.

**Evangelism/Lay Ministry:** Marijo Nabben reported that events have been put on hold until after the first of the year. It was suggested that for Home Communion especially in the nursing homes, that maybe a family member could pick up the communion cups and give communion to their loved one either during the church service while communion is taking place, or that the board will have the literature with the communion service available if giving the communion at a time other than during the Sunday service. It had been brought to this board's attention that during the Covid shut down, there were members that had "slipped through the cracks" as far as any contact from the church. These members are what this board would consider of a "younger age" versus the elderly. The Evangelism and Lay Ministry board is asking that anyone that see the parents waiting for their children to be done with Sunday School to take the time to invite them to come to the Fellowship Hall for coffee and a time of visiting.

**Christian Ed and Youth:** Judy Melby reported that their board members are Jenna Holen, Krista Johnson, Laura Fay, and Mike Flaagen. Their board has had a long discussion on the requirements for the confirmands. Judy said there is a need for a new laptop. The Sunday School Christmas Program will be Sunday December 19th. The board is bringing back the goodie bags for the kids to be given after the program that Sunday. December 5th will be the First Annual Gingerbread House Contest. Judging will be done during the coffee/Sunday School hour. Judy stated she has purchased a Christmas tree in memory of Richard and that the Sunday School kids are making ornaments and paper chains for it. The tree will be on display and on a timer in front of the double doors in the upper narthex so it is lit at night and can be seen from the street. Judy also stated that she would like Amber Holtan and or Amanda Jeworrek to come to their board meetings so they can have a better line of communication. Flap Jacks for Faith has been renamed to Food and Fellowship. The first Food and Fellowship will be held on December 19th and David Lee will be making French toast. The board also discussed and would like a representative from each of the sophomore, junior and senior classes to come to their board meetings. The National Youth Gathering is this coming summer. No fund raising has been done in the last couple of years. The board will be discussing this more at upcoming meetings. The board is looking for ideas as to how they can continue encouraging and involving the youth in helping with the church services and other events.

**Parish Fellowship:** Glenice Johnson reported that the board has been working on completing the new Sharing Servants booklets which will start anew in January. A reminder that the Pie and Desert Auction is Sunday November 21st during the Sunday School hour. The income from the auction will go into the General Funds.

**WELCA:** Glenice Johnson reported that there are only four circles that are still active, so this group is trying to reorganize. WELCA meets the second Tuesday of every month. Lenten Suppers are a concern. Yes, the suppers should continue during Lent whether they are catered or groups such as the council help with the preparation of the meal and the serving or the Men's breakfast group.. The monies from the meals are used to help pay half of the registration fees for the kid's bible camps. Ash Wednesday is March 2nd. Glenice also reported that 24 quilts, 86 personal care kits, 35 baby care kits and 76 school kits were shipped.

**Publications:** Darlene Hulteen's minutes were presented as follows: The board is weeding out and reorganizing the library in the lounge. They are asking for a dumpster as there are a lot of items that are outdated and taking up precious storage space. Spirit of Giving will be advertised on Zion's website, Facebook, flyers around town, KTRF website, Channel 13's carousel, along with an article to be put in the Times and the Watch. Laura Rantanen, Jodi Bergman and Darlene are meeting about the existing website and the new website.

The council would like to thank Linda for all she does! She is our "glue"!!!



The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 pm after praying the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Holtan  
Secretary for the Congregational Council

# Confirmation

Thank you to our 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Class for an awesome job with our 65+ supper. Our guests enjoyed a great meal, thanks to you! And a HUGE thank you to all of our parents for their help!

Blessings to all,  
Kami

December 1 - Dinner - 5:15 Baked Macaroni and Cheese  
Class - 6:00

December 8 - Dinner - 5:15 Spaghetti and Meatballs

December 15 - No Class  
Special Friend Bingo Christmas Party

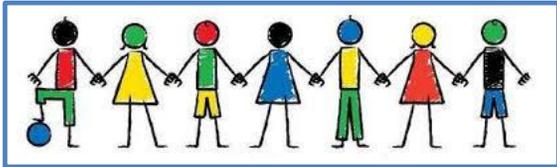
Next Confirmation Class – January 5



**Parents, please sign up for our Confirmation Remind!**

Sunday Servant Opportunities and Acolytes Reminds and Confirmation changes are sent this way.

Special Thank you to Deb Holtan, Pastor Mark and the Senior Choir for sharing their time with the confirmation classes during our first Worship Study!



Please remember to sign up for Servant Opportunities and then make sure you show up when you are scheduled.

## Youth

### December Youth Events

December Noisy Offering will go to Austin's Hope

**December 5** - First Annual Zion **Gingerbread House Contest**. Each family may create one gingerbread house and enter it in the contest. The gingerbread house must be edible (cookies, candies, frosting, etc.). Gingerbread houses must be in the Fellowship Hall by 10am. Judging/voting will be held during Coffee Hour.



**December 18** - Starting at 11:00am, we will be making **Goodie Bags** for our younger Sunday schoolers. We will need the help of our middle schoolers to make goodie bags for our youth to give out to them after their Christmas program. Goodie bags will have hot chocolate packet, marshmallows, candy cane and a few Hershey kisses.

**December 19** - **Sunday School Christmas** Program during 9:00 worship



**December 19** - **Food and Fellowship** (formerly Flapjacks for Faith) in the Fellowship Hall. We will be doing Food and Fellowship the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month. Donations during these events will go towards new furniture for our Sunday school classrooms.

### Worship Together in the Sanctuary

Zion – 9:00 - Silver Creek – 10:30

Zion Sunday School – 10:00

## Worship Online

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

- KTRF radio – 1230 AM at 9:00
- Cable TV – Channel 3 – KTRF – 9:00
- Garden Valley – Channel 37 – 12:00 Noon
- Log in to Zion’s webpage – **ziontrf.org** and listen to the service over the internet.
- Facebook Live – 9:00 on Zion’s Facebook Page

