

2011
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CONGREGATION



ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2714 JAMES STREET

MARINETTE, WI

Annual Meeting
Following Worship
Sunday, January 29, 2012

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Marinette, Wisconsin

ANNUAL MEETING
Sunday, January 29, 2012

A G E N D A

Opening Prayer

Call to Order

Acceptance of Agenda

Appointment of Tellers

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Adjourn and Closing Prayer

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Term Expires in Jan. 2011

**Amanda Litts
William Boerner
Troy Cording
John Radloff**

Term Expires in Jan. 2012

**Pam Lund
Girard Rudell
Peter Thielen
Shawn Limberg**

Term Expires in Jan. 2013

**Nancy Benchley
Kathy Heimbuch
Jacki Renne
Karen Sylvester**

SAMPLE BALLOT – January 29, 2012

**Church Council
(3 year term)**

_____ **Amanda Litts**

_____ **John Radloff**

_____ **Gary Houdek**

Personnel Committee (vote for 1)

**Nominating Committee
(2 year term)**

_____ **Ann Buscher**

_____ **Kathy Heimbuch**

_____ **Nora Plym**

Council Youth Member (one year term)

COUNCIL NOMINEE BIO'S

Amanda Litts - grew up in Phoenix, AZ, and has lived in California, New Jersey, Florida, and Wisconsin. She is currently self employed as the owner of Digital Designs Photography and was previously employed at Aerial for 15 years. Zion is the only congregation she has ever been a member of and was baptized at Zion in Dec. of 2006. Since joining, she has served on the Missional Planning Group and the Stewardship Committee. She is also a part of the Sarah Circle and the A.V. team. Amanda took on the task of creating our last pictorial directory, (a huge job), and spear-headed the development of Zion's Harvest of Hope Community Garden. Amanda has just completed her first term on the Congregation Council.

John Radloff - and his wife, Maryellen, live in Marinette and have been members, along with their two sons, since 1991. John is the director of accounting at BAMC. He is currently Zion's Treasurer, a position he has had since 2001. John has been a Sunday School teacher and confirmation teacher and has sung in the choir. He has served on the Congregation Council in the past, and has just finished his first term of his most recent work on the Council. Some of the gifts John will bring to Zion's Council are he good communication skills, integrity, and various professional skills.

Gary Houdek - and his wife, Karen, have been members of Zion since 2008. They have one son. Gary is employed in maintenance at Northland Lutheran Retirement Community. His wife, Karen, is Zion's Financial Secretary. Gary and Karen enjoy traveling.

VISION STATEMENT - Approved January 25, 2009

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18) At Zion Lutheran Church, Marinette, Wisconsin, we believe vision is about God’s dreams, desires, and aspirations of what can be. Our congregation envisions becoming a thriving, vibrant model of Lutheran ministry both within our community and the world. We envision organizing and executing God’s mission through our congregation in such a way that growing numbers of the unbaptized, particularly adults, will connect with Jesus through our congregation and inactive members will return to active participation within the church community.

God has gathered and richly gifted Zion for this mission. God’s greatest gift is that through the waters of Holy Baptism we become part of our Lord Jesus and as such, become his disciples, participating in what Jesus is doing in the world today. God has also given us the precious gift of one another in order that we support and help each other grow in our discipleship.

In light of the many unique gifts that God has graciously entrusted to Zion, we envision a congregation that:

- PRAYS** regularly and embraces prayer as being central to all that it does and habitually listens for God’s call and guidance, not only in all areas of congregational ministry, but in our personal lives as well.
- WORSHIPS** enthusiastically and is so hungry to praise and worship God that at least half of its baptized members are present for worship on a weekly basis.
- STUDIES** the Holy Scriptures and the principles of Christian faith in order to fulfill its great desire to learn more about its calling as disciples of Jesus and the gifts that God so graciously provides. Families will regularly use materials provided for Bible study at home, and groups within the congregation will regularly gather to study the Scriptures and these principles.
- INVITES** others to participate in the life of the congregation by training its members to actively encourage those who are not connected with a congregation to participate in what Jesus is doing through Zion, warmly welcoming them and enthusiastically involving them in the mission work we do together as God’s children.
- ENCOURAGES** and supports its members and others in the community on their faith journeys by regularly organizing groups that will foster Christian fellowship. Zion will also continually grow in the types of caring ministries offered within the congregation.
- GIVES** generously of time, talents, and treasures for the work of Jesus in our community and around the world, and encourages others to be generous with their gifts as well.
- SERVES** by employing innovative ways to assist children and their families in our community as well as around the world.

This is God’s vision for Zion’s mission – God’s dream of what “going where Jesus leads” will look like within our congregation. “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’” (*Isaiah 6:8*)

Report of the Pastor for 2011

Thanks to the statewide organization of the Knights Templar, I was able to go to Israel in 2011. Certainly the most powerful experiences I had while there had to do with seeing, touching, walking or riding upon the things that unquestionably connected directly with Jesus. For instance, I saw the rocks that were outside of the gates of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified. I touched the Jordan River and sailed upon the waters that Jesus walked on. I touched the wall of the Temple in Jerusalem that was present when Jesus was there. I walked down the trail toward Jerusalem that Jesus took on the back of a donkey. I saw two olive trees in the area of the Garden of Gethsemane that were 2,000 years old. I saw the foundation of a synagogue within which Jesus taught. Even though so much of this experience seemed (and still seems at times) surreal, I'm so grateful that I had this opportunity to be there.

Earlier, in 2011, I wrote that I was uncomfortable with calling Israel "The Holy Land" because of how it seemed to separate the holiness of that plot of ground with the holiness of the ground that we live our lives upon. Yes, one cannot deny the special way that God used that land and the people upon it; how he called them to a special ministry and responsibility for the sake of the world. However, we too are called to a special ministry and responsibility for the sake of the world. God is just as much present with us as God was present with those who dwelled in that land 2,000 years ago and before.

One thing I really became aware of during this trip was all the "unholiness" present upon that land, certainly nothing new for Israel. In many ways I was shown how Israel continues to get it wrong. But, the Bible is FILLED with stories of how those whom God has chosen get it wrong more often than they get it right. Even those who walked and talked with Jesus, his chosen 12, got it wrong more often than they got it right. However, God did not abandon them. God did not take away their special calling and mission in the world, and this gives me hope.

As I look at the state of the church locally as well as globally, there is plenty of evidence that we get it wrong more often than we get it right. Our fixation upon the maintenance of our institution over and above the mission that is entrusted to us by God is a constant concern. The more we turn in on ourselves, the more difficulties we find ourselves struggling with as an institution, just as Israel and the early church experienced so many years ago.

God certainly has not abandoned us, just as God has not abandoned the people of Israel. There was plenty that occurred within our congregation this past year that excites me and gives me hope. After years of prayer and prayerful discussions, Zion created a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement that we felt reflected what God had equipped and called us to do. The Missional Planning Group and our Congregation Council has tried to be diligent about using these statements as the guiding foundation of the work we do as a congregation. Certainly we have had our struggles, but using the Seven Marks of Discipleship we can see that God has not abandoned us; that God used us in many wonderful ways. Using our core of our Vision Statement, the Seven Marks of Discipleship, I will share what I see as some of the strengths of Zion's mission as well as some of the growth areas.

Pray

Our Vision Statement describes Zion as holding prayer central to all that we do as a congregation. Certainly we have a long way to go with this. Too often for me, prayer is a nice extra to our ministry rather than the main thing that we do. I think we have experienced significant growth with prayer, but again, we have a long way to go. I am pleased that we spend a significant amount of time at our Council meetings in prayer. Presently it is only at the beginning and end of our meeting. I'm hopeful that we will learn how to turn to prayer throughout our meeting. I'm also pleased that other groups and gatherings at Zion are doing more to include prayer. Certainly the length and depth of our prayer time in worship will lead our growth in this mark of discipleship.

Worship

Zion's Vision Statement focuses heavily upon the number of people in worship. Certainly this is a concern for us due to the way many within the church now define regular worship attendance. A few decades ago and earlier, regular worship attendance was defined as weekly worship. Now, for many reasons, it is common to think of worshipping once or twice a month as regular worship attendance. Our concern about this change is that so many are not taking the breather that they need to take. God made keeping the Sabbath a commandment for our health and not for God's, because we don't do well when we don't get a breather, and worship is the important first step of that breather.

Certainly 2011 marked the beginning of Zion's formal use of projection in worship. Yes, we have been using projection since April of 2010, but we did a lot of testing and experimenting during that time. Since then, a task group met a number of times to hammer out the specifics of what we will project, how it will be projected and why we project what we project. I am pleased with the work that this group did and how it shaped what we are doing with projection in our worship services today. Not only does projection encourage a greater community atmosphere in our worship, but the art that is used also enhances the proclamation of the Gospel.

Study

In the spring of 2011, Zion no longer worked together with congregations in our community to offer education for our children. With that, six years of offering Faith Fest came to a close. In the spring, following Lent, we tested a Sunday morning offering and had some success. This past fall we saw the need to continue offering a Wednesday evening opportunity. We are very excited about the new curriculum which is both Bible story focused and lectionary based. In other words, the children are studying a Bible story that will be used in worship on Sunday. This curriculum also offers a storybook Bible for the youngest children that is the best I've ever seen. The flexibility we now have with operating our education program on our own should give us good opportunities to explore new directions and styles in the future.

During the fall of 2011, the Menominee Valley Conference developed a local campus of our Synod's Lay School for Mission. Our Synod has been operating this school since the early 90's, gradually adding more campuses across our Synod. A local campus within our conference has been needed for a long time, and finally we have one. The school operates on a semester system, with two semesters offered each year. A total of five semesters of classes are offered. One can

start taking classes at any time. The student does not need to participate in all the classes offered during a particular semester. Upon completion of all the coursework, there is recognition of graduates at our Synod Assembly. Locally, classes are offered on Monday evenings beginning at 5:15 and concluding usually at 9:15 at the latest. Classes are held at Emmanuel Lutheran in Menominee. There is no cost for the school except for books. I will be teaching on of the courses this spring, and plan to teach others in the future. I STRONGLY encourage you to consider participating in the school. Zion presently has four students participating at various levels. It would be wonderful to have four more get on board this fall. Please talk to me about the Lay School for Mission!

Invite

During 2011, a task group from the Congregation Council met to form a mission statement, a vision statement and some suggested initial projects for the Evangelism Committee. This is the Mission Statement:

“Following Jesus’ lead, Zion’s Evangelism Committee will encourage, enable, and empower God’s children of Zion to embrace their calling to be evangels through the ministry of Zion and in daily life.”

And this is the Vision Statement:

In order to accomplish the mission that Zion’s Evangelism Committee is called to do, this committee will:

- 1) Strive to ensure that every worshipper feels comfortable and welcome so that they are drawn to support and participate in God’s mission through Zion.**
- 2) Develop and maintain Zion’s reputation within the community as being a congregation that’s open, welcoming, and caring.**
- 3) Encourage the development of daily evangelism skills within God’s children.**

With the guidance and help of God, this is what the mission of Zion’s Evangelism Committee will look like.

We are excited to get this committee up and running in 2012. Maybe you are being called to be a part of it!

It is important to note here a common misunderstanding about the work of the Evangelism Committee. It is not about getting more people in the doors so that we can maintain what we are familiar and comfortable with as a congregation. Evangelism is all about sharing the story of our relationship with Jesus with others. The purpose of doing this sharing is to make the Gospel come alive, and thereby encourage all people into a deeper life of faith. Obviously we want to encourage all people to deepen their life of faith, and that happens when we worship and work together within congregations. Certainly we want people to consider joining Zion’s mission, but we must also be aware that this will always come with changes to what we have grown comfortable with. Evangelism is daily life is, at its root, is simply sharing with others the stories that illustrate the work that Jesus is up to in our lives.

Encourage

I just can’t say enough good things about Zion’s Caring Ministry Team. Please be sure to read their report in this Annual Report. I am so pleased with the work they are doing, and I hear again