

WE ARE ZION



Zion Lutheran Church

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**E
W
S**

December 2021



The Seven
Marks of
Discipleship

#Pray

#Worship

#Study

#Invite

#Encourage

#Give

#Serve

“O Come, Emmanuel”

*O come, O come, Emmanuel
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

As I write this it has been just a few days since the horror and tragedy that took place at the Christmas parade in Waukesha, the hometown of Karen and me. We both marched in the high school band that was hit. The granddaughter of my cousin was supposed to march with the children’s dance group that was also struck, but she did not because it was too cold. I remember going to that parade as a very young child, weeks before my brother was born. I got an earache shortly after attending that parade. (Mom, who did not attend the parade that year, was certain my earache was due to not covering my ears well with my cap as I watched for Santa.) “O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here.” These words powerfully express the deep sorrow on our souls and the yearning that sorrow creates.

I remember singing “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” more than once at the bedside of a member who was dying at this time of the year. It was easy to sing the opening verse but extremely jarring and difficult to sing the refrain, “Rejoice! Rejoice!” There was no rejoicing happening as this loved one was dying and yet the words so powerfully pointed to the truth that gives us hope at the deaths of our loved ones or when children are struck by an SUV: “Emmanuel shall come to you.”

I heard someone the other day describe this as a Christmas hymn, but it is not. It is definitely an Advent hymn that expresses the longing that unites humanity through the

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ages. We long for a hope that is greater than the pain which too often tears at our lives. We long for Emmanuel, "God with us." And because of this infant who was born in a stable so many years ago, and died on a cross thirty-three years later, we can dare to hope and even, (*deep breath*), rejoice because we know that Emmanuel is coming. We need Advent and Advent's hymns because the yearning expressed during this season leads us to the joyful twelve-day Christmas celebration; the realization that, unbidden, Christ invades our lives which are too often filled with pain and sadness. Christ brings compassion, grace, forgiveness, love, and new life, the best Christmas gifts of all.

Savor the longing and the yearning of Advent this year, with the knowledge that "*Emmanuel shall come to you.*" Rejoice, and have a very merry Christmas.

Pastor Keith



Letter from Bishop Finegan

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

You have no doubt noticed the increasing darkness. The kids go to school in the dark, and soon, the school day will end as it began, in darkness. The hours of light are getting shorter and shorter, and people are grateful for lingering twilight.



How ironic that the most hopeful season of the church year begins as the darkness increases. In the weeks to come, we light candles on the Advent wreath, and it's not a moment too soon. These lights of hope stand against the growing darkness. And every week, as we add the flame of another candle, the light will increase and shine brighter even

as the darkness comes sooner and lasts longer.

In this season of Hope, and as this year of Hope 2021 comes to its end, I share with you some things that I do see that give me hope:

Our congregations continue to find new creative ways to do ministry.

As I read through your newsletters, whether online or hard copy, I am impressed and encouraged by your continued efforts. Sure, some things have paused. Yes, some priorities have been re-evaluated and energies placed in new directions. Yet, this is all good as we continue to be church together and church for the sake of the world. I am grateful to the Spirit that is at work among and through us as the work of Christ continues.

We have wonderful pastoral leaders!

In the past few years, we have welcomed many new pastors and they bring new energy, perspective, and ideas. And our seasoned pastors and Licensed Lay Ministers have provided stability and the blessing of trusted relationships that keep congregational partnerships in motion and help reduce anxiety. And

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Letter from Bishop Finegan _____

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congregations in pastoral transition have been patient and involved, waiting for God's timing with hope.

We have renewed joy in being together again...safely.

As pandemic restrictions have eased, Pastor Jim and I are once again happy to gather with you for worship. I do not mind wearing a mask if it means we can sing together and gather in the same space. I love hearing the voices of others raised in song and prayer. It has felt like salve on a wound to share the peace, sing alto to someone's soprano, and hear combined voices pray the Lord's prayer together in the rhythm and cadence of voices in unison. While I truly believe that some sense of community can be achieved and appreciated through Zoom, YouTube, and Facebook live, the joy and value of the community gathered in person is also true and real.

Our synod is newly connected through Lifelong Faith Formation, Pastoral Leader Check-Ins, and various Zoom meetings.

While I have missed being able to add lunch and snacks to in person Synod meetings, in many ways we are more connected as a synod than we have ever been. Teachers and students from the Copper Country to Marinette, from Ironwood to Sault Ste. Marie gather in virtual classrooms and discussion groups. We are church together in a whole new way, gathering to discuss and wrestle with conversations about issues of race, scriptural interpretation, and to consider and plan various ministry efforts.

God is at work!

In all our efforts, in all our re-evaluations, in all the changes and future uncertainty, the Spirit of the living Christ is gathering, inspiring, supporting, and guiding. We are discovering again what it means to be church, what the purpose of the Body of Christ is in this world, and who we are in mission together. I

Continued...

Letter from Bishop Finegan

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see a new hunger for deeper spirituality and for meaningful connectedness to God and each other. I see ministry efforts taking on a life of their own. I see details and pieces falling together. I see a willingness to experiment, to try new things, to jump even when the landing is unclear.

There is much to be hopeful for because of what we can see even as we continue to hope for that which is still becoming. As Advent candles are lit, as the glow from the manger bed grows brighter, as we strain to hear the songs of angels, remember that you are not alone. In hopeful anticipation of Christmas and a blessed New Year, I believe it is not too soon to share the following verse from "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" that speaks anew to our present circumstances:

*And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!*

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan

Christmas Eve Worship

This year, there will be two Christmas Eve services. One at 4:30 p.m. and one at 8 p.m. It will be a candlelight service with Holy Communion. Celebrate the Nativity of Jesus with us. Live streaming via Facebook Live will be available at 4:30 only.



Congregation Council Highlights

On Nov. 9th, 2021 the congregational council met via Zoom.

Pastor Keith reported a decline in attendance for the month of



COUNCIL UPDATES

October. He held two funeral services. He will be supervising an intern, off-site, for one year.

This is for a student in Escanaba who was a pastor in another denomination and wants to become a Lutheran Pastor.

Pastor Keith has a vacation

planned for November, and one for a Sunday in December.

The October financial report showed a general fund increase for the month, with a year-to-date decrease of \$6,336. The disbursement to the EagleHerald for advertising has been depleted, therefore, newspaper

advertising will cease. The council discussed the order of funds to be used in payment of the new piano. The council also discussed exploring options for better interest rates on CD's.

The Property Committee is awaiting an estimate to replace the motor on the bell. Snow removal will be the same as it was last year. Stewardship and Generosity Committee reported that the fall drive is underway with mail and email delivered. And Personnel will be meeting to complete staff evaluations and work on salary suggestions for the budget.

Worship will be indoors during the winter months with Communion offered outside afterward as weather permits, moving indoors when weather dictates, continuing to follow safety protocols. The SPARK Christmas program planning is in place with a performance to be held on December 19th. The council discussed the possibility of holding two separate Christmas Eve worship services. Faithful Innovations continues to move forward with their TikTok project and continues to look to develop a social media committee.

The next Congregational Council meeting will be held Dec. 14th.



Zion received the following thank you notes from grateful recipients.

The DAR Boys & Girls Club — You have a heart of gold! Thank you for believing in the children in our community. Your passion to give them a fun and safe place to receive a healthy meal, learn new life skills, and enjoy time with friends and adult mentors does not go unnoticed. Thank you for trusting the DAR Boys & Girls Club to be that place for the Club children and their families. The DAR is blessed to have friends like you who are willing to participate to make our Club and community a better place. Thanks again for all your hard work and helping us be the place where "Great Futures Start Here!" Thank you so much for your donation. You are helping make futures a reality for the next generation of youth in our community.

John & Sharon Powilaite — THANK YOU to Zion's Social Ministry Committee for the cookies, bars, bread, and pretty painted jar with autumn leaves and a battery candle inside, delivered to our house on November 13th, shown as an appreciation for us elders. Love it! Praying that next year we can get back to gathering in the Social Hall for the traditional Harvest Dinner.

Worship Assistant Opportunities

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer as a lector or as an usher please follow the link [2021 Worship Assistant Opportunities](#) & fill in the necessary information. The readings for the particular Sunday will be shared with you days in advance and a copy will be printed for you to use that particular Sunday. Pastor Keith will update you of the ushering duties prior to worship as needed. Thank you for your consideration!

Holy Communion Offered During Indoor Worship_____

Presently we are distributing Holy Communion as a part of our in-person indoor Sunday worship. The distribution takes place at the end of the worship service outside when the weather allows. For those who do not want to worship indoors, you are still welcome to join us for Holy Communion following the service, but please call the church office at 715-735-7898 to inform us of your intent so that we will wait for you if necessary. (When the weather doesn't allow, we are planning to distribute communion in the social hall with fans on and plenty of fresh air passing through, and with people exiting out the north door.)



December Eternal Light_____

The Eternal Light for the month of December is sponsored by Michael and Pam Goes in honor of their son Philip who will celebrate his birthday this month.

What's Around the Corner in December?_____

Zion is buzzing with worship preparations! Below is a brief outline of what is "around the corner".

- Dec. 5: Second Sunday of Advent, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Special music recorded by the Zion Senior Choir.
- Dec. 12: Third Sunday of Advent, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Contemporary worship
- Dec. 19: Fourth Sunday of Advent, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Spark program
- Dec. 24: Nativity of our Lord, 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. indoor worship and via Facebook Live. With special music, candlelight and Holy Communion.
- Dec. 26: First Sunday of Christmas, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.

***Join us in lifting up our brothers and sisters in
Christ, in prayer as we remember their Baptism***

December 1: Timothy Marzahl, Karen Sylvester

December 2: Henry Zuehls

December 4: Sandra Zylkowski

December 5: Jane Landenberger, Jeffery Minzlaff

December 6: James Jagielski, Amanda Oleson

December 10: Amanda Litts

December 14: Ethan Schomaker

December 15: Alexandria Cording

December 17: Nila Krenos

December 19: Lisa Cook, Nancy Sallee

December 21: Niklas Williams

December 22: Lori Kirt

December 23: David Despins

December 25: Aaron Trusty, Jerzee Trusty

December 26: Hope Goes, Philip Strohl

December 28: Gail Melgary

December 29: Randall Schroeder II

December 31: Barbara Francour



Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp Events

Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp will be holding the following events:

Jan. 10, March 14, and May 9: Senior Days, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Presentations and topics vary. Follow the camp on Facebook for updates and details.

January 14-16: Winter Wonderland, All ages. Includes lots of outdoor winter recreation, cozy fireside moments, and an optional day at Ski Brule at a reduced rate. Groups may stay over through January 17 for an additional fee.

February 4-5: "Disconnect to Reconnect," a retreat for people in grades 7-12.

February 11-13: "Nurturing Wholeness," young adults ages 18-26 (must be high school grads).

February 18-20: Young adult retreat with an emphasis on self care for people ages 18-26

February 25-26: "Building on Faith," youth retreat for kids in-grades 3-6

Each retreat includes meals, programming, opportunities to play both indoors and outdoors, time to reconnect with friends and family, and key faith formation for all ages. We welcome all to join us for these events, from camp veterans to Fortune Lake newbies. For more information, visit our website and keep an eye out for those flyers in the mail.

Registration for these events is now open at fortunelake.org. If you have any questions about the process or are interested in bringing a group from your congregation, please reach out by calling the camp office at 906-214-2267 or by emailing hospitality@fortunelake.org.



The Stewardship and Generosity Corner

The goal of Zion's Stewardship and Generosity Committee is to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus through the use of the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them.

Christmas is a hectic but wonderful time of the year. Decorations abound in and outside our home, enchanting Christmas music can be heard most everywhere, the scent of pine and cinnamon fills the air, cookies and candies are being attended to, and special food for a holiday gathering has been meticulously planned. Gifts are being made, purchased, and then wrapped, delivered, or sent. Yes, Christmas is delightful, but it's also frenzied, stressful, and for some a very sad and lonely time.

Amidst all this hubbub, we tend to forget about God, and yet he certainly doesn't forget about us. While we're doing the planning, decorating, purchasing, and wrapping — God is with us. He resides in our home, within each of us through his Holy Spirit. It is God's loving spirit that urges us, particularly at this time of year, to provide food, clothing, and toys for children and their families who are less fortunate. It is this time of year when we reach out to those near and dear, and it is most especially this time of year when we reach out to those we hardly know letting them know we care, and that we want to bring God's joy into their lives through our actions in whatever form that takes.

And so, in this the second year of the COVID-19 Pandemic I present an overview of what Zion is doing to make Christmas of 2021 a bit more celebratory than last year. The holiday festivities are not back to normal, but they are making a comeback in a scaled-down way.

Zion's Social Ministry Committee has decorated a Christmas tree in our lobby with tags that have the names of boys and girls whose parents need a little help providing their children a blessed and happy Christmas. Please take as many tags as you like making sure to record them on the log next to the

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The Stewardship and Generosity Corner

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tree. Shop for the items listed and anything else you think is appropriate. All gifts need to be returned unwrapped by December 5th. If you missed out, it isn't too late. You can still make a child very happy by going to an area retailer and picking a name or donating on the Salvation Army website or to one of the area kettles. The local Salvation Army estimates they will supply gifts to 350 area children this year. Please do what you can.

Zion's Sanctuary Arts Committee led by Kathy Heimbuch will be holding the decorating Zion for Christmas activity on December 9th at 10:00 am. This activity takes 1-2 hours depending on turnout. Kathy tells me the color scheme is gold and silver balls with red poinsettia. If this is something that warms your heart, and you feel comfortable participating, please plan to attend. There is no signup sheet, just show up and you'll be given a job or two to do. Masks are required. There will be no lunch served.

Johanna Zuehls is the playwright and director for the brilliant SPARK Children's Christmas production entitled, "A Silent Night in the Christmas Woods." The play will be taped and broadcast on December 19th at the 9:30 am Worship Service and via Facebook Live. I look forward to this every year. Seeing these adorable angels giving their all to this will put a smile on your face. Honestly, it is so unique and memorable! Thank you, Johanna, for all the work you put into this to make it a reality.

Ann Buscher may be recuperating from her unfortunate fall, but she remains dedicated to making Zion's Christmas worship season memorable through music. As I understand it, almost everything presented will be taped to make it safer for everyone, most especially the presenters. I don't know when these

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The Stewardship and Generosity Corner _____

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productions will be aired, but I can tell you what I know. A quartet comprised of Johanna Zuehls, Barb Grom, and Karen and Pastor Keith will be singing "Whisper Whisper." Addison Rosenfeldt will be singing "Mary Did You Know," and it is hoped a prior musical production by the full choir will be aired. Zion is blessed to have so many gifted individuals in its congregation, and the fact that they are willing to share their gifts from God with us is truly a blessing.

Lastly, so that all can attend Zion's Christmas Eve Worship Service safely, Pastor Keith and the Council have opted to have two worship services on December 24th. The first will take place at 4:30 p.m. and the second at 8:00 p.m. As always, masks are required. Watch the announcements emailed to your home for more details.

The pandemic lingers and continues to restrict what we can do safely, but Christmas remains a time for renewal, a time of joy, a time of love and deep affection. As you open your door, or you walk through someone else's door this holiday season, remember that God's Holy Spirit resides in you and those you greet. Weeks ago, Pastor Keith shared this short prayer: "I wonder how I'll see Jesus today. Dear Lord, Open my eyes." Won't you join us in this prayer daily? God will open your eyes!

I wish every member of the congregation a very Merry Christmas and hope that you feel blessed this holiday season knowing you have shared yourself and your resources to bring others happiness. I also hope that your cup overflows with the love, joy, and peace that others bring to you. There is so much to be thankful for, not the least of which is God's deep and enduring love.

In God's peace, and love,
Karen Sylvester

December Birthdays

December 5: Barbara Francour
December 8: Miah Andrist
December 9: Kimberly Graf
December 10: Sally Peterson
December 11: Keith Despins, John Radloff
December 13: Larry Nelson
December 15: Rachel Kuhn
December 16: Dean Schoen
December 20: Alice Larson, Dawn Vincent
December 21: Carrie Heitmeier, Lori Kirt
December 22: Presley Schroeder
December 26: Jacob Marzahl
December 27: Brian Krah
December 31: Eileen Jagielski, Alexis Roth, Gabriel Roth



Stay Up to Date with Zion

Are you on Zion's email list? If not, would you like to be? To be included on our email list, please send an email to: zion@newbc.rr.com requesting to be added to our emailing list. The emails consist of weekly announcements, important reminders, sign ups for distribution of Holy Communion and the monthly newsletter (just to name a few)!

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION 2020-2021

Equal in God's Kingdom

Cholita Narzary made history in November 2020 as the second woman ordained into ministry by the Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC) in Assam, India. She joined the roster 22 years after the denomination ordained its first woman, the late Kunanjaw Basumatary, who served as BELC bishop in the past. "Since the first woman's ordination there were many silent years," said Ichahak Muchahary, BELC bishop. "The church becomes a family only with the recognition of women as equal partners in God's vineyard."

Muchahary credits the ELCA-organized 2019 South East Asia Conference on Gender Justice in Hyderabad, India, for pushing him and other leaders to advocate for and implement gender justice shifts within the church. The ELCA has accompanied the BELC for two years, funding some of its ministries through Mission Support. Since entering a formal companion relationship with the BELC in 2018, the ELCA has accompanied the church with mutual encouragement and leadership training events and funded community development, disaster response and academic scholarships (including for International Women Leaders). Said Narzary of her ordination, "I knew the call of God from my childhood, but due to my parents and others, I could not go for further biblical studies. It took me long years, and it was really challenging for a girl like me to [acknowledge] my true [vocation]."

Prior to 2020, Narzary served as an evangelist and Sunday school teacher within the BELC and received training at the Karnataka Theological College in Mangalore (India).

She currently works as women's coordinator for the BELC, manages its Silk Research and Development Centre and leads a local parish.

Muchahary said Narzary's ordination has paved the way for the BELC to ordain more women. Currently six are pursuing theological studies in different seminaries in India and, in 2021

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STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION 2020-2021

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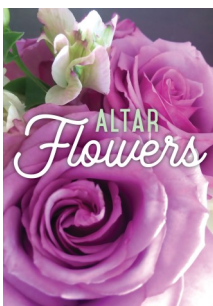
the BELC General Council adopted a resolution to implement 41% gender representation in all its governing bodies, in compliance with the Lutheran World Federation's gender justice policy. With those amendments, Narzary hopes that many qualified and ordained women will take leadership positions in the BELC. "Women have always been in the forefront of Jesus' ministry," she said. **"I strongly believe that men and women are equal in God's kingdom, both bearing the image of God. Now, after experiencing the work that women are also capable [of], the church will open the door for other women too."**

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Thank you for your generous gifts of Mission Support, which made this story of faith in action possible. Mission Support is the portion of your offering your congregation shares with your synod, and your synod shares with the church-wide organization. To learn more, visit ELCA.org/SOFIA.

Donate to Zion

Did you know that you are able to contribute to Zion via the website? Simply to go: <http://www.zionlutheran-marinette.org> and in the far right margin of the page is a nice purple rectangle button that reads: Donate. Click it and follow the steps to donate. If you have questions, please call Karen Houdek. She'll help you through each step of the way. You may also click on the "Shop Now" button on Zion's Facebook page!



Altar Flower Sponsorships

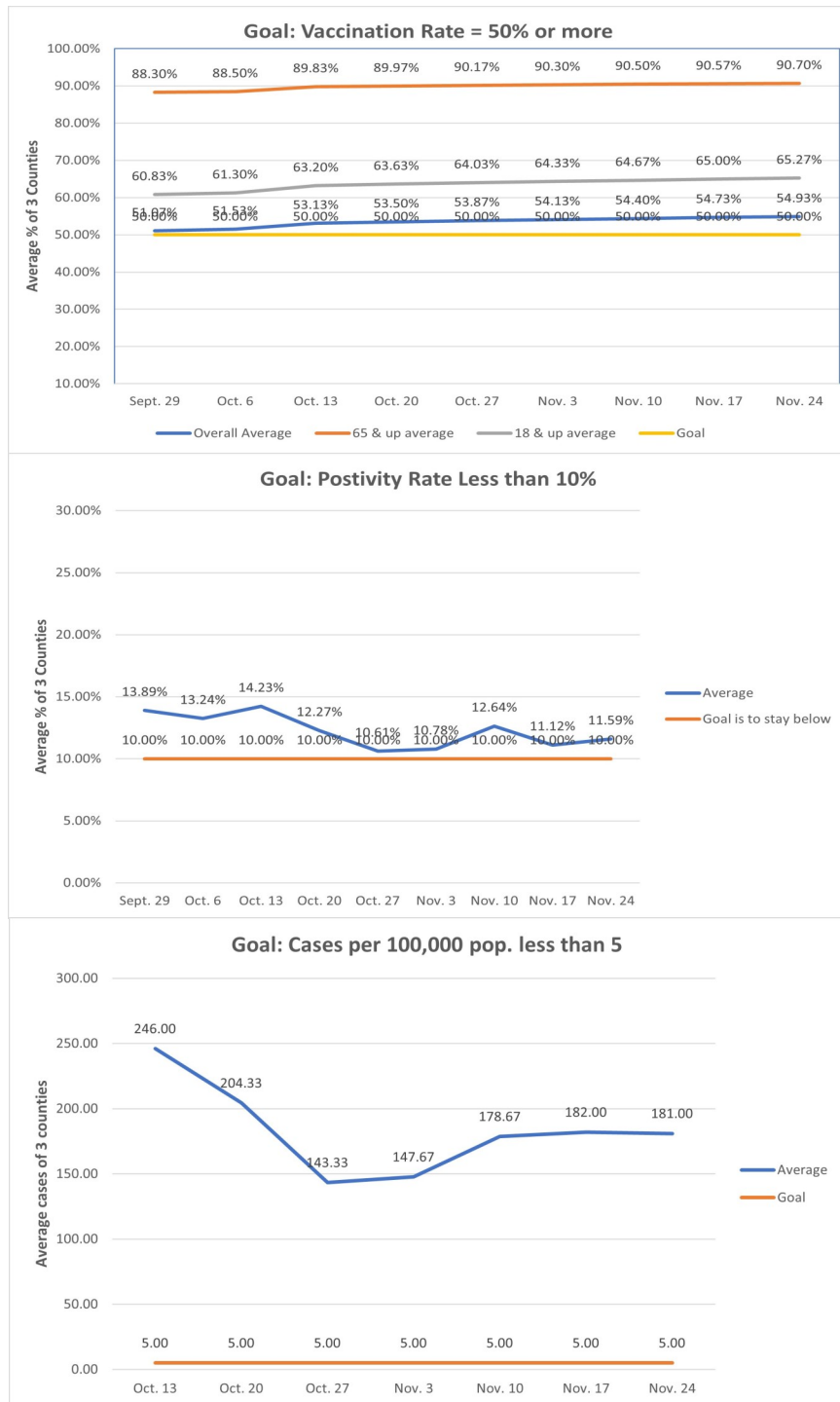
Zion has altar flower sponsorships available. The cost of sponsoring the flowers for one week is \$15.00. Dates are reserved on a first come first serve basis. To reserve a date, please call or email Zion's office at 715-732- 7898 or Zion@newbc.rr.com.

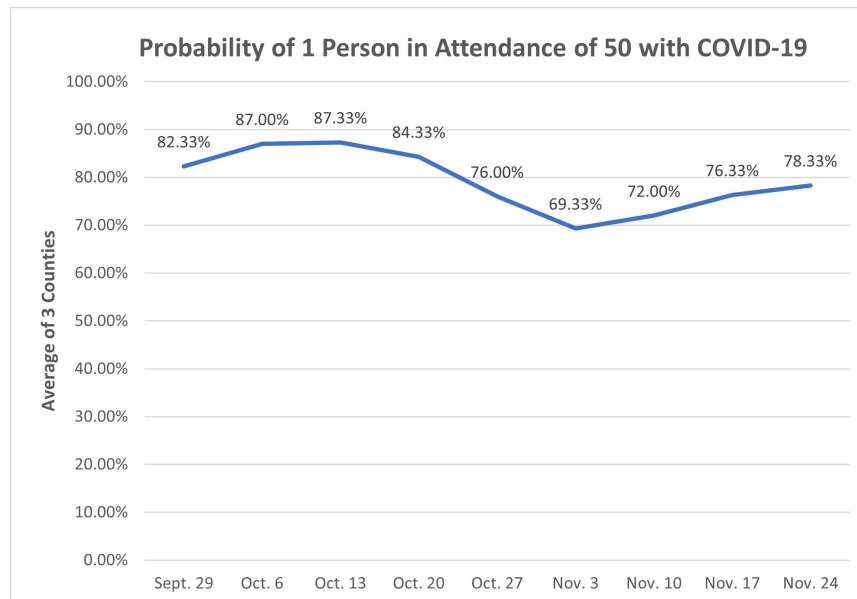
Indoor in-person worship

Indoor services are held every Sunday. ***At this time, Zion is no longer requiring you to reserve a pew for the in-person indoor worship. However, it is subject to change*** and is dependent upon the positive test rate and the probability rate. Social distancing practices will continue to be used (no passing of the peace or offering plate, limited & soft singing). Please visit Zion's website to read the [Protocols for In-Person Indoor Worship](#) - *all adults in attendance are required to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth* (the exception being Pastor who is leading worship).

At this time, we acknowledge that there is some risk involved. Even though as of November 24, our local total population is 54.93% vaccinated which surpasses our safer goal of 50%, our 65+ age group is over our safe goal at 90.70%. The 18 & up vaccinated average is currently at 65.27%. We are also watching the test positivity rate. Our area's positivity rate is 11.59%, which is over our goal and persists above it. Cases per 100,000 has been dropping but remains high. Another measurement is a percentage of probability where, in a gathering of 50 people, how likely is it that someone with COVID-19 would be present. Right now, there is a 78.33% chance of this happening. We are watching the trend of each graph with what are considered to be safer and safe goals in mind. The data used in the graphs is collected from the CDC website and from a website tool provided to us from our Northern Great Lakes Synod. Please make the time to familiarize yourself with the graphs/information. As always, if you have questions, please call Zion's office at: 715-735-7898 or send an email to: Zion@newbc.rr.com.

Here are the charts showing the various COVID-19 data on which the Congregation Council is keeping a close eye.





From our families to yours, happy holidays!_____

From all of us in and around Zion; we wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year. We are looking forward to spending 2022 with you!

Peace and Blessings,

Pastor Keith, Karen H., Michelle, Ann, Rachel and Marissa





Poinsettias serve as beautiful Christmas decorations. If you make a donation of at least **\$13.00** you may take one of the plants home following the 8:00 p.m. service on **Friday, December 24, 2021**. You may also designate it as a gift in memory or honor of someone.

If you are willing to purchase one or more Poinsettia, please fill out the form below and place it in the offering plate.

The order forms and payment must be received by
Zion's office by Friday, December 3.

GIVEN BY _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

IN HONOR OF _____

AMOUNT CONTRIBUTED: \$ _____

Envelope # _____

**PLEASE ENCLOSE THIS FORM WITH YOUR MONEY AND DROP
 OFF AT ZION, MAIL TO ZION OR EMAIL ZION'S OFFICE @
 ZION@NEWBC.RR.COM SO WE CAN SUBMIT OUR ORDER.**

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Going Where Jesus Leads



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