

WE ARE ZION



Zion Lutheran Church

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**E
W
S**

January 2022



**The Seven
Marks of
Discipleship**

#Pray

#Worship

#Study

#Invite

#Encourage

#Give

#Serve

“It’s Christmas Until Epiphany”

I need to confess that I’ve been a little snarky lately, and if you were the recipient of my snark, I apologize. My snark has been triggered by questions and comments surrounding the celebration of Christmas. On the second day of Christmas, I heard someone say, “Now that Christmas is over.” I controlled myself and stayed quiet. It wasn’t easy. But, I haven’t stayed quiet when people have questioned when to celebrate the 12 days of Christmas, or have wondered how long their Christmas celebration should last. “Christmas begins on Christmas day,” I say, “and lasts for 12 days. Each day is as much a day of Christmas as is the first one.” I’m often surprised by the number of people for which this is new information.

My snarkiness, however, is uncalled for. Outside of the popular song, (“Five golden rings, ba dump, bump, bump!”), the knowledge of Christmas being celebrated for just shy of two weeks is mostly relegated to church nerds like me. And just like I am unaware of the basic theorems that physicists operate with every day, why should those outside the church or on its periphery be aware of the seasons of the church year and how long each one lasts?

Part of the confusion, surely, comes from the popularity of our, (the church’s), celebration of Christmas. In case you haven’t noticed, there are lots of people who like to celebrate it with us, people who have little to no idea what Christmas is all about. As the number of people who profess to have no faith continues to grow, there doesn’t seem to be any slowdown in the number of people who celebrate Christmas.

It’s tempting to get snarky with the “Reason for the Season” comments to those who don’t believe, but I tend to take a different approach. How awesome is it that

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something as important to us the birth of Christ is not only on the lips of those who profess to not believe, but that they also embrace many of things attributed to Christ, like love, caring, generosity, sacrifice, and even humility. Imagine countless people around the world celebrating the birthday of your grandmother, people who have no idea how special she is to you or what made her the wonderful person that she is/was. It's just "Ida's birthday, and we travel to be with family and friends, and we give gifts and have special meals and decorate and carol, and watch special movies on the Hallmark Channel, etc. all because it is Ida's birthday." It would be pretty awesome to have her remembered like that even though so many did not know her. It can be that way for Christmas as well. No snarkiness needed.

However, all those who celebrate our holiday usually conclude their celebrations shortly after the 25th, but we do not. We continue until the 6th of January when a new season in the church year starts: The celebration of Epiphany; the day when the magi come to see Jesus and present him with gifts. (By the way, here's another opportunity to be snarky. How many magi/wise men were there? We don't know because the Bible doesn't say. There was more than one, but the exact number is not listed. We know they gave three gifts, but those three gifts could have been given by two magi or by six. Matthew 2:1-12) We get 12 days to celebrate. I pray that your celebration is still filled with joy and wonder.

Pastor Keith





Zion received the following thank you note from a grateful recipient.

Pastor Keith and Karen Kolstad — Dear Zion Family,
 THANK YOU for remembering us this Christmas season with your cards and gifts! We are truly blessed by each and every one of you and give thanks to God for you every day. May you and yours enjoy a wonderful holiday season and abundant joy and health in 2022!

What's Around the Corner in January? _____

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

- Jan. 2: Second Sunday of Christmas, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Special music recorded by Jim Weissgerber. Removal of holiday decorations following worship.
- Jan. 9: Baptism of Our Lord, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Contemporary worship.
- Jan. 16: Second Sunday after Epiphany. 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.
- Jan. 23: Third Sunday after Epiphany. 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Special Music by Johanna Zuehls.
- Jan. 30: Fourth Sunday after Epiphany. 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.

Congregation Council Highlights

The congregational council met via Zoom on December 14, 2021. Pastor Keith reported that the November attendance was very similar to the October attendance. He performed one baptism on November 21st. And he will be taking his final vacation day for the year on December 26th.

The November financial report showed a general fund increase this month and a year-to-date decrease of \$6071. The Capital Improvement Fund showed \$50 of unrestricted donations, \$50 donated for pew repairs, and \$2805 for the piano. An additional \$150 was transferred in from The Helping Hand Fund reclassifying funds for pew repairs.

The Property Committee still awaits a response on the bell repairs. Some plumbing repairs will be needed in the kitchen to correct the hot water supply to the dishwasher; the committee is hoping to obtain a quote by the end of the year so that it can be added to the 2022 budget. The Social Ministry Committee reports another successful Angel Tree project, with all names chosen and gifts forwarded to Salvation Army for delivery. Youth Ministry used raised monies for one of the Angel Tree cards. The Stewardship and Generosity Committee is still collecting the commitment forms from their fall drive. The Personnel Committee has reported that annual evaluations are completed and has recommended an increase in salaries for 2022. And The Mission Endowment Committee held a meeting on Nov. 22nd in which they discussed publicizing of grants, promotion of funds, and review of membership.

Worship continues to be held indoors, and Communion during worship was moved from outdoors to inside near open doors. Safety protocols and monitoring of recommendations continue. Zion has chosen to charter Cub Scout Pack 4168; this has a charter expense of \$75.00 for Zion. Troy Cording will be the representative, and both Troy and Pastor Keith were able to attend a Keeping Kids Safe training class as a part of this.

The Council was provided a draft of the budget for 2022 to review before the January 11th, 2022 council meeting.

The Annual Meeting was set for January 30th, 2022 following worship, and will be held in person.

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

January 1: Beverly DeGroot, Robert Hamer, Carrie Heitmeier,
Alice Larson and Dean Schoen

January 2: Kurt Aschim

January 3: Lynn Francour

January 5: Mary Hayward

January 7: Carol Magnuson

January 8: Naomi Dumke

January 9: Jaclynn Knopik and Mary Thielen

January 10: Ainsley Emler and Bryan Gutknecht

January 15: Susan Fischer

January 17: Addalynn Brown

January 18: Spencer Martin

January 20: Karen Dill

January 27: Alexis Roth and Gabriel Roth

January 30: Carissa Kempka



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.

We sang this hymn at a recent Sunday Worship Service, and I thought it mirrored my thoughts about the approaching long winter months still ahead and the promise of 2022 yet to come.

"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

*Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.*

*Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story,
May God fill every day we share and bring us at last into glory.*

This past year remained challenging for me, just as 2020 did. Thank you very much, COVID-19, the Delta variant, and now the Omicron variant! I most assuredly made adjustments to the way we lived our lives. Nobody got through our front door, not even our son or granddaughters. My emotions were all over the place. I went from scared to angry, to hopeful, then back to angry and terrified. For months on end, I couldn't seem to get anything done, all I wanted to do, all I did, was shut myself off from the world, curl up with a book and not move. I was not coping very well with my new lifestyle. I felt isolated; I was isolated. I felt myself retreating into myself. I felt I was becoming a loner. Frankly, I think I may have been just a bit depressed.

Then my husband and I both got immunized and our front door opened once again. We welcomed family back into our home, we were able to hug and kiss each other and share a meal together. It was wondrous! I felt joy again. The sunshine came back into my life. We attended our granddaughter's wedding,

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The Stewardship and Generosity Corner_____

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and it was beautiful and so very special. We took a trip on Amtrak's Empire Builder to Whitefish, Montana.

What an experience! Zion started in-person worship and I could worship and sing with the congregation once again. I could feel God's Holy Spirit filling me up. I felt God's joy and his love within me. I cherish the fact that life as I knew it is returning, and it is a wondrous joy.

Throughout this pandemic, I somehow lost sight of — or stopped thinking about— the blessings God continued to shower down on me. I needed to remind myself to seek out those blessings and try to share them with people I encounter. I need to savor the life I never thought I'd have all these many years and to be of service to others (something which brings me joy) even though the Pandemic rages on.

Now as I face a new year, my anxiety levels have decreased somewhat, but I am concerned about the Omicron variant, and the effect it may have on my family and our community. I do feel a bit more carefree and hopeful than I did in 2020 and early 2021. For the most part, my optimism has guardedly returned. I know God continues to bless me and I strive to remember those blessings rather than concern myself with the threats that could envelop me.

What 2022 will bring is anyone's guess, but one thing we can be sure of is what this beautiful song tells us.

*Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.*

*Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story,
May God fill every day we share and bring us at last into glory.*

The Stewardship and Generosity Corner _____

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I wish you all a very happy New Year!!

I pray 2022 fills your heart and mine with God's love and
grace,
Karen Sylvester

Donate to Zion _____

Did you know that you are able to contribute to Zion via the website? Simply to go:

<http://www.zionlutheran-marquette.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!



January Eternal Light _____

The Eternal Light for the month of January is sponsored by Ann Buscher in honor of all who share their musical talents with Zion.

Worship Assistant Opportunities _____

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer as a lector or as an usher please contact Ann Buscher at 715-735-3017. 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!

January Birthdays

January 2: Debra Harding
 January 3: David Francour
 January 4: Mary Hayward
 January 5: Adison Rosenfeldt and Daniel Zuehls
 January 10: Johanna Zuehls
 January 13: Oliver Swenson
 January 15: Paige Dugre, Marilyn Gould, Dianne Slack and Bethany Wolf
 January 17: Maryellen Radloff
 January 18: Gina Boucher
 January 20: Kathleen Heimbuch
 January 21: Sharon Powilaite and Drake Schutt
 January 22: Shawn Limberg
 January 23: Willow Williams
 January 24: Pamela Lund and Tatem Schroeder
 January 25: Beverly DeGroot and Denise Despins
 January 26: Colleen Madden
 January 30: Shirley Kaufman



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

Evangelism is Alive in Malawi

In spite of COVID-19, ministry continues.

Those are words from Evance Mphalasa, a pastor and acting general secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi (ELCM), words that have energized him and a team of evangelists as they spread the gospel despite the setbacks of the pandemic.

Strict government measures issued in early 2020 closed some of the churches in Malawi and restricted gatherings to 100 people, said Feston Phiri, pastor, ELCM director for training and secretary for mission and evangelism. Churches that remained open had to provide congregants with masks, sanitizer and water buckets, unbudgeted expenses that proved financially devastating.

Additionally, the printing of Sunday school and evangelism materials — particularly those in the Tumbuka language — stopped completely because most offices were closed, Phiri said. Malawian evangelists were not deterred.

2020 was “a very hard time indeed in regard with evangelism in Malawi, but I think the whole world [was challenged],” he said. “Despite this COVID-19, as a problem, Malawi has not stopped evangelizing. [We simply used] a different approach.

Pastors hosted two, three, even four services each Sunday to accommodate the small gathering restrictions. To further share the gospel, Phiri said, evangelists organized a van equipped with loudspeakers so they could preach and sing to people in their homes. “We used this van and this singing group, which is a praise team, evangelizing, going around to different areas, reaching out to different people with this kind of way,” he said. “This exercise was done during [the evenings] ... when people are in their houses, so it was very easy to reach them.”

Many first-world countries turned to social media to continue faith conversations and stay connected to parishioners, but
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STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION 2020-2021

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Malawians lacked that luxury.

ELCM Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe created a virtual forum for Malawi pastors, providing daily updates so the pastors could stay at the forefront of helping their parishes.

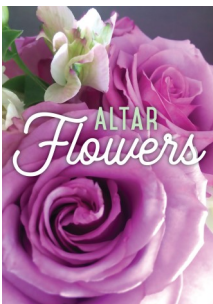
“Bishop never slept; he was always helping to get us the latest information about COVID-19, always sending messages through the forums for pastors,” said Mphalasa. “Then, the pastor disseminated the information.”

This outreach — part of which was funded through ELCA Mission Support — has encouraged and increased the growth of the church, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Without your help, we wouldn’t be talking about expanding the church,” Phiri said. “The church is growing so fast and so rapidly. This is very important.

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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](https://elca.org/SOFIA).



Altar Flower Sponsorships

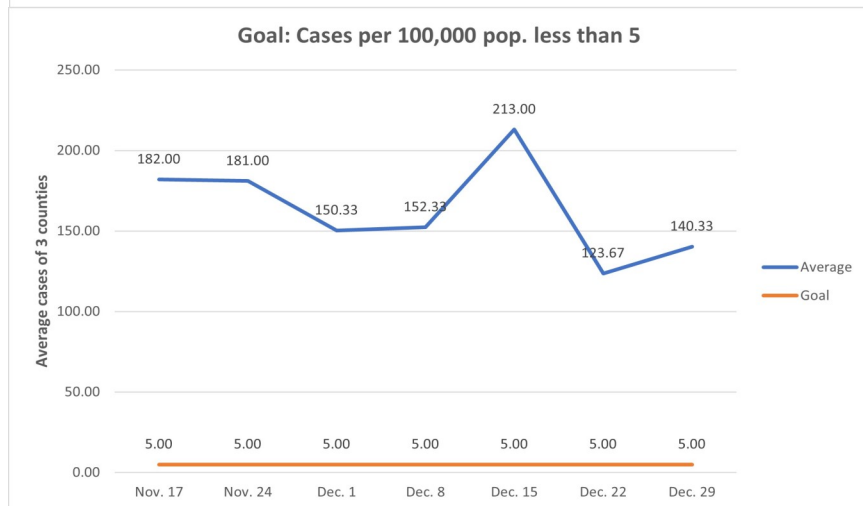
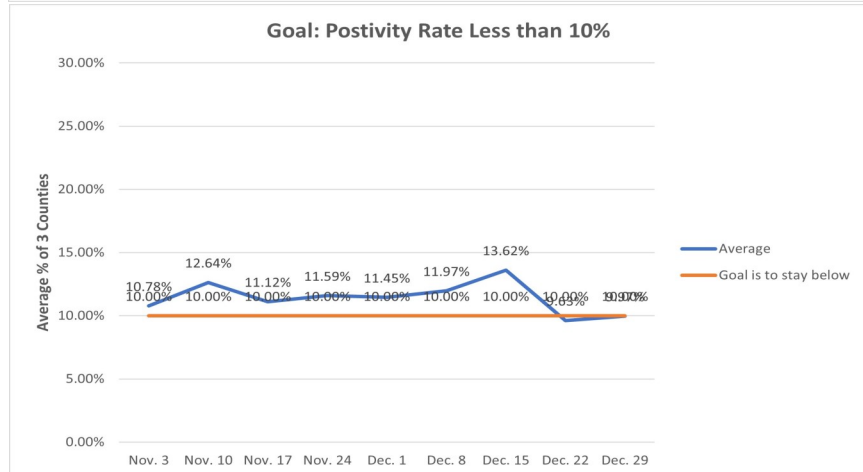
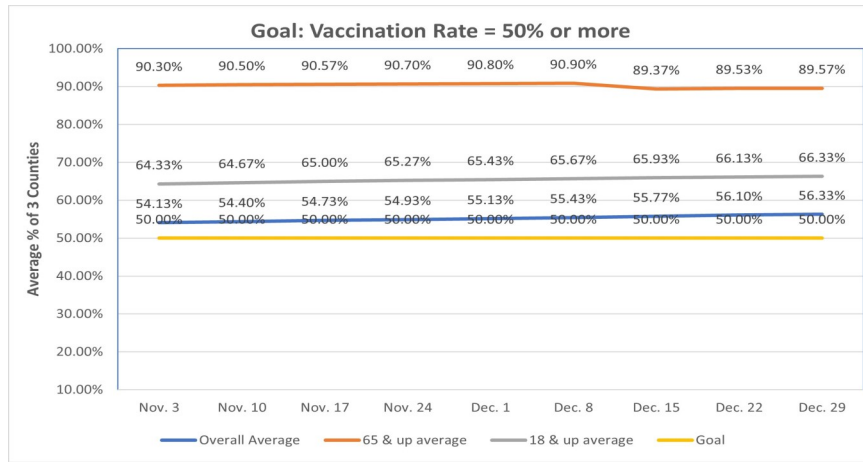
Zion has altar flower sponsorships available. The cost of sponsoring the flowers for one week is \$15.00. Dates are reserved on a first come first serve basis. To reserve a date, please call or email Zion’s office at 715-732- 7898 or Zion@newbc.rr.com.

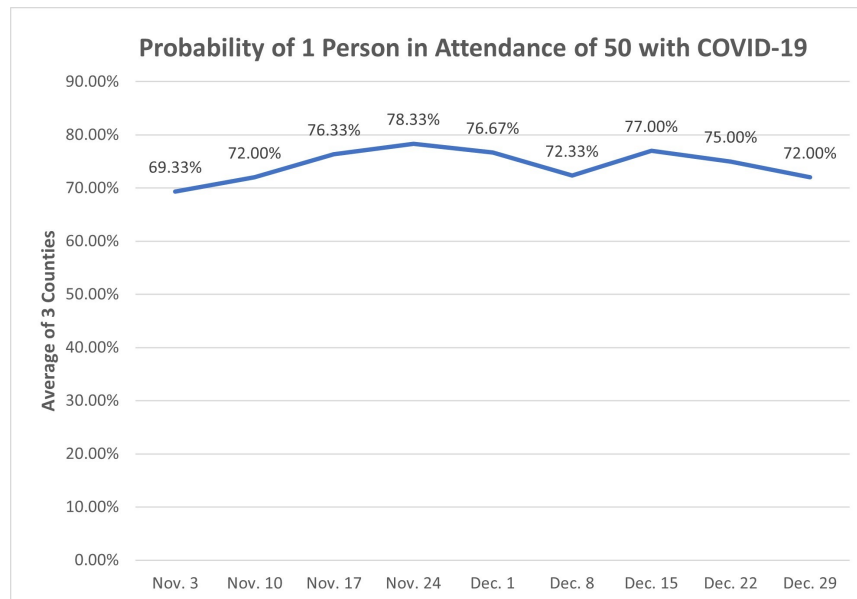
Indoor in-person worship

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 December 29, our local total population is 56.33% vaccinated which surpasses our safer goal of 50%, our 65+ age group is over our safe goal at 89.57%. The 18 & up vaccinated average is currently at 66.33%. We are also watching the test positivity rate. Our area's positivity rate is 9.97%, which is below our goal and but remains close to it. Cases per 100,000 has been dropping but remain 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 72% 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.





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Going Where Jesus Leads



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Equipping the Saints for Ministry



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God's work. Our hands.