

WE ARE ZION

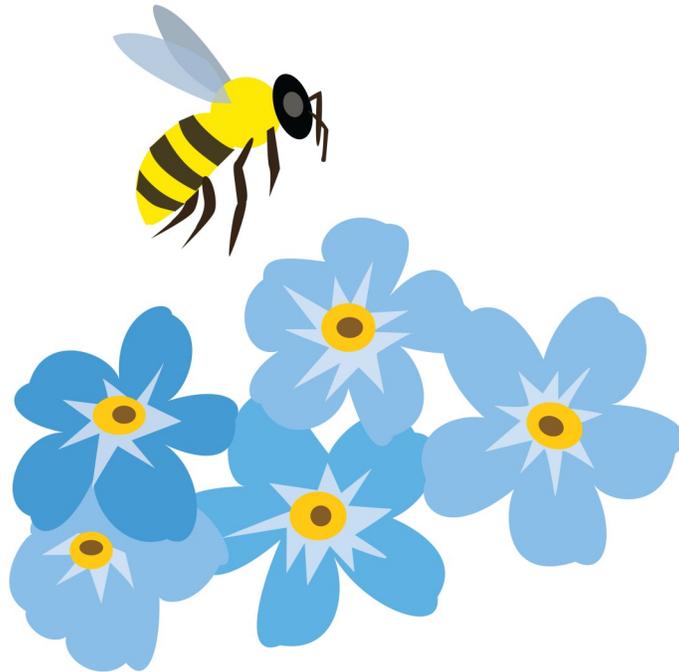


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www.zionlutheran-marinette.org

May 2022



**The Seven
Marks of
Discipleship**

#Pray

#Worship

#Study

#Invite

#Encourage

#Give

#Serve

FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

Dear People of God at Zion,

Last evening (April 19), at the Congregation Council meeting led by Bishop Katherine Finegan, I was authorized to serve as your Interim Pastor. As I anticipate this to be a relationship that will last one year or longer, I would like to introduce myself to you.

In actuality, I am no stranger to Zion. During the 33 years I served as Senior Pastor at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Menominee and 9 years of retirement, I have worshiped at Zion many times, preached at Zion on several occasions, and attended numerous events at Zion. I have enjoyed a close friendship and collegial relationship with both Pastor Paul Holmstrom and Pastor Keith Kolstad. My wife, Marilyn, served as one of Zion's organists for 25 years and as choir director for 3 of those years. In fact, it is primarily through Marilyn's involvement at Zion that I became familiar with Zion congregation and established friendships with many of your members. I preached at Pastor Holmstrom's retirement service and then served as Interim Pastor when you called Keith Kolstad to be your pastor. I have always felt a close bond with Zion congregation. I am pleased to once again serve you as you transition from one pastor to the next.

Beginning May 1st, I will be serving you on a ¼-time basis, the equivalent of 1-2 days per week, or 8-12 hours. I intend to hold office hours at the church on Tuesdays and Thursdays, approximately 9:00-noon. This will give me an opportunity to work with your office administrator, Marissa, on bulletins, newsletters and other administrative matters, and be available to members who would like to meet with me. In the afternoon I might visit members in the hospital, nursing homes and make home visits to members who need pastoral care. I will officiate at baptisms, weddings and funerals, or arrange for someone else to provide those services. My administrative responsibilities will include overseeing and guiding the work of the Congregational Council, committees and programs of the congregation. I will also oversee and guide

the process of accessing the congregation's assets and needs in preparation for interviewing pastoral candidates that will lead to the calling of a pastor. In essence, I will be responsible for all that is required of a pastor.

A ¼-time Interim Pastorate normally requires leading worship and preaching one Sunday per month. However, in the interest of maintaining stability and offering a consistent pastoral presence, I will lead worship and preach three Sundays per month on average. I will continue a long-term commitment to lead worship at another community church on the 2nd Sunday of every month and arrange for pulpit supply on those Sundays. I will also fill in for my Pastor, Scott Ehle, when possible and arrange for pulpit supply at Zion on those Sundays. That will allow me to maintain some presence at Bethel Lutheran Church in Menominee where Marilyn and I are members. I have already arranged for pulpit supply in the coming months by Craig Mansur, Nick Johannes and Rick DeBenedetto, all pastors familiar to Zion members. Bishop Finegan will lead worship and preach at Zion on September 11th.

Finally, I will be on call at all times for emergencies and to meet the pastoral needs of Zion members. I may be reached at 906-863-5463 (home) or 906-271-1106 (cell). My email address is dschoen4@new.rr.com.

I look forward to joining you in celebrating and affirming the faithful, fruitful and visionary leadership that Pastor Keith has provided Zion over the past 24 years. I will support you in grieving the loss of a good pastor, encourage you as you build on your strengths as a vibrant, generous and mission-minded congregation, and prepare you for calling the next pastor who will serve you. Only God knows who and when that will be. Please join me in prayerfully giving thanks for all that God has done through Zion congregation in the past and what God will continue to do through Zion in the future as we GO WHERE JESUS LEADS.

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Doug Schoen

Congregation Council Highlights



The congregational council met April 12th, 2022 at 6:30 pm. Pastor's Report: Attendance report and upcoming baptism and funeral. Confirmation classes have concluded for the year. Students will be ready for Confirmation the last Sunday of October. First Communion class will begin.

Pastor will be unable to attend to the membership roles to identify those who have fallen off. The council should make other preparations for this project and can work with Marissa. Also should put together a new member program for when the new Pastor is on board. Zoom subscription has been ordered, Zion owns its own – going forward, council meetings can utilize it. The purchase of the Parsonage Property by the Kolstad's will be complete at the end of the month. They would like to plant a tree, a Burr Oak, on the property as a thank you to the Zion family for the years together. May 13 there will be a blood drive, Marissa is aware, but there will be a little set-up to be done.

March Financial Update: Fund balance increased by over \$11,000, some is from the World Hunger Drive, which will be paid at the end of the drive. Will deduct \$800 from the Community camper fund, this adjustment will possibly come from the general fund and will be noted next month.

Property: Water pump coupler system replaced. No update on the bell. Will be looking to replace the lawn care company, as the one we previously used has retired. Troy is looking into other options.

Social Ministry: World Hunger Drive taking place, received almost \$5,000. The last day will be Easter Sunday, this

Continued...

Congregation Council Highlights

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weekend. This money will be part of the drive for the Synod Assembly.

Worship & Music: Should discuss whether the Facebook prayer petitions will be included in the in-person worship. Also, going forward we can use past versions of prelude slides are created while the organist plays at the beginning of the service. Currently, Pastor does it based on the theme of the day. All the Power-Point presentations exist on the computer since 2010. Post-covid has gotten away from the full bulletin (all the words, prayers, songs) and will not be re-instituting.

Youth Ministry: Karen Dill would like to add Rachel Rosenfeld to the checking account.

Stewardship & Generosity: Meeting held last week, they are planning the year-long drive, which was first discussed before Covid. There will be monthly/seasonal themes based on the 7 marks of discipleship. Will allow people to make a commitment to growth in prayer, worship, study, encouragement, etc. Also looking to continue recognizing baptismal birthdays and bring in other people who should be recognized for doing Christ's work in everyday life. A good visioning meeting for this year and beyond.

Harvest of Hope Community Garden: E-mails have been sent to sign up for plots, and some outdoor work has begun.

Mission Endowment Fund: Meeting in June to go over the applications. One application came in today.

Old Business

Continued...

Congregation Council Highlights

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Worship During a Pandemic: Looking for any feedback people would like to share. Hearing none, this item can be removed from future agendas.

Zoom Meeting Room: We're asked by the Synod to host the Synodical meeting. It would require to have Zoom functionality. Though we would have the equipment for this meeting, we would utilize it going forward for other stewardship needs. Full estimate from Northern Sound & Video is around \$5,400 including installation. Camera \$2,000, television \$2,000 for about an 85" screen, rolling cart \$1,300. The size of the room determines the type of equipment needed. If the room cannot be designed in time, we can do it in the sanctuary. Use the Agnes Bennett Memorial/Christian Ed Fund and unrestricted Memorial fund toward the expenses. MSC Dean/Mark. Hoping it would be installed by May 14. A/V team would be responsible to learn how to use it and train others how to use it as well.

New Business

New Boiler: When recent work was being done on the pump, technicians noticed that the boiler may need to be replaced. Typically, a boiler lasts about 20 years and this one was purchased in the 90s. Johnston Furnace Service Corp gave us an estimate after looking at our configuration. The estimate is for 3 boilers that would work in tandem to heat, in warm weather, only one would work. This would be more efficient and save the amount of gas used. Also recommend replacing the water heater to which would provide limitless hot water when needed, and be more efficient when not in use. Lastly, recommend replacing water pumps and expansion tanks, All of these are estimated over \$61,000, the bid is good for 30-days. There may be the option to receive Focus on Energy Grants with more efficient pumps and boilers. Johnston also gives us at 10% rebate as a non-profit. Though yearly maintenance will be costly, the savings

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Congregation Council Highlights

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on energy costs will be a major benefit. Troy asked LeeAnn to reach out to the bank to see if we could get a 5-year loan. To pass this type of project, it would have to go before the congregation. We will have information prepared.

Call Committee: Karen Sylvester would like to be part of the Call Committee when the time comes. Pastor explained that Call Committees can be the entire Council or can be a subcommittee of the council using appointed members. Ultimately, the final say is by the council with the congregation voting on the proposed candidate.

Synod Answer the Call Campaign: Request from the Bishop, asking that we put the information in our bulletins one Sunday in May. A general fundraiser to help seminary students pay off their debt from schooling. Troy recommends May 15, a loose offering as well as intentional donations.

The congregational council also met April 19th, 2022 at 6:30 pm. Devotions were given by Pastor Keith. Pastor Keith's exit interview was completed. Pastor Doug was introduced and details of interim were discussed. Overview of transition time and call process was discussed. Motion made by Dave Johnson to ask Pastor Doug to be interim pastor. This motion was seconded by Mark Swenson. Pastor Doug accepted.

The next council meeting is May 10.

Congregational Meeting

Before the service on May 22nd, there will be a congregational meeting to discuss Zion's boiler and the bell.

One More Goodbye

Dear Friends,

Well, that was certainly an unexpected “last Sunday.” Karen and I are saddened and sorry that things didn’t work out as planned, particularly for all the work and expense that was not recoverable, but we do look forward to our “final Sunday” taking place on May 22. It will be important for us to take the time to say goodbye in a more formal way, and to officially pass the torch to Pastor Doug. We all need that formal time of closure, even if it will be taking place after the event.

It is important to say goodbye. That’s what the women were doing when they came to the tomb on that very first Easter morning. Yes, the angels asked them why they were seeking the living among the dead, but it wasn’t a scold. Even if they fully anticipated the emptiness of the tomb, they didn’t know how that empty tomb would affect their futures. They still needed to say goodbye and going to the tomb was, for them, a way of doing so.

Saying goodbye is important for us as well. We have lived together for these 23+ years. We have cried and laughed together. I have presided at funerals and weddings, baptisms and confirmations, prayer, and Holy Communion for all of you at one time or another. We have been involved in creative and dynamic ministry plans over the years. That will be coming to an end officially on April 30 and symbolically on May 22. I will miss being so intimately involved in the life of a community of people. This is what I was ordained to do almost 37 years ago. It has become an essential part of who I am.

As you may also know, Karen and I will not be moving away from Marinette. We love this community and the nearness it offers to our fathers and our daughter’s family. However, not moving creates a set of circumstances that I must address in advance of my departure.

Continued...

One More Goodbye

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It is part of the professional ethic of a pastor to not interfere in any way in the ongoing life of a congregation previously served. I'm sure you can imagine the kind of disruption that is possible if a former pastor continued to attempt to influence the life of a congregation. To avoid even the appearance of such intrusion, here is how I intend to conduct myself after my retirement:

Karen and I will transfer our membership from Zion to another congregation.

- I cannot solicit nor be available for pastoral care or ministerial acts at Zion after my retirement (weddings, funerals, baptism, hospital calls, etc.).
- I cannot attempt in any way to influence the ongoing life and decision making of Zion.
- Since we will still cross paths in the community, you can help by not asking me for comment on new developments in the life of the congregation. This will help me refrain from nicely saying that I can't comment.
- I will pray daily for the people of God at Zion and for the continued life and growth of the congregation.

These sorts of "boundaries" are in the best interest of the congregation. In the coming weeks and months, the best interest of the congregation we love will need to be at the forefront of everyone's hearts and minds. If everyone focuses on what is best for the whole congregation, more than on personal interest and desire, then all will be well.

These times of transition are difficult for everyone, and yet we know that times of transition are the times when

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One More Goodbye

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tremendous growth is possible. We are Easter people! This affects more than just our afterlife. It also affects today. We look for the living, for new life, among the dead because that's exactly where Christ is.

God be with all of you as we lean into God's gracious future.

Blessings to you, now and always,

Pastor Keith

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

May 1: Chad Derby, Karen Houdek, Carol Johnson,
David Johnson and Michelle Larson

May 3: Shirley Kaufman

May 6: Cassandra Bauer

May 7: Oliver Swenson

May 8: Diane Race

May 12: Nicole Oleson, John Powilaites, Jacob Swenson and
Marlea Wienandt

May 13: Martha Aschim

May 15: Elsa Limberg and Bonnie Schoen

May 17: Baylee Zuraski

May 24: Troy Schutt

May 25: Sophie Limberg

May 26: Easton Buenning and Judy Stehle

May 27: Willow Williams

May 29: Ruth Olson and Shirley Swenson



Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp Events

Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp will be holding the following events:

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

Leaders-in-Training (LIT): Grades 10-12, Week 1: June 19-24, Week 2: July 5-8, July 10-15, or July 17-22

High School Week: Grades 9-12, June 26-July 1

Youth Week: Grades 3-8, July 10-15 or August 7-10

(Villager, Vagabond, Venturer) **Mini Week:** Grades 1-8, July 5-8, Mighty Ones (T-Th), Minis (also offered Aug 7-10), Mash Up

Specialty Camps: Grades 3-8, July 17-22 (Art Camp, LEGO Camp)

Jr. High Night Owls: Grades 6-8, July 17-22

On-site Day Camp: Grades K-5, July 24-29

Intergenerational Week: All ages, June 19-24 or July 24-29

Victory Camp: 18+ with disabilities, June 12-17

Musical Theater Week: All ages w/ parents, Grades 7+ without an adult, July 31-August 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. For more information and registration details, visit FLLC's [website](#).

FORTUNE LAKE LUTHERAN CAMP			
	DATES	CAMP PROGRAM & AGE/GRADE COMPLETED	COST
Week 1	June 12-17	Victory Camp (Adult 18+ with disabilities)	\$625
Week 2	June 19-24	Intergenerational Week (all ages) LIT Training Week (Grades 10-12)	See website \$425
Week 3	June 26-July 1	High School Week (Grades 9-12)	\$425
	July 5-7	Mighty Ones (Grades 1-2)	\$205
Week 4	July 5-8	Mini Camp (Grades 2-3) Mash Ups (Grades 4-8) LIT Option #1 (Grades 10-12)	\$305 No charge
Week 5	July 10-15	Villager (Grades 3-4) Vagabond (Grades 5-6) Venturer (Grades 7-8) LIT #2 Option (Grades 10-12)	\$425 No charge
Week 6	July 17-22	Art Camp (Grades 3-8) LEGO® Camp (Grades 3-8) Jr High Night Owl (Grades 6-8) LIT #3 Option (Grades 10-12)	\$455 \$425 \$425 No charge
Week 7	July 24-29	Intergenerational Week (all ages) Onsite Day Camp M-Th (grades K-5)	See website \$110
Week 8	July 31-Aug 6	Musical Theatre Week (All ages - see website.)	See website
Week 9	Aug 7-10	Mini Camp (Grades 2-3) Villager (Grades 3-4) Vagabond (Grades 5-6) Venturer (Grades 7-8) LIT #4 Option (Grades 10-12)	\$305 \$305 No charge

REGISTRATION & DISCOUNTS

Register by March 1 for a FREE t-shirt, April 1 for a \$15-\$25 discount.
See website for all discounts, eligibility, and program information.

Register online & find forms at **FORTUNELAKE.ORG**

More info at FortuneLake.org

THANK YOU!

Zion received the following thank you notes from grateful recipients.

NEWCAP:

Dear friends at Zion Lutheran Church, amazing, amazing church! Thank you so much for a very generous donation of \$3,010 for our Marinette food pantry. It will bring many smiling faces to our community folks in need. We appreciate your thinking of us at NEWCAP with your donation.

Your friends at NEWCAP,
Pattie and Bev

The DAR Boys and Girls Club:

Dear Zion Lutheran Church,
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. Thank you so much for your gift. Your donation of \$400 will allow us to continue our mission during this trying time. You are helping make futures a reality for the next generation of youth in our community. It is generosity and devotion that helps us do whatever it takes to meet the needs of any child who walks through our doors.

Sincerely,
Koreen Gardon, CEO

Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp:

Greetings from Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp!

Thank you for your generous support of outdoor ministry. For 90 years people have gathered in authentic community on the shores of Fortune Lake to be refreshed, to have new experiences, and to grow in faith. God has blessed us! Thank you for allowing these meaningful moments to continue through your contribution.

This past year has taught us a lot. We are ever grateful for our beautiful facility and the opportunities it provides to be in God's creation Music and art, they are balm for weary souls. Prayer and worship: they center our own lives while keeping us mindful of others. More than anything, we value relationships with God and with one another! The true magic of Fortune Lake happens when we gather together.

Throughout the pandemic, you have increasingly shown us how important Fortune Lake is you. Thank you.

Thank you! Blessed Easter to you all!

Grace and Peace,
Amanda Rasner, Camp Director

**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.

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.

This month's article will focus on one of the Seven Marks of Discipleship – Pray. Here is Zion's Vision Statement for Pray: *"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."*

For the last few years, our intercessory prayers at worship have started by focusing on taking a deep breath with a moment to quiet ourselves. I like that practice very much and it certainly has helped me focus on the spoken and often unspoken prayers. Recently, in the Stewardship Leaders Newsletter, I read about another form of prayer. It's called the Ignatian Prayer of Examen, which the writer says helps her identify and reflect on the ways that God is active in her everyday life. In other words, it is a technique of prayer and meditation for sensing God's presence and guidance in daily life.

Below are three different types of Examen Prayer. Step one for each of the three requires that the individual acknowledge awareness of God's presence before beginning.

1. The Traditional Examen Prayer.

At the day's end, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your memory over the day's events and conversations in a posture of gratitude recognizing God's Divine Presence.

Recognize a "Consolation" and a "Desolation" from the day.

Consolation is an experience that causes you to feel fully alive, at peace, joyful, happy, comforted, whole, connected, your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel close to God.

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The Stewardship and Generosity Corner _____

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Desolation is an experience that causes you to feel drained of energy, frustrated, irritated, angry, sad, sorrowful, alone, isolated, unaccepted, fragmented, less than your best self, etc. and could be understood as an experience in which you feel far away from God.

Choose a “Desolation” to pray into. The tricky thing about desolation is that even though it is an uncomfortable and sometimes distressing experience, and we may feel as if God is far away, God is still very near. So, the gift is praying with the desolation, telling God about your experience, and asking for God’s grace in the experience (you might want to give God thanks for the consolation experiences). God shows up in desolations AND consolations. It’s just that it’s easier to “experience” God in consolations, and we often move away from God in desolations. Lastly, look with hope for the new tomorrow asking where you’ll need God in the day to come.

2. Do a Bible reading by putting yourself in a Gospel story.

Just choose which character you’re going to be and walk right into the scene where Jesus heals someone, delivers teaching, or feeds thousands. You can be a main character in the story, or you can be a bystander or friend that you simply invent for this prayer. Don’t get distracted by trying to be historically accurate—this is not about you interpreting Scripture in a scholarly way. The point is to encounter Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide this very spiritual function, the human imagination, to where you need to go.

3. Pray using Conversational Prayer. Pray as though you are having a conversation across the dinner table or in your living room. You speak to Jesus as you would a close friend. You speak to God the Father/Creator, or to the Holy Spirit who is Comforter. Sometimes, when we pray the same way we talk, it can enable us to
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The Stewardship and Generosity Corner _____

Continued...

be more honest.

If like me, you would like to pursue the traditional Examen Prayer, there is a bookmark that you can download which will greatly assist you. On your browser enter: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/examen-prayer-card/>

Praying is a very important part of a Christian's life. In the coming year, I hope you will be able to utilize one of these three approaches.

In God's peace and grace,
Karen Sylvester

Stewardship Initiative _____

On Sunday, May 1st the Stewardship and Generosity Committee will kick off the yearlong "Stepping in Faith" stewardship initiative. This initiative will concentrate on Zion's Seven Marks of Discipleship. Prayer will be the focus for May, and eventually, all the Marks will be addressed.

Those attending worship on May 1st will be given a magnet which we hope you will put on your refrigerator. You will also be provided suggestions on what you might do to encourage your journey in faith through prayer. We do not expect you to provide a written pledge; rather, that decision will be between you and God. Our committee's goal continues to be to help God's people grow in their relationship with Jesus using the time, talents, and finances God has entrusted to them.



May Birthdays

May 3: Shirley Lebick

May 5: Debra Strohl

May 6: Jacob Buenning and Spencer Martin

May 11: Lisa Knopik, Dennis Mullen and Aaron Trusty

May 12: Ron Klein and Jennifer Jokela

May 14: Taylor Ehle and Vallery Krah

May 15: Macy Bodam and Samuel Gressel

May 19: Kirsten Tuyls

May 22: James Martin

May 23: Mackenzie Andrist and Charlotte Bauer

May 24: Skyler Emler

May 25: Aiden Bailey

May 27: Michael Jagielski

May 28: Margaret Williams



May Eternal Light

The Eternal Light for the month of May is sponsored by Deb Strohl and is in honor of her parents, Bob and Maeble Sharon

Keeping the Light Burning

If you feel inclined to sponsor the Eternal Light for one month, please notify Zion's office which month you'd like to sponsor (715-735-7898 or zion@newbc.rr.com). August and December are the remaining months currently available for sponsorship. The cost of sponsoring the Eternal Light for one month is \$13.00. Payment of your sponsorship can be mailed to Zion or placed in the offering plate after Communion.

Accurate contact information?

Have you or a family member recently had a change of address or phone number? Have you or a family member moved? Not sure if Zion has accurate information on file (mailing address, phone number, email)? Zion is striving to have current information on file. Please call or email Zion's office to verify what is on file (715-735-7898) or zion@newbc.rr.com). Thank you for your assistance!

World Hunger Buzz

Believe us when we say thank you. We mean it from the bottom of our hearts! During the season of Lent you gave \$5,266 to our World Hunger collection. That's 527 bees placed on our honeycomb over the last 7 weeks. This money will make a difference in the world. In May it will be



combined with gifts from churches all over our Northern Great Lakes Synod and used to aid people all over the world. This may be the end of Zion's annual drive but we are always happy to pass money along to the ELCA for this ministry. Thank you again for your generosity and remember to leave some dandelions for the bees this spring!

What's Around the Corner?

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

- May 1: Third Sunday of Easter, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.
- May 8: Fourth Sunday of Easter, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.
- May 15: Fifth Sunday of Easter, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.
- May 22: Sixth Sunday of Easter, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live. Pastor Keith's final Sunday. Dinner for Pastor Keith's retirement to follow worship. Congregational meeting prior to worship will be held.
- May 29: Seventh Sunday of Easter, 9:30 a.m. indoor worship with Holy Communion and via Facebook Live.

Pastor Keith's Retirement Dinner Rescheduled

As you are all aware, Pastor Keith's retirement luncheon had to be canceled because the Kolstad family contracted COVID-19. That dinner has now been rescheduled for May 22, 2022, directly after the special worship service taking place that day. If attending, it is vital you RSVP to Karen Sylvester at the very latest by May 13th via email (sylvesterkaren27@gmail.com). If you prefer, call her at 715-587-4206.

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!

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION 2022-2023

New Ways to be Faithful

When a congregation's location can best be described as "on the road out of town, near the mall," that might be a reason people aren't filling the pews. In fact, in early 2020, Living Christ Lutheran Church, Flagstaff, Ariz., was facing a 65% decline in membership since 2013. Grants from the Grand Canyon Synod, funded by Mission Support, helped sustain Living Christ's ministry.

So when the pandemic struck, the congregation faced an uncertain future.

After in-person worship was halted, Living Christ reignited its ministry by expanding its online footprint to include digital worship, with new sermon videos posted weekly and associated worship materials provided via PDF. "We were initially just getting anywhere from 30 to 40 viewings for the sermons," said Dean Garner, council member and IT/website manager for Living Christ. "When I put a little more work towards it when the pandemic started, we got up to 70 to 100. Then we put just a few dollars into it [on Facebook], and now we're averaging 500 for the viewing of the sermons."

The online presence has enabled this church on the edge of town to reach an audience that extends from Phoenix to the Philippines. **"The internet has basically been as much of a change for the church as, say, Gutenberg and the printing press was for Luther,"** said Living Christ's pastor, Kurt Fangmeier. "We're always trying to find new ways to be faithful, both to the calling in our baptism but also in the midst of the world as it is."

Though Living Christ may be new to internet outreach, the congregation has long been known for involvement in its community, particularly Flagstaff's LGBTQIA+ population. In 2011, the congregation began sponsoring Pride in the Pines, an annual celebration in Flagstaff that is hosted by the

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STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION 2020-2021

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Northern Arizona Pride Association (NAPA) and typically draws over 4,000 attendees.

“There are not too many churches ... that walk the walk and talk the talk,” said Debra Taylor, president of NAPA, of the congregation’s LGBTQIA+ outreach. “Living Christ does.” Now, in year two of the pandemic, Living Christ has transitioned to a hybrid in-person/ online model and plans to relocate to downtown Flagstaff, which offers ample outreach opportunities.

“The building has served us well for over 35 years and will serve us well again by providing us the means to take our mission elsewhere in our community,” Garner said. “Jesus did not share the good news from one place, nor shall we. ... We are excited about this new journey.”

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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).



Worship Assistant Opportunities

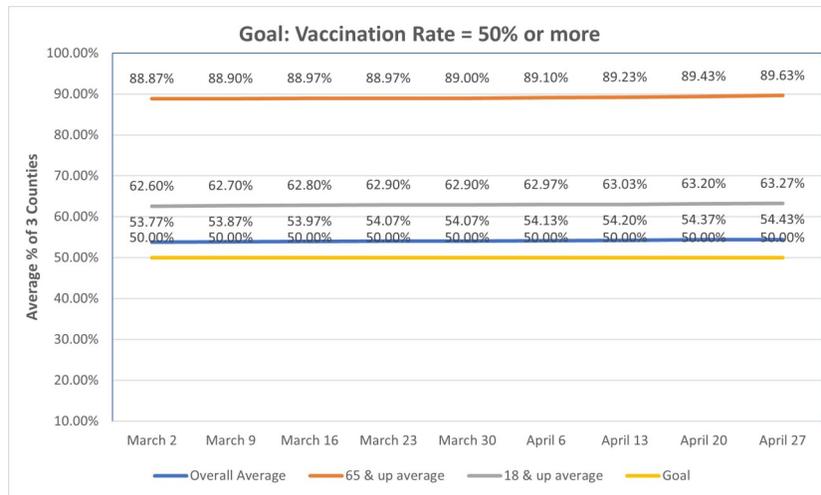
If you’d like to volunteer to serve as lector or usher please contact Ann Buscher at 715-735-3017. The readings for the particular Sunday will be shared with you days in advance and a copy will be printed for you to use that particular Sunday. We are also looking for people to set up and take down communion and be communion assistants with Pastor Doug. Directions have been posted in the sacristy. Thank you for your consideration!

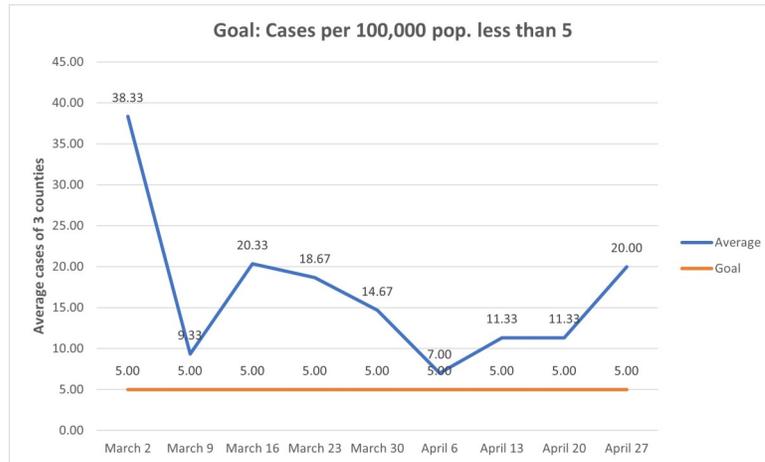
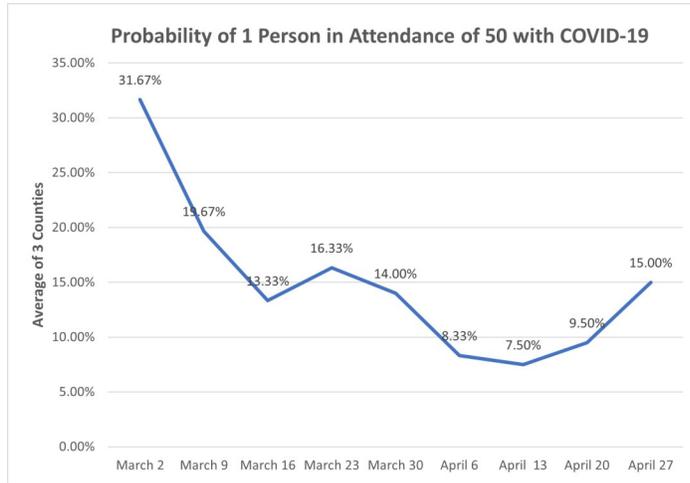
Grant Application from Zion’s Mission Endowment Fund

The application and Endowment Fund Brochure are available on the table in the front hall and on Zion’s [website](#). Please take one and share it with another one of your favorite organizations. Applications need to be received at Zion by June 1.

Masking is Optional

The number of COVID-19 active infections and the positivity rate have declined to safe levels. This, along with a high vaccination rate among those who typically join us for worship, guided the Congregation Council at its March 8th meeting to decide that masking will be optional for all activities within Zion’s building, including worship. The Council also decided that our worship service will go back to our pre-pandemic practices, which will include holy communion by intinction around our altar and collecting the offering, (ushers will hold the plates). We will practice a “touchless” sharing of the Peace with waves, head nods, and lots of smiling. As soon as there is someone to sponsor coffee time following worship, that too will be available. Of course, we will continue to monitor the infection rate in our community and will take appropriate actions if they become necessary.





Eastern Europe Crisis Response

On Feb. 24, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, launching land, sea and air attacks.

Airports are now shut, and few railway lines are operational. Civilians fleeing the violence are heading toward Ukraine's western districts and such neighboring countries as Poland, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. Hundreds of thousands of people are seeking refuge in neighboring countries. There are major humanitarian concerns for both internally displaced people and refugees. Many of these Ukrainians fleeing their homes need shelter, basic necessities and pastoral care.

Lutheran Disaster Response is accompanying our companions in Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, as well as such ecumenical partners as Lutheran World Federation and Church World Service, in their humanitarian responses to the crisis. These partners provide refugees with immediate support and supplies such as food, blankets, water and hygiene kits.

The ELCA presiding bishop issued a pastoral message on Ukraine and it can be found [here](#).

We are collecting monetary donations for Ukraine. People may also donate online through the [ELCA](#) or through [Lutheran World Relief](#).



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