**ZION’S MESSENGER**

**May 2020 + Zion Lutheran Church + 269-367-4817**

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I write this as April comes to an end. A month ago, I could not have imagined that there is a good chance that May 1 will not be the day that our state will be re-opened from our social isolation. However, this virus is continuing to spread throughout our state and the country. As much as I wish that we could start gathering together for church services and other activities, I don’t envision that happening soon.

I do not need to focus on the things that we are missing and struggling with. You know these things. Each of us have different challenges as we deal with the implications of this virus. Know that I am praying for all of you daily. That is one thing that I do have, plenty of time to pray! I pray that more testing will become available soon and that a vaccine will be developed. I pray that we will be able to be together soon in some form or another.

Instead, I would like to focus on things that we have and things that we have learned in this time. I am thankful to see our church being the church outside of the building. I know that many phone calls and other means of being in touch with each other electronically are happening. As I talk with people, I hear how much calls and cards and messages are appreciated. I have appreciated those who have helped us out by dropping off needed groceries that we cannot get at Carl’s Market (thankful that they are delivering to us!) I am thankful to have learned how to reach out to you via Facebook Live with the weekly sermons and amazed at how many people from all over the state and country are checking in!

There are many things that are uncertain for us and it is hard to live in the midst of unknowns and things that we are not able to control. One thing is certain. God is in control of this time in our lives. God is with us in the midst of uncertainty and fear. This is something to hold onto every day. This verse from Romans 8 has particular meaning for us at this time. Nothing is able to separate of from the love of God! Not even the coronavirus or the social and medical affects that this is having on us.

“ 28We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 31What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Until we meet again in person….

Pastor Becky+

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

The April 14th meeting of the church Council was held as a virtual meeting using an ap called GotoMeeting.  We thank Karen Heise for finding this opportunity for us to meeting safely during the Stay Home, Stay Safe, Save Lives Executive Order.

Even though our services and activities are on hold, Council continues to work on the needs of the church.  The Trustees and Building and Grounds members have also been very faithful during this time to ensure that needed repairs, maintenance and updates are done.  A few of the items that have been addressed include repair of the water softener, installing a new crash bar on the south entrance (by the old youth room), scheduling the required inspection of the elevator, and tuning up and getting the lawn mower ready for the spring and summer season.

  If you have driven by the church, you may have noticed that work started on the new metal roof.  The North side roof has been completed, however, work has ceased until the Executive Order is no longer in effect.  This project is being completed using a combination of funds from the Rockafellow memorial funds, Endowment funds, and contributions designated toward this project.

Although we do not know when we will be able to resume services, Council had extensive discussion regarding cleaning and sanitizing the church before we schedule services.  Bids are being obtained to have carpets and pews sanitized and cleaned as part of the process to make the church ready for services/activities.

  The Heise family has donated a new playset to the church in memory of Charles Heise and the playset should be installed soon.  This is exciting and we know the children of the church will enjoy using this when we are able to be back together.

Council authorized Karen Heise and Martha Yoder to complete and submit an application for a loan/grant under the Payroll Protection Plan.  If approved, this grant would provide 2.5 months of payroll assistance in the form of a low cost loan that has the potential to be forgiven in the future.  The application was completed and submitted and we are waiting to hear back from Union Bank on whether funding will be received.

  Council had scheduled starting a review of all church policies and the church Constitution.  In light of the current shutdown and inability to meet in person, this project is put on hold until regular in-person meetings can resume

Council expresses gratitude to those who are sending offerings to the church during this time.  Some have made arrangements to have their offerings picked up as they are not comfortable sending them through the mail.  If anyone would like to have their offering picked up, please contact Karen or Martha.  Holding offerings until services are resumed was suggested as an option when the need to shut down was first announced.  We know some people are doing this and that is appreciated as well.

  Council expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude to Pastor Becky for continuing to minister to our congregation and Tara for her work ensure information is disseminated. We pray for the Church, our church family, our State, Nation and World during this time and pray that we will be back worshiping in the near future.

If anyone has questions, suggestions or ideas, please feel free to contact Martha or any Council member.

**LAY PREACHER NEEDS**

Lay preachers needed on December 27. Please see Martha Yoder or Pastor Becky if you would like to fill in on.

**BIBLE BUDDIES!**

The boards of youth and education met virtually on April 21.

A lot of ideas were generated about things that we can do for our children and youth regarding Christian Education once it is safe to meet together again. We don’t know when or how that will happen so in the meantime, we thought it would be fun for our adults and children to become Bible Buddies. This is like being pen pals. A list of the children and youth will be compiled and we would like to have an adult be the buddy for each of them. All adults who would like to be a Bible Buddy to a child/youth in our congregation are asked to let Tara Brodbeck know your interest. Jennifer Rutledge has offered to then put the pairing together. This would involve sending cards and notes to the children/youth with encouragement and Bible verses.

**SPECIALS IN MAY**

**Anniversaries**

24-Mark & Brenda Bite

27-Jason & Michele Makley

**Baptisms**

09-Norma Smith

12-Joyce Heise

16-Penny Dahms

16-Taryn Willard

23-KeatonMcLaughlin

**Birthdays**

04-Laura Krikke

04-Brandon Makley

08-Sharon Krauss

10-Brenda Bite

11-Kevin Brodbeck

11-Sylvia McDowell

12-Karen Heise

16-Mary Smith

19-Claudia S. Alderink

22-Ashley Griffin

24-Trenton Makley

26-Michael Johnson

26-Rebecca Plummer

**(All Schedules subject to change as we wait for the state, then our church, to be reopened.)**

**SERVING IN MAY**

**Altar Guild**

Chris Childs

Harry Hetchler

Lisa Hetchler

**Cleaning Committee 5/3 to 6/6/20**

Mike & Roxanne Johnson

Don & Diane Griffin

Jason & Ashley Griffin

Jolene Griffin

**Coffee Fellowship**

Mary Makley

Judy Fisher

Deb Elenbaas

**Greeters**

Volunteers

**SUNDAYS IN MAY**

**May 3- NO Worship in Church**

**May 10- Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese**

Altar color - White

Communion Worship

Coffee Fellowship

Musician: Martha Yoder

Elder: Claudia Smith Alderink

Trustee: Jim Elenbaas

Acolyte: Olive McDowell

Lay Reader: Landon Griffin

Offering Counters: Martha Yoder, Doug Mackenzie

Safety Person:

**May 17- Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese**

**Graduation Recognition Sunday (will be rescheduled if stay home extended)**

Altar color - White

Communion Worship

Musician: Martha Yoder

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Tom Krikke

Acolyte: Lilly Pepper-Griffin

Lay Reader: Karen Heise

Offering Counters: Brenda Bite, Jim Avery

Safety Person:

**May 24- Pastor Michael Anton**

Altar color – White

Communion Worship

Musician: Martha Yoder

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Acolyte: Landon Griffin

Lay Reader: Lisa Hetchler

Offering Counters: Buffy Meyers,

Connie Hall

Safety Person:

**May 31- Pastor Becky Ebb Speese**

**Confirmation day**

Altar color – Red

Communion Worship

Musician: Martha Yoder

Elder: Claudia Smith Alderink

Trustee: Jim Elenbaas

Acolyte: Emil Meyers

Crucifer: Anna Zylstra

Lay Reader: Buffy Meyers

Offering Counters: Mike Johnson,

Irene Ames

Safety Person: