**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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I am writing this before June 12, which is to be the day that the stay safer at home order is supposed to be lifted by our governor. As much as I wish that I had information for you as to when we can resume worshipping in person, I cannot as it seems that dates for things are a moving target right now. Change happens on a daily basis. I never imagined back in March, that we would still be in this place of dealing with the coronavirus, but we are. And with so many big events being cancelled in the summer and fall, it seems that there is no end in sight. The council has been hard at work to come up with a safe plan for when we do re-open based on things we are learning from our Churchwide office, our synod bishop, and health experts. You will be informed as soon as we have a fairly definitive date and how things will be when we are back at church in person. It will be different.

However, I am proud of how the people of Zion have been and will continue to be the church outside of the walls of our building. Many phone calls get made on a regular basis to each other. I always enjoy being the surprise recipient of a call from someone along with the calls that I make. We have so many ways of keeping in touch these days, not just though phone calls, but though text messages, emails and messenger. These kinds of contacts keep me busy every day. Boards are using new internet technology to have meetings. Many things are happening behind the scenes. Our church remains active in different ways. Yes, I certainly miss seeing you in person. I am very sorry that things like first communion, graduate recognition and confirmation have been postponed but be assured that these things will happen when it is safer to have these special events.

I have discovered that using our website and Facebook live to record the weekly mini-services/sermons have reached people beyond our church membership. People are connecting to us from around our community, state and even from other states. This is an amazing evangelism tool We may want to look into a way that we can maintain an internet presence, even when the Zion members return to church. And perhaps we will be surprised at who might join us.

A number of our children, youth and adults were planning to attend camp at Stoney Lake again in June but because of the covid-19, the camp will not be open this summer, so that is a big disappointment.

I am very thankful that no one at Zion has become ill with the virus or any other serious illnesses in these months. People have had successful surgeries and other treatments for which we can give thanks.

As you know, Terry has to be extremely careful to protect his lungs and kidneys as he continues to recover from a form of vasculitis. So I have had to be very careful as well. He cannot catch any illness, let alone covid-19. We have been so appreciative of those who have been willing to pick items up at stores for us as we are grateful to Carl’s market for delivery. It has been hard to be pretty much at home all of the time, but keeping Terry healthy makes it worthwhile.

So, dear church, we will continue to be the church of Christ in all that lies ahead. We trust that God is with us as we move forward. I would like to leave you with this quote from St. Julian of Norwich, written while she was in prison.

“All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.”

Pastor Becky +

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**GRADUATES**

Three of our young people graduated from Lakewood High School. Though they could not have their ceremony at this time, we wish to recognize them and celebrate this milestone with them.

Laura Krikke, daughter of Tom and Lisa Krikke, will be attending Albion College. She has been accepted into the honors program and will be on the tennis team. Her major will be biochemistry.

Rebecka Nelson, daughter of Amy Robinson and Mark Nelson, will be attending MCTI in Plainwell. We are thankful that Rebecka found Zion and has made us her church home.

Isabelle, Izzy, Zylstra, daughter of Dan and Nicole Zylstra, is still deciding between attending Lansing Community College in health technology or attending the Spectrum CAN starter program.

We will these young ladies well as they move on in a new chapter in their lives!

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**BIBLE BUDDIES!**

The boards of youth/education are working on pairing adults with our children and youth as Bible Buddies. We have close to 30 children and youth connected to Zion. So far, two adults have requested to be Bible Buddies, but we need more! This is not a hard task. If you are willing to send cards or notes with words of encouragement and sharing Bible verses to one or two of our children and teens, wonderful intergenerational relationships can be developed. Once the child receives a card or note, they will be encouraged to write back to their adult. This is intended to be like the pen pals that I remember having. Please contact Tara Brodbeck if you are interested. When she receives enough names, Jennifer Rutledge will pair the children and adults and let the adults know who their child/children are. It would be great to have this up and running soon!

**Sign up today!**

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

The May 12th Council meeting was held using the virtual meeting app “GotoMeeting.”  It is not the same as an in-person meeting, but it is a great benefit right now as it allows us to continue to be responsive to our duties.  The app is easy to use and we again thank Karen Heise for finding this tool.  Other groups including the Board of Education, Board of Worship and the Women’s Book Study have also used the ap to resume having regular meetings.

**Finances**:Currently offerings are not keeping up with expenses.  We know that some are not able to contribute during this time and others are holding offerings until services resume.  Because of the length of time the shutdown has continued, we encourage mailing offerings to help us meet our obligations including salaries, utilities and other ongoing expenses, if possible.

Our thanks to all who are continuing to send regular offerings.  The mail is picked up from the church mailbox and taken into the church on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.  You may want to time your mailing so it arrives on one of those days.  Karen Heise continues to serve as our counter and makes our deposits.  If you are uncomfortable mailing an offering, please contact Karen or Martha for other options.

  Zion was approved for a low interest loan/grant under the federal Payroll Protection Program.  Under this program, Zion has received approximately $8,900 which can be used toward two and a half  months of  salary expenses and up to 25% of utility expenses.  Karen and Martha worked with Union Bank to prepare documents and apply for this loan/grant.  They will continue to work with Union Bank to ensure Zion uses the funds within the parameters of the program and submit required reports and documentation.

**Scholarships:**Scholarship requests were received from all three of Zion’s 2020 graduates and scholarships were approved for all in the amout of $500 each.  We are so pleased to be able to help our 2020 graduates take the next step in their education.  Scholarships were provided to Laura Krikke, Rebecka Nelson, and lsabell Zylstra.  A graduate recognition will be held for graduates in the future.  In the meantime, the Board of Education has arranged for recognition on social media and through the Zion sign board.

**Building and Grounds:**The trustees have started lawn care for the season.  Thank you to those who have mowed and trimmed.  A schedule was shared through Mary Smith’s email list to identify volunteers for weeks through June.  If you can help by taking a week to mow the church and parsonage lawn, please contact Tom Krikke.

 The roofers have resumed work on the church roof.  The project is progressing and the new roof looks very nice.

  The rains on May 17 and 18 did cause some water issues at the church.  The roof started leaking in the front of the sanctuary near the organ.  The organ has been tarped and unplugged.  There was some water in the church basement in several areas that is being addressed by the trustees and building and grounds committee.

**Church Reopening Plan:**Work is continuing on a plan for resuming worship.  At this point, we do not have a specific date for when worship in the church sanctuary will resume.  One option that is being explored is whether we might begin by having service outside on the lawn where it would be easier to maintain social distancing. We are all anxious to be back together for worship and Council is working to ensure this can be done a soon as possible in a manner that keeps everyone safe.

**Semi-Annual Meeting**: The Semi-Annual meeting is currently scheduled for July 19, 2020.  Council will determine whether the meeting can go forward at their June meeting and will let members know.  Until then, please mark your calendars and reserve this date.

**LAWN MOWING**

The following weeks in June are available for people to sign up to mow (church and parsonage):
•Monday, June 8
•Monday, June 15
•Monday, June 22
•Monday, June 29
If you are able to mow, please let Tom Krikke know

**SPECIALS IN JUNE**

**Anniversaries**

02-Dan & Nicole Zylstra

10-Jeff & Kathy Engle

30-Phil & Dawn Brodbeck

**Baptisms**

01-Mary Smith

03-Jeff Engle

06-Laura Krikke

16-Christina Childs

22-Tristen Alderink

**Birthdays**

02-Christina Childs

02-Layton Griffin

04-Jenna (Avery) Olmstead

06-Arlene Forman

07-Evelyn Brecheisen

07-Rachel Meade

15-Ken Heise

16-Roxanne Johnson

22-Charles Bursley

22-Jackson MacKenzie

24-Aidreana Childs

26-Jerry Engle

26-Lee Hetchler

30-Betty Hynes

30-Dawn Brodbeck

30-Landon Griffin

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

**SERVING IN JUNE**

**Altar Guild**

Diane Griffin

Ashley Griffin

Jolene Griffin

Roxanne Johnson

**Cleaning Committee 6/7 to 7/4/20**

Judy & Linden Fisher

Jim & Deb Elenbaas

Dan & Cindy Utterback

Dan & Nikki Zylstra

**Greeters**

Irene Ames

**SUNDAYS IN JUNE**

**June 7- NO Worship in Church**

**June 14- NO Worship in Church**

**June 21- Pastor Becky Ebb Speese**

Altar color - Green

Communion Worship

Musician: Martha Yoder

Elder: Claudia Smith Alderink

Trustee: Jim Elenbaas

Acolyte: Emil Meyers

Lay Reader: Terry Speese

Offering Counters: Brenda Bite, Jim Avery

Safety Person:

**June 28- Pastor Becky Ebb Speese**

Altar color – White

Communion Worship

Musician: Martha Yoder

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Tom Krikke

Acolyte: Anna Zylstra

Lay Reader: Cindy Utterback

Offering Counters: Buffy Meyers,

Connie Hall

Safety Person: