**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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 Every summer, at this point in time, I stop to wonder, “where has the summer gone?”. By August, we know that the traditional season of summer is quickly coming to an end and we try to get in as much more of summer fun as possible before school starts and fall begins.

This summer is not different except that it has been the most unusual summer of our lifetimes. None of us have spent this much time in a pandemic. Summer has been very different for most of us. I never, in my wildest imaginings, imagined that we would still be where we are back in March, when the pandemic began in earnest for us in Michigan. But here we are.

 I wish that I had definitive information to give you as we begin to think about fall activities, but I don’t. Every plan remains on a wait until things are different or better answer which really is no good answer at all. We don’t know when, how or if Sunday School will resume. We don’t know when we will return to worship in the sanctuary. We do know how, as we have a good plan, but it will be very different than it was before March. Most community fall events have already been cancelled.

 It is very frustrating but also very important to err on the side of caution to keep all of our church family safe. There is still too much unknown about the virus.

And so, I feel like lamenting, such as the psalmist, David often did. Read these words from Paslm 13:

“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O Lord, my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, “I have prevailed”: my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”

 We may all be feeling the words of the lament. And that is certainly understandable with all that we are dealing with. But let’s focus on the last verse. Let’s focus on where God has been and is with us in this time. Good things have happened at Zion. I give thanks for all of the hard work that people have done to keep things going. I love the new things that are visible from the outside such as the roof, the sidewalk, and the playset! The drive- in services in the parking lot are going well and we were able to honor the graduates before the rain came on the 19th! I am thankful that so far, no one at Zion has contracted Covid-19. I am thankful to see the crops growing so well after a very wet spring. Though we find ourselves lamenting and wondering how long this virus will last, let us also focus on how God is with us and doing good things in our lives no matter how long this will last.

Pastor Becky +

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

 We begin all our council meetings with devotion and prayer lead by Pastor Becky.  Our devotion this month was on the meaning of the 6th Commandment,“You shall not kill.”  Pastor Becky shared that it goes beyond not endangering or harming others to include helping and support all in life’s need.  She said this was from the Eastern culture where community comes first and Jesus was from the Eastern culture.  She shared several scripture passages including Galations 5 where we are called on to ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,” and a reminder that when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, we will grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.  This devotion led to a good discussion by council on how we can be a witness and help to those in our community now.  Some things discussed were reaching out with personal care kits, back to school supplies for children, or assistance with food or gas for those in our community who are in need.  Karen volunteered to reach out to Jayne Flannigan of Manna’s Market to see if she had an idea on where the greatest area of unmet needs may be.

  Council edited and adopted a Pandemic Reopening Church/Resuming Activities plan for Zion.  Once the document is finalized, it will be shared with members via the email list and posted on the church website.

  A discussion was held on how to handle requests as we slowly reopen the church.  Currently, the men’s coffee fellowship is meeting Wednesday mornings in either the Fireside Room or the Fellowship hall, depending on the size of the group.  Council is holding in person meetings and the Worship committee has met in person.  It was decided that we are not ready to move worship service back into the sanctuary at this time.  We also discussed the need to stay in contact with the funeral home for the most up to date guidance on funerals should the need arise.

 Portico, the company through which we pay the Pastor’s benefits and retirement announced a .7% reduction in retiree support costs which will save the church $23.77 a month.  This reduction was made to recognize the financial constraints felt due to COVID-19.  Brotherhood Mutual is providing a 15% reduction in premiums for two months for an amount of $19.63, also as a way to provide support to policyholders.

  It was decided to cancel the church picnic that had been scheduled for August 16th.  Martha is to contact Mary Makely and ask her to talk with Kirk Forman to see if our reservation can be moved to the third Sunday in August 2021.

  Discussion regarding resuming Sunday School in the fall was held.  There is a Zoom meeting with the Bishop on Saturday, July 18th to provide guidance.  Pastor Becky and Martha will participate in the meeting.  There was discussion on scheduling Confirmation classes via Zoom in the fall to hold the final classes for our current Confirmands.  There was also discussion of using Facebook Live at a specific day/time each week to share a kids message.

  The Woodland Homecoming has been cancelled for 2020.  Alan Brodbeck contacted Zion to see if we would like to appoint a member to the planning community.  Each church and business in the Woodland area is offered an opportunity to be on the committee.  There were no volunteers at this time. We will revisit this in the spring of 2021.

  There are two air conditioning units that are not functioning.  One in the fellowship hall and one in the sanctuary near the pulpit.  Hansbargers had been serving the units, however, the business is now closed.  Tom is contacting Welton’s from Hastings to arrange a service call.

  The play structure was installed this week.  Murray’s will be back to complete the driveway project in early August.

  We are thankful to be worshiping again at Zion in the parking lot and being able to add communion back into the service.  God is faithful to us!

**THANK YOU!!**

 We want to take a moment to express how incredibly thankful Carlotta and I are.  I’ve had lots of good days and some bad; but having this support of love and prayers from our Zion Family gives me more courage and determination for conquering this disease.

 May God’s blessings be felt by each and every one of you! We are forever “Thankful” for your continued thoughts and prayers!”

 + Mark and Carolotta Willard

**THANK YOU!!**

 Thank you once again for your support of Feed the Need. During the school year we served an average of 91 kids. During the Covid early dismissal of school, we served each community averaging 110 bags.

 Your support helps these kids. Now they will have something to eat on the weekend. Thanks again!

 +Feed the Need

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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, eight 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!**

**WOMEN’S BOOK STUDY**

The women’s book study will resume in the fall. If anyone would like to join in the fall and wants to enjoy some summer reading to catch up, read Sensible Shoes and Two Steps Forward by Sharon Brown. We will start the 3rd book in the series in the fall.

**UPSTAIRS REFRIGERATOR**

 The church’s main refrigerator in the upstairs kitchen is no longer in service. It was running nonstop and no longer staying cold. All items that were still good have been moved to the downstairs refrigerator.
 The ZLCW is researching a new refrigerator. Since there is not a rush we plan to take our time to ensure we find a good fit and have one that we know can be serviced in the future by local repair places.
 The plan is to scrap the refrigerator as it is too costly to repair and this model does not meet current energy requirements. Please see a member of the ZLCW board with any questions.

**SPECIALS IN AUGUST**

**Anniversaries**

08-Michael & Amber Holland

10-Terry Speese & Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

16-Jim & Jill Avery

16-L.D. & Georgiea Smith

**Baptisms**

05-Diane Southgate

06-Aidreana Childs

12-Jerry Engle

14-Becky Plummer

18-Janine Frizzell

29-Jared Krikke

30-Brandon Makley

31-Travis Willard

**Birthdays**

02-Ben Meade

04-Travis Willard

05-Mariah Krikke

08-Janine Frizzell

11-Duane Meyers

13-Michael MacKenzie

17-Michele McDowell

19-Grant Alderink

19-James McDowell

20-Deb Elenbaas

20-Steven Utterback

20-Lyssa Griffin

21-Barb Smith

23-Joyce Heise

30-Jennifer Rutledge

30-Chloe McDermott

**(All Schedules subject to change as we continue to monitor the Covid-19 situation.)**

**SERVING IN AUGUST**

**Altar Guild**

Marie Brodbeck

Connie Hall

Michele McDowell

**Cleaning Committee 8/2/20 to 9/5/20**

Martha Yoder

Mary Makley

Doug Makley

**Greeters**

Volunteers

**SUNDAYS IN AUGUST**

**August 2- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

**August 9- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

**August 16- Drive in Worship**

Claude Smith

**August 23- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

**August 30- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese