**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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 I love September. It brings the promise of fall, yet we can still have some beautiful summer weather to enjoy the out of doors. I have already seen glimpse of color on the trees, the corn around the parsonage is tall with big ears of corn ready for harvest. Yet, this is a fall, unlike any other. I wish I could give you definitive answers about fall programming at church this year, such as when and how Sunday School will start and when we will return to the sanctuary for services but I still cannot. I can say that we will remain in the parking lot for the month of September at 9:30 am. Though not the same as worshipping together in the sanctuary, I have been pleased with how well the drive- in services have gone this summer. We have continued to be the church wherever and however we can gather. And plans for different kinds of outreach to our community are in the works. Zion remains an active family of faith in the midst of some very challenging times.

 We may be very weary by now. I know that I am. There is so much, along with the coronavirus, that is causing division and distress in our country.

 To combat our feelings of weariness and unrest, I think that it is important to turn to spiritual disciplines. Many of us practice different kinds of spiritual disciplines but there are times that we may let them lapse. Now is a time to pick them up if they have lapsed, to find new ones and to wholeheartedly turn to God and support each other in remaining faithful and encouraged. If you have not read through the Bible before, now may be a good time to give that a try. If you love music, there are so many great options for music out there to enrich our lives. I am particularly fascinated by the virtual choirs on you tube. Being out in nature is also another good way to connect to God in the beauty of creation. Artwork is a great creative expression to connect us to God Connecting with others by phone, by letter writing, by email and Messenger have been lifelines for me, and I hope for you as well. I love hearing about who has called or sent a card to someone from church when I talk to people on the phone. You have seen many announcements now about **Bible Buddies.** The board of education would love to see an adult paired with each of our children and youth to establish a pen pal kind of relationship with sending cards and notes to give spiritual encouragement to them and hopefully, they would send cards and notes in return. We are still in need of more adults, women or men, to be paired up with a child or youth. Please send Tara a message if you are interested.Whatever is meaningful to you, I encourage us all to find positive things in our lives and focus on the many ways that God blesses us!

 A passage that I turn to a lot in many times of my life is Romans 8: 38-39. “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor ruler, nor things present, not things to come, nor powers, nor height, not depth, nor anything else is all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NRSV)

This is good news indeed!

 Pastor Becky +

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

 The August Council meeting focused on plans for the fall season at Zion. There was a strong desire to move forward with readying the sanctuary for when we are able to resume services and for making plans to carry out God’s work in our community.

 Council discussed this year’s “God’s Work, Our Hands” activities. There was support for again collecting personal care items and canned goods for a local cause. Council is recommending that the Board of Evangelism assume responsibility for our ”God’s Work, Our Hands” activities this year with assistance from other Boards and groups.

 Zion sent a gift to help with expenses to the family of Tina Salas to Koops Funeral Home from the Helping Hands fund. We also asked Koops to let us know in the future when they see a situation where there is a significant need such as an unexpected death, someone young, or someone with surviving young children.

 Council recommends the service time remain 9:30 am while services are behind held outside.

 Council discussed the need to resume having offering counters work in pairs to count offerings. Martha is contacting counters to determine who is willing to continue counting.

 Work is continuing to implement the church reopening plan adopted at the July Council meeting. A copy of the plan is attached to the newsletter. Council selected the date of October 4th to possibly have the first service in the sanctuary, knowing this may change based on the State guidance at the time. If possible, the bulletin information will be projected on the wall and no print copies made. Council recommends that we continue to use the disposable communion sets when we return to the sanctuary. We also discussed the need to implement all of the safeguards in the reopening plan for minimizing contact and maintaining safe distancing. Council is asking Worship Planning to determine how hymns will be handled. Council discussed the need for a paid cleaning position in place before services resume. Council also recommended the move back to the sanctuary be a time to relaunch worship with a theme of leaving the world behind at the door and focusing on the Word.

 Council supported exploring the equipment needed to live stream the entire service for those who are not able to attend service in the sanctuary. The living streaming would make the entire service available from home The live streaming would replace the AM radio broadcast as continuing the broadcast from inside the church would require the purchase of additional equipment.

 The Trustees have two projects underway. One is to obtain bids for repainting the brown wood trim on the outside of the church. The other project is to replace the AC unit in the sanctuary near the pulpit and repair another unit. This project is being helped with an anonymous gift by a member of $2,500. Council is very thankful for this generosity.

**“GOD’S WORK, OUR HANDS”**

**FOOD DRIVE**

 Bring some canned goods to church and help others!  September is National Hunger Awareness month and we are holding a month-long food drive to help our local community as part of Zion’s 2020 “God’s Work, Our Hands” initiative.  The food collected will go to Manna’s Market and the little food pantry in Woodland.

 Wondering what to bring?  Manna’s Market is currently experiencing a shortage of **baked beans**.  They are not able to obtain baked beans so these are especially appreciated.  There is an ongoing need for**peanut butter, tuna, soups, vegetables, fruit, macaroni and cheese dinners, and skillet dinners**.  In addition, **paper towels and kleenex** are in short supply and donations appreciated.  All canned goods must be in date.  Jayne Flannigan, Director of Manna’s Market said that a drive like this will be helpful to so many in our community.

 Bring your donations to drive-in service any week in September.  A member of the Evangelism Committee will collect the items as you leave the service.  You may also make a monetary donation.  If you are not able to attend service and would like donations picked up, please let Martha Yoder know and we will arrange a pick up.

 According to Feeding America, West Michigan, in our West Michigan area one of every eight people and one of every seven children are in need of food.  Let’s see how many people Zion can help in the coming month.

 Looking ahead, the Evangelism committee is also hoping to find help from other boards to hold a couple additional “God’s Work, Our Hands” collections.  One is a children’s sock, underwear and pajama drive in October.  Manna’s Market has indicated this is a serious ongoing need.  According to Jayne, there are many local children who simply do not have these things to wear.  The other is to again collect personal care items for Barry County Family Promise.

 Thank you for your caring generosity!

**PRAYER IN THE PARK**

A community wide “Prayer in the Park” is scheduled for September 12 at 6 PM in the Lake Odessa Park. This will be a time of praise and worship along with prayers for our government, media, arts and entertainment, businesses, education, religious, family, and repentance.

**PLAYGROUND DEDICATION**

**AND FIRST COMMUNION**

Join us on September 27 at 9:30 am to dedicate our new playset and celebrate first communion!

**THANK YOU**

 Thank you to our Zion family for your support during Chuck’s illness and after his passing. We appreciate the cards, prayers, food, and visits. Thank you to Pastor Becky for leading the service to celebrate his life.
 Zion Lutheran Church and all members held a special place in his heart, and we know he missed attending the past few months. Your friendships meant a lot.

 Love,

 The family of Chuck Bursley

**THANK YOU!**

A huge thank you and our heartfelt appreciation to **Paul Meade** for his diligent work to make our outdoor services possible. Paul obtained, tested, set-up, and operates the equipment needed to broadcast the outdoor services. He has been at Zion early every Sunday to bring the equipment out, set it up, and ensure that it is functioning properly during the eservice. If you see Paul, give him your thanks for his great service and faithfulness.

**THANK YOU!!**

 Thank you, Zion for the generous scholarship, your kind words, prayers, and the prayer shawl. I’m attending Calvin University and move in on August 27 so each is appreciated!

 A thank you also to the Board of Parish Ed. for the gift basket that was delivered to my home by Brenda. It was so thoughtful and nice to receive!

 Also, thank you to Pastor Becky for coming to my open house and the special gift!
 Thank you all so much!
 -Laura Krikke

**THANK YOU!**

 Mark and I want to personally express our gratitude of thank for the generous gift of money. Your donation has really helped us with this uncertain journey we are on. God bless and thank you!!

 Mark, Carlotta and Family

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS!**

**T**hank you to all my wonderful Zion family for your thoughts and prayers during the past month as I have struggled with health issues.  I had a series of mini strokes and have had a very difficult time getting my blood pressure stabilized.  During the past month, I had two hospital stays.  On my last hospital stay, I had an experience that reminded me our Lord is always with us and we should never doubt Him.  It was late at night and I saw two men’s faces.  One was very unsettling and seemed evil.  I told it to get out in the name of Jesus.  I said, “You can’t take me because I belong to Jesus.  He loves me and I love him.”   I saw another man that I know was Jesus to remind me of His love.  I started to sing “Jesus Loves Me” and when I got to the last verse, I couldn’t finish it.  I just couldn’t say the words.  When I said my prayers, I ended with “Now I lay me down to sleep,” and again I couldn’t finish it or say the words.  I know this was Jesus telling me I wasn’t going to die that night.  What a wonderful reminder to know that Jesus is always with us.  What a wonderful Savior we have.

I am getting stronger every day and I know that your care and prayers for me are making a difference.  Thank you so much.

Caroline Brecheisen

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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!**

**SPECIALS IN SEPTEMBER**

**Anniversaries**

06-Nicholas & Samantha Bite

11-Tom & Lisa Krikke

16-Ken & Karen Heise

20-Don & Diane Griffin

23-Claude & Mary Smith

**Baptisms**

05-Mariah Krikke

24-Jeremy Avery

**Birthdays**

02-Kayla (Bite) Cole

02-Lillian Pepper-Griffin

03-Chris Farlee

05-Kris Willbrandt

07-Orianna (Ramos) Murray

13- Tom Krikke

18-Nicholas Bite

19-Terry Speese

19-Levi Griffin

23-Martha Yoder

24-Mary Makley

26-Diane Griffin

30-Lisa Hetchler

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

**SERVING IN SEPTEMBER**

**Altar Guild**

Deb Elenbaas

Judy Fisher

Judy MacKenzie

**Cleaning Committee 9/6 to 10/3/20**

Tom & Jill Plummer

Jim & Jill Avery

Mark & Brenda Bite

Andrew & Kayla Cole

Wayne Hazel

**Greeters**

Volunteers

**SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER**

**September 6- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

**September 13- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

**September 20- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Mike Kemper

**September 27- Drive in Worship**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese