**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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 After a very long season of being the church outside of the walls, we will return to worship in the sanctuary on Sunday, Oct. 4 at 10:30 am. I have a number of feelings about this. First, I believe that we learned that our boundaries can be stretched. I learned how to preach over Facebook live. In doing this, many people from our community and all over the country became a part of the worshipping community of Zion. This has become a huge tool for outreach and we will continue this, even as we return to the sanctuary. Having the drive- in services over the summer were another way that we were more visible as people saw us worshipping as they drove by our service. These things have shown that the family of Zion has remained alive and well and active.

 I am excited about being able to worship in the sanctuary again. But this time does not come without some anxiety, probably for most of us. What will it be like to return with our safety plan in place? There are some things that we will not be doing for a time. We will remain in our pews to share the peace and we will not shake hands or hug each other. We will not be able to sing, something that will be very hard for those of us who love singing in church. We will hear music, we will listen to the hymns but we will not sing. We did sing while worshipping in the parking lot. So you may ask, why can’t we sing in church? The issue has to do with indoor airflow vs. outdoor airflow. The air is much more confined in the space of the sanctuary and

the aerosols that we expel, especially while speaking and singing, are much easier to spread to one another. Churches have been places known as super-spreaders, especially ones where social distancing, mask requirements and singing were not enforced. We do not want to be one of these churches. We have many people in our congregation who are high risk for the coronavirus. We have loved ones whom we need to protect. I, personally, am high risk with having diabetes. Terry is high risk with having a very poor immune system so I have to be diligent in protecting us as well as being careful to protect all who are vulnerable in this congregation. Our safety plan was developed to keep everyone who worships at Zion as safe as possible. Some may say we are living in fear and not faith. These are not mutually exclusive terms. By maintaining safety, we are being faithful in loving each other. Jesus tells us many times in the Gospel to love our neighbors as ourselves. And so, as there are many studies that have shown that it is not safe to sing or speak loudly in indoor spaces, we will refrain from singing as a congregation in this time. Even as I lead worship and need to project my voice, this could expel aerosols to you, so I will keep a large distance from you.

 Another thing that the safety plan asks of you, is to wear a mask. Masks will be provided if you come without one. I know that mask wearing is a very polarizing issue right now and the last thing I want to see happen is to have to ask someone to leave because of refusing to wear a mask. If you chose not to wear a mask, you are invited to take part in the service through the Facebook live recording. When I go into a business where I see people not wearing a mask, I do not feel safe and will no longer go to that business. I do not want anyone to come to Zion and not feel safe. I do not want to feel unsafe as your pastor if someone will not wear a mask.

 To be able to worship safely together again, we all are being asked to love one another by abiding by the safety plan, which has been sent out via the prayer chain and is in this newsletter. Please read it as you prepare to return to our sanctuary. It is a good thing to come back together. Lets all work together to keep it a good thing. It has been a long time since we have been together and I know that I have missed you. Even with our new guidelines, it is a blessing to be able to worship together.

 Pastor Becky +

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

 Pastor Becky opened the meeting with a devotion that focused on grief and loss.  The devotion included discussion on processing the pain of loss/grief, adjusting to the work without the thing that has changed or is gone, and finding a connection to what was lost.

 Council accepted with regret the resignation of Claudia Smith-Alderink as Elder.  Council voted to appoint Jolene Griffin to the vacant elder position until the election at the annual meeting.  The Council thanked Jolene for her willingness to serve in this role.

 The church reopening plan was revised to indicate that family members may sit together.  Caregivers may also sit with those they bring and/or care for.  Council agreed to return service time to 10:30 when service is moved back into the sanctuary.  Council decided that initially only the Pastor and Elder will be in front to talk.  The elder will light the candles.  Pastor will ask Tara to make cards that people can write announcements on and the Elder will read them during announcement time.  A “Welcome “Back” to Zion!” information sheet was reviewed and revised.  The sheet will be added to the newsletter, distributed with the bulletin and copies will be available at the church.  Council again discussed wearing masks and reaffirmed that initially all who are over the age of five must wear a mask when inside the church building.  There was much discussion on reopening and the need for all to be patient with one another as we restart worship in the sanctuary.  The priority has been to move forward in the safest manner possible. However, none of us have lived through a pandemic before and we are learning as we go.

 Two park benches for the play area are being ordered.  Members who wish to assist with the cost of the benches may sponsor a third of the cost and have their name added to one of the backrest boards.

 The Elders are working to finish the stain glass window project on the east side of the church.  The storms need to be removed so the technician can return to make the repairs and then new storms will be installed.  The Elders are also seeking bids to paint/repair the wood trim on the front of the church.

**“GOD’S WORK, OUR HANDS”**

 For the month of October, Zion will have a collection for a Thrivent Action Team project.  Jolene Griffin and Carol Engle are the leaders. We are asking for donations of pajamas, socks and underwear for kids of all ages.  We will have a display table set up in the Fellowship Hall for all donated items. You may also give a monetary donation.  Just write on your offering envelope the amount and that it is for this project.  October 25th will be our Kids P.J.s and Undies Sunday. After our worship service that day, everything will be packed and taken to Manna's Market. We have several sizes of free Live Generously t-shirts available. Please help yourself.  Carol Engle has been given a $250.00 grant from Thrivent Lutheran Financial.  She has used this grant money to purchase some  of the items needed.

**VOLUNTEER NEEDED!**

As our current plan is to return to the sanctuary for worship on Oct. 4 at 10:30, the decision has been made to not have printed bulletins but to project the service on the wall. As it would be difficult for me to try to lead the service and see to advance the slides at the same time, I do have a remote clicker that will work from anywhere in the sanctuary. Would someone like to help out with the slides during the services? More than one person to share the responsibility would be great.

You can text me, email me or send a PM to let me know your availability.

Thank you,

Pastor Becky

**WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY**

Women’s Bible Study will resume this month and meet on Tuesday, October 20 at 1 PM in the Gathering Room. Hope to see you there.

**THANK YOU**

 We are so grateful for you all. Thank you for the prayers, donation, and support. Thank you for your kindness and sympathy at a time when it was deeply appreciated.

God is good!
 ~The family of Tina Salas

**THANK YOU!**

 Thank you to all of the people who have volunteered to be traffic assistants during this time of having church services in the parking lot. You have been very gracious in helping to make the service run smoothly and your help is greatly appreciated. Also, we have a couple of people that are passing out bulletins and communion kits. Thank you as well.

**SPECIALS IN OCTOBER**

**Anniversaries**

15-Paul & Kim Meade

21-Jim & Debbie Elenbaas

21-Mark & Carlotta Willard

**Baptisms**

04-Kayla (Bite) Cole

09-John Brodbeck

10-Jolene Griffin

12-Anna (Diane) Zylstra

12-Lexie Griffin

12-Jeremy Childs

13-Dana Traub

16-Diane Griffin

30-Tom Krikke

**Birthdays**

02-Carlotta Willard

03-Jill Avery

05-John Brodbeck

09-Isabell Zylstra

14-Taylor Utterback

23-Jim Avery

24-Gene Beyer

26-Lisa Krikke

29-Alex Rutledge

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

**SERVING IN OCTOBER**

**Altar Guild**

Kim & Paul Meade

Norma Smith

Nicole & Isabell Zylstra

**SUNDAYS IN OCTOBER**

**October 4- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Tom Krikke

Offering Counters: Karen Heise, Brenda Bite

**October 11- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Doug MacKenzie, Mike Johnson

**October 18- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Mike Kemper

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Jim Elenbaas

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder

**October 25- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Tom Krikke

Offering Counters: Karen Heise, Brenda Bite