**ZION’S MESSENGER**

**April 2021 + Zion Lutheran Church + 269-367-4817**

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Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! These are ancient words that were exchanged between the disciples and early Christians to celebrate Christ’s resurrection. We share these same words today as we enter the season of Easter once again.

It has been quite a year since last Easter. We have lost a lot, we have been pushed into all kinds of changes, we have gained new ways of being the church. In the midst of it all, this joyful reality is still with us. Christ is risen! Christ defeated sin and death!

Last year at this time the words cancelled and closed were predominant in our lives. We celebrated Easter through Facebook Live. This year, we will celebrate Easter Sunday outdoors, in the parking lot with the plan to resume worship in the sanctuary on April 11. This year, re-opening is the predominant word in our lives as the wonderful miracle of vaccines have come to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. New life is with us in so many ways as much of life is being restored.

Let us keep in mind, as we get excited about getting back to lives outside of our homes, that though many have been vaccinated, we are making great strides in getting this virus under control, that we are not completely out of the woods yet. I am concerned that cases are rising at a fast rate again in Michigan, and this time this rise seems to be affecting many children and youth. There are still younger people who will be waiting in line to get their vaccines as they are soon available to everyone 16 and older. For a time, we will need to be considerate for the health of those still waiting and those who may choose not to be vaccinated.So, when we return to the sanctuary, we will start with the safety precautions that were in place in the fall. Masks and physical distancing will still be our way of worshipping safely together before we all enter the light at the end of the tunnel! As we celebrate Easter joy, let us also celebrate with love and concern for our whole family of Zion.

I came across this poem recently and would like to share it with you as we reflect on the year we have been through. It was written by Kendra Wieser, Director of Faith Formation at Peace Lutheran Church in LaCrescent, MN.

IT WAS A YEAR AGO

When the words CLOSED and CANCELLED took over

When the word ESSENTIAL was defined

When the words NEVER ALONE became our comfort and our challenge

When the word CHURCH was understood as people, not place.

IT WAS A YEAR AGO

When each news cycle shifted our reality

When virus numbers displaced market numbers

When nature healed and adapted without us

When humanity clashed and divided among us

IN THIS YEAR

Phones calls became new lifelines and zoom calls got old fast

Our choices teetered between protecting mental or physical health

We learned to bake bread, make art and plant seeds

We noticed ways that inequity is seated at our table so

We practiced gratitude for and generosity with what we have

IN THIS YEAR

We practiced simplicity and OPENED ourselves to what could be

We discerned God’s love and our faith are ESSENTIAL

We prayed because we truly were NEVER ALONE

We practiced hospitality and forgiveness because WE ARE THE CHURCH

ITS BEEN A YEAR

And in this year

Our story is growing

Not to what was

But to what we will become

Let us celebrate a joyous Easter and look for the many ways that God will continue to be at work in our lives and in our faith!

Pastor Becky +

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

Council opened with devotion on questions for congregations to consider when assessing whether people will return to in person worship.

Pastor Becky advised that she had sent a letter to Ruth Hindman to let her know that her membership at Zion is reinstated at this time. She indicated that Ruth’s husband, Jimmy, is interested in joining when it is possible to have a class. Ruth and Jimmy will be formally received into membership after in person worship services resume.

Karen reported that all bills are paid that the financial picture looks good at this time. Offerings have increased and expenses have been down,

Jolene reported that the Board of Evangelism met and have several plans for the coming year. An Easter Egg Hunt will be held in conjunction with the Board of Education. It will be held Easter Sunday following worship. The board is also planning to participate in the Lake Odessa parade and the Woodland homecoming celebration. Other ideas include offering Christmas trees and ornaments to those in the community who are in need, a fall festival, and a business card with Zion’s mission statement on the back for members to have and hand out.

Jerry reported that the Trustees are working on repairing the leak that is outside the Pastor’s office door. Bids were received for a new lawnmower, however, Karen advised that the old lawn mower has been fixed. It has had the heads replaced. Parts for the repair were approximately $447 and Ken Heise donated the labor to make this repair. Because of this repair, we will use the existing lawnmower and not be purchasing a new lawnmower at this time.

Brenda reported that Board of Education met with the Evangelism committee regarding the Easter Egg Hunt. She indicated the Board of Education needs more members.

Pastor reported that Board of Worship met and that Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter will be outside services. Pastor and Martha will be outside, weather permitting.

Considerable discussion was held on the recent difficulties with the livestream and radio broadcast of worship services. Purchasing a computer to use in the sanctuary to livestream the services was discussed and approved. Jill Avery will ask Jim if he can assist in obtaining recommendations and quotes. Paul will provide a list of the things needed on the computer for the livestreaming. Having a computer dedicated to the livestreaming should help with the loss of service and improve the quality of the recordings. In addition, the organ technician is coming on March 22nd to install an output on the organ so it can be picked up for recording. This should improve the quality and clarity of the music.

Karen shared several requests that had been received including Synod Partners in Ministry, Forgotten Man Ministry, and the Alpha Women’s Center in Hastings.

There was an article in Living Lutheran with the names of those elected to congress who are members of the ELCA. Council agreed to send a letter of congratulations and support to those elected.

Pastor indicated the Synod Assembly will be a virtual one day meeting this year on May 15th. Zion needs two voting delegates, preferably one female and one male. Paul indicated he would consider participating. After discussion it was agreed that Pastor would ask Carlotta Willard if she would consider attending. Pastor did ask Carlotta and she agreed to be a voting delegate for Zion. Thank you, Carlotta!

Zion was approved for a second Payroll Protection Program grant in the amount of $6,180. This grant can be used for salaries, fringe benefits, and utilities. There is a possibility that the grant may not need to be repaid.

Council is very thankful to everyone who continues to serve and support the work of Zion and for your patience as we continue to work toward returning to the sanctuary.

**UPDATED COUNCIL AND**

**BOARD MEMBER LIST**

Included in this newsletter is an updated 2021 Board Member list. The updated list includes Lisa Krikke on the Nominations Committee. Lisa was elected to the committee at the annual meeting but was inadvertently left off the list. The updated list also deletes Jim Avery from the Nominations Committee as he was listed on this committee in error. Our thanks to Lisa for serving and our apologies for the errors.

The updated list adds Carlotta Willard as Council Secretary. Carlotta will be appointed to the secretary position at the beginning of the April Council meeting. Carlotta succeeds Brenda Bite who resigned. We thank Brenda for her four plus years of dedicated, excellent service to Zion and the council. We welcome Carlotta and thank her for her willingness to serve in this important role.

**TECH TEAM**

As we will continue to live stream our worship services, even when we do return to in-person worship, more people are needed to be on the tech team to make this happen! Paul Meade will train you to do this. Please see Paul or Pastor Becky if you would like to be involved in this new ministry.

**SPECIAL OFFERINGS FOR 2021**

The special offering designations are:

* Lent: World Hunger
* Thanksgiving: Lakewood Ministerial Association
* Advent: Family Promise of Barry County
* Christmas Eve: Lakewood Community Council

Labels for your offering envelope boxes with the special offering designations will be prepared and distributed to your church mailboxes. Your Lenten offering can be given at any time during the Lenten season. Thank you for your faithfulness.

**MANNA’S MARKET DONATIONS**

In the month of May, Zion will be doing another collection for Manna's Market.  This Action Team project will be for supplies that are used in the bathroom. We all take for granted all the items we use in the bathroom every day.  We can all help Manna's Market provide free needed items for others in our community.  Jerry Engle has been given a $250.00 grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to purchase some of the supplies.  The items most needed are toilet paper, facial tissue, paper towels and all sizes of garbage bags.  Other items you may choose to donate are shampoo, cream rinse, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, razors, shave gel, toilet bowl cleaner, cleaning wipes and any other items you know would be useful.  You may also donate cash to be given to Manna's Market. A table will be set up in the Fellowship Hall to put all the donated items on.  Sunday, May 23rd. will be the last day to bring items.  That week the action team will pack everything up and deliver it all to Manna's Market.

**ON FOLLOWING PAGE:**

**2021 Board Member List:**

**(With year(s) elected/appointed)**

(Note: Pastor and Council President are ex officio Board members)

**Rev. 03/22/2021**

**Church Council:**

* President: Martha Yoder, ’18, ‘20
* Vice Pres: Paul Meade, ’19, ’20
* Secretary: Carlotta Willard, appt. ‘21
* Treasurer: Karen Heise, Appointed
* Financial Sec: Jill Avery, ’17,’19, ‘21
* Elder: Dan Utterback, ’18,’20

Jolene Griffin, ’20, ‘21

* Trustee: Jim Elenbaas, ‘20

Dan Zylstra, ’19, ‘21

Jerry Engle, ‘21

Mike Johnson, ‘21

**Board of Endowment: (3 yr. term)**

* Paul Meade, ’18, ‘21
* Carol Engle, ‘20
* Buffy Meyers, ‘19
* Claude Smith, ‘20

**Board of Evangelism:**

* Jolene Griffin, ’17,’19, ‘21
* Doug MacKenzie,’18, ‘20
* Dan Utterback,’18, '20
* Martha Yoder, ‘20
* Martha Yoder (council rep)

**Board of Fellowship:**

* Deb Elenbaas, ’17,’19, ‘21
* Carol Engle, ’17,’19, ‘21
* Mary Makley,’17,’19, ‘21
* Irene Ames,’17,’19, ‘21
* Dawn Brodbeck, ’19, ‘21
* Mary Smith, ’19, ‘21
* Diane Griffin, ’18,’20
* Doug Makley, ’18,’20
* Jolene Griffin, ’18,’20
* Roxanne Johnson, ‘21
* Jill Avery (council rep)

**Board of Parish Education:**

* Kayla Cole, ’17,’19, ‘21
* Diane Griffin, ’18, ‘20
* Jolene Griffin, ’19,’20
* Jennifer Rutledge, ‘20
* Brenda Bite (council rep)

**Board of Stewardship:**

* Claude Smith, ’17, ’19, ‘21
* Jim Avery, ’16, ’18, ‘21
* Doug MacKenzie, ’19, ‘21
* Karen Heise (council rep)

**Board of Worship Planning:**

* Buffy Meyers, ’18, ‘20
* Mary Smith, ‘20
* Irene Ames
* Dan Utterback (council rep)

**Board of Youth:**

* Combined with Board of Education at this time.

**Nominating Committee: (1 yr. term)**

* Ken Heise, ‘21
* Lisa Krikke, ‘21
* Buffy Meyers, ‘21
* Jill Plummer, ‘21

**Building & Grounds**

* Jerry Engle
* Linden Fisher
* Ken Heise
* Mike Johnson
* Paul Meade

**ZLCW 2020-21**

* President: Buffy Meyers
* Secretary: Jolene Griffin
* Treasurer: Carol Engle
* Secretary of Action:

Dawn Brodbeck

Mary Makley

* Circle Rep:

**SUNDAYS IN APRIL**

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

**April 4- Easter Sunday, Drive-In Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Offering Counters: Diane Griffin, Carlotta Willard

**April 11- In Sanctuary, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle, Brenda Bite

**April 18- In Sanctuary, No Communion**

Jolene Griffin

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie, Mike Johnson

**April 25- In Sanctuary, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder