**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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A few weeks ago, we experienced the beginning of new life at Zion as we celebrated Pentecost Sunday. We continued our work of serving those in need in our community by offering our abundant collection of bathroom items to Manna’s Market. This abundance came through the generosity of our members and a Thrivent grant. It was wonderful to have Jayne Flannigan at our worship service to receive these gifts. We also celebrated the gifts of volunteers who have worked so hard at making sure that all of our varied kinds of worship services happened over this past year. It was a wonderful thing to hear voices sing a hymn at the end of the service. And the board of fellowship outdid themselves with a delicious array of treats that we were able to eat together outdoors. To see so many people gathered with joyful hearts was so encouraging. The Holy Spirit has been busy at work in the life of Zion and will continue to breath new life into this community of faith as we move forward into a new place.

This article may seem disjointed but there are a number of things that I would like to highlight for the life of our community.

Over this past year, I worked primarily from home, which has been a very odd experience for a pastor who is used to being out and about with visiting people. I stayed connected by phone, and various electronic means but not in person. This led me to do church related activity sometimes every day as I have reached out and people have reached out to me via text and email and messenger and many zoom meetings. I found that it was easy to lose sight of the fact that I have been called to serve you at a half time status. Now that things have opened up, I have begun to resume working outside of the parsonage. I would like to remind you (and myself!) that my formal workdays are Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday. Sometimes meetings happen on other days and certainly when there is an emergency or special need, I will respond outside of those days as I am able. I would ask that you keep this schedule in mind, understanding that it’s so easy to send a quick text or email or phone call without thinking about what day that it is. With this being said, please do not hesitate to contact me with an emergent issue. On my end, my normal routine is to do office type work, including sermon and worship preparation on Wed. and Thurs. morning (being in the church office on Thurs. mornings) and visitations, meetings and other activity in the afternoons and evenings of those days, as well as Sundays, as needed. Of course, things like hospital visits, may need to happen on other days and I will respond as best as I am able. Terry and I are gradually entering into social life again and hope to re-engage in social visits with you as well. Also, as I resume visitations, I will only make indoor visits with vaccinated people. This is for the safety of the congregation, especially those who are immune compromised or have other health issues.

The second thing that I am really excited about is becoming a mission partner with another church in our synod. Our council voted to become a mission partner with Trinity Lutheran Church in Battle Creek and Pastor Kjersten Sullivan. Trinity is going through re-development as they work to serve the people living in poverty in Battle Creek. They have some great programs going in their neighborhood but need mission partners to join with them. We have agreed to support them financially but the more exciting part is that as soon as things are in a more stable place with the pandemic, Pastor Sullivan and I are going to set up a pulpit exchange so that you can meet her and learn from her about the mission that Trinity is involved in and learn how we might be involved personally. I will then be at Trinity that Sunday to meet the people there and begin a relationship together. Battle Creek is close enough that we could send members of Zion there to assist with community programs down the road. Who knows what kind of mission partner relationship might grow out of this initial connection? The Spirit is on the move and we, at Zion, will be on the move as well.

This summer is looking like a time of renewal and hope in the life of Zion. I look forward to seeing more people returning to worship in person, either inside the church or in the church in the parking lot! Our leadership will continue to monitor safety needs and protocols for all of our members and visitors.

Let’s have a great summer together, Zion family!

Pastor Becky +

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

 The May 11th meeting was opened by Pastor Becky with a devotion on “creation care” that talked about the relationship between the earth and people. It emphasized that we are created for relationship and that together we are the image of God.

 The Pastor reported that she is gradually resuming home visits to members. She reported that there will be an inquirer’s class with three people. Pastor indicated that she believes our return to worship in the sanctuary is going well. Discussion was held on Pastor’s work hours. During the pandemic she has been very flexible in responding to needs and attending Zoom meetings. However, now that many activities have restarted, it is time for the Pastor to resume a more normal schedule. Pastor has a half-time appointment and she will primarily be working on Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday, with some flexibility as needed. We need to be mindful of her work hours and need for time off.

 Karen reported that expenses are down approximately $1,000 from this time last year. The CROP walk on-line and through church offerings was $550. The refrigerator has been looked at by a repair person. It has a small leak and was in need of freon. It needs the coil replaced which will cost approximately $1,800. This information will be shared with the ZLCW.

 The Trustees will put out a sign-up sheet for help with trimming and mowing. Mike Johnson volunteered to take primary responsibility for mowing each week. A clean-up day for outside the church was set for June 5th, with a rain day of Jun 12th, at 10:00.

 Discussion was held on resuming regular meetings and activities by all boards and committee. All boards and committee are encouraged to become active to resume more activities at Zion. Council discussed the need for additional members of the Board of Education and Youth.

 A number of volunteers who have been instrumental in facilitating worship services the past year will be recognized on May 23rd with a special thank you and coffee hour. This will be an outdoor coffee hour with prepackaged treats.

 Council discussed our Mission Partnership with Trinity Lutheran in Battle Creek. Council approved sending a $500 donation to Trinity for their Mission Redevelopment Program Outreach in the poorest areas of the city.

 The need to replace the boiler was discussed. Due to the size of the project and the length of time that it will take to have this completed, Council agreed to use a Special Ballot Meeting to determine whether the congregation approves this project. The Trustees recommended a bid from Lakewood Heating and Cooling at a cost of approximately $35,000. The boiler is a commercial boiler and can only be installed by a vendor with certification from the State. Also, prior to installation, the vendor must create plans and send them to the State for review and approval before work can begin.

 This year marks the 165th anniversary of the founding of Zion Lutheran Church. Evangelism is recommending a Happy Birthday Zion party on August 22nd. A separate committee will be formed to work on this celebration. It is hoped that a member of each Board and anyone interested will help. A call for volunteers will be put in the bulletin and newsletter.

 A special Council Meeting was held on May 18th to discuss changes to current safeguards for services and activities at Zion. Council agreed to the following changes:

 June: Masks are required for all when entering the church and walking to your pew. Once seated, those who are fully vaccinated may remove their mask. Masks are required for those who are unvaccinated. It is on the honor system. We will resume bringing the offering to the front with music. We will resume singing all hymns with masks on. Passing of the peace will continue with people standing and talking/waving from their pew.

 July: Continuous communion will begin. We will review guidelines in place at that time for eating as a group to see if there are any changes to fellowship time.

 Fellowship time has resumed with an outdoor coffee cart and prepackaged treats. All are encouraged to lawn chairs and participate. Martha was asked to meet with Fellowship to discuss returning to scheduled fellowship times.

 Council expressed their appreciation for the patience and faithfulness of the congregation during the past year.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**SUMMER WORSHIP TIME 9:30**

Sunday, June 6, Zion will begin having service at 9:30 AM. This time will continue through the summer, ending the week after Labor Day.

**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.

**END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**

**CELEBRATION SUNDAY, JUNE 6TH**

 June 6th will be a very special Sunday at Zion. We know that our kids have had a tough year at school and want to have a celebration for them to commemorate the end of the school year and celebrate the beginning of summer. The celebration includes a hotdog lunch with all the trimmings and VBS type games led by the Utterbacks. All kids will receive a gift bag filled with summer fun items. Kids of all ages are encouraged to be here for this special Sunday and encouraged to bring a friend too! Everyone in the congregation is encouraged to be here to join in our first lunch together in a long time and help our kids celebrate.

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

 June 6th we will also be welcoming our three new members during worship. Welcome, Jimmy and Ruth Hindman, and Janine Frizzell!

**BOILER REPLACEMENT UPDATE**

Thank you to everyone who took the time to reply to the special ballot meeting on the boiler replacement.  The ballot was approved with 33 members voting to move forward with this project.  The Trustees have been in contact with Lakewood Heating and Cooling to get the project started.  Because the church has a commercial boiler, the vendor must develop a plan for approval by the state and then components for the project can be ordered.  It is anticipated that actual work will be able to happen in September.  Again, thank you to all who supported this needed equipment purchase.

**EVANGELISM UPDATE**

 The Board of Evangelism kept busy this spring planning for outreach during 2021 and has already completed several projects. The first was the Easter Egg hunt in conjunction with the Board of Education. On May 8th during Nurse Appreciation Week, small gift bags were delivered to seven nurses who work at Spectrum Lake Odessa and the Family Medical Center. The gift bags included a card with thanks for their care of others, a blessing, and information on services at Zion. On May 17th, breakroom baskets of goodies were delivered to all six all Lakewood Public School location with a note of thanks to the nearly 200 staff for their work with our kids this past school year and wishes for a great summer from Zion On May 23rd, a Volunteer recognition day was held in conjunction with Board of Fellowship.

 Upcoming projects include an End of the School Year Summer Celebration on June 6th. This will be a special day filled with food and fun things for our kids – and everyone at Zion to enjoy. Additional projects include: the Lake Odessa Fair Parade on June 26th, the Happy 165th Birthday Zion celebration on August 22nd, a Blessing of the Backpacks for kids returning to school in the fall, the Woodland homecoming on Labor Day weekend, a possible Fall Festival with a pet blessing, and a Zion Christmas Tree Farm for those in need of holiday decorations. Watch for more information on these outreach projects. Additional help with these projects is needed and welcomed. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Board of Evangelism or helping with a specific project, please let Martha, Jolene, Dan U., or Doug MacKenzie know. Thank you.

**LET’S GO TO THE PARADE!**

 Zion will have a float in the Lake Odessa parade on Wednesday, June 23! Martha Yoder has offered her lawn tractor and trailer, which we will decorate.
 We are in need of members to walk alongside and pass out candy. We are also in need of members to help us put stickers with Zion’s information on the candy that will be passed out. This can be done at church or you can take home the candy, apply the stickers and return to the church.   Also, we would welcome donations of individually wrapped candy.
 If you have any questions or want to volunteer for either, please contact Martha, Dan Utterbeck or Jolene.

**HAPPY 165TH ZION**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

 There will be a quick organizing meeting immediately after worship on June 13th for everyone who is interested in helping to plan the 165th Birthday celebration for Zion. We are encouraging every Board to have at least one representative join this group. We also encourage everyone interested in helping to come to this meeting. We want this to be a very special day to celebrate our heritage and the future of our ministries. If you have questions, please talk with Martha, Jolene or Dan U.

**GRADUATION RECOGNITION**

 Zion is planning a Graduation Recognition Sunday for our graduates! We will choose a date that works for all. Please let Pastor or Martha know of any high school, college, or trade school graduates who should be included.

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**ZION CHRISTMAS TREE FARM**

 Donations are starting to come in for our new mission to provide Christmas Trees and decorations to those in need within our community. Zion will invite those who do not have a Christmas tree to come to the church and pick out one along with some ornaments and lights at no cost. To date, we have 7 trees and some very lovely ornaments thanks to two generous community members, Jan Brace and Janette Brodbeck. If you have items to donate, please contact Jolene or Martha. Also, remember this mission if you are at a garage sale and see a good deal on a tree or décor!! Thank you.

**VOLUNTEER NEEDED!**

 A volunteer is needed to begin selecting hymns each week for worship. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Becky.



**THANK YOU**

Thank you all so much for contributing to our Everything for the Bathroom collection for Manna's Market.  This Action Team project provided so very many needed supplies for those in need in our community.  We were thankful Jayne Flanigan could come on May 23rd to receive the monetary donations and see the 3 tables full of supplies. She said that she really appreciates all we do for Manna's Market.  It was very helpful to receive the $250.00 grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to purchase some of the supplies.  Here is a list of most of what we received: 187 rolls of toilet paper, 21 boxes of facial tissue, 38 rolls of paper towels, 7 boxes of garbage bags, 24 bottles of shampoo and cream rinse, 92 bars of soap, 38 tubes of toothpaste, 34 toothbrushes, 12 packs of Floss, 10 deodorants, 12 razors, 5 cans of shave gel, 8 bottles of toilet bowl cleaner, 11 containers of cleaning wipes, 5 bottles of hand lotion, 2 combs, 4 bottles of hand soap, 15 bath towels and 18 wash cloths..  We also received $220.00 in monetary donations for Manna's Market.  The tables were full of all these items in the Fellowship Hall and on Monday, May 24th, Martha, Ruth, Mike, Roxanne, Carol and Jerry packed it all and delivedered it to the Market.   Once again, thank you all.

**THANK YOU**

Dear ZLCW Board, thank you so much for the donation to purchase school binders! They can be quite expensive for families but really help students to be more organized and successful at school. Thank you so much and please know how appreciated your donation is! ~Lisa Krikke

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**SAVE THE DATE. PLAN TO ATTEND**:

* June 5 (or 12) – Outside Clean-up day at Zion
* June 6 – End of the School Year “Summer Celebration”
* July 18 - Semi-Annual Mtg.
* August 22 - Zion's 165 Birthday Party
* September 4 - Woodland Labor Day Games.  Workers needed

**SUNDAYS IN JUNE**

**June 6- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Ken Heise

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder

**June 13- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Safety Person: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Diane Griffin, Carlotta Willard

**June 20- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Marcia Schultz

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle, Carlotta Willard

**June 27- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie, Mike Johnson