**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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 At this writing, I am still basking in the joy that we experienced at our 165th birthday party for Zion on Sunday. It was a perfect day. I really appreciated having the tent both to shade people from the sun and also to make our service even more visible as people passed by on the road. It was exciting to see so many people together for worship and the huge group of children and youth who came for the blessing of the backpacks. It was fun to receive and then read the many memories of Zion from former pastors, spouses and children to current members of many generations. The meal from the food truck was excellent and the hymn sing was also a joyful end to the festivities.

 I hope that this milestone event brings us encouragement to look into the future and seek ways to keep Zion such a beacon of faith in our community as it has been for 165 years. Yes, the congregation is smaller than it once was and the pandemic has not helped to boost attendance but though small, we are mighty in faith and I pray that as we continue to live our faith out in the community, that new people (and of course returning people would also always be welcome!) will look to Zion to be a church home. Zion, not just as a building, but as a family of faith is a gift to our community and surrounding area. I was reflecting on the ELCA Lutheran presence in our area, other than our sister congregation, Grace in Hastings, there is no other ELCA presence in Ionia, Eaton and Kent counties until Immanuel in Grand Ledge to the east, all the way to St. Paul in Greenville and Faith in Sidney to the north and Two Churches (Ascension Lutheran and Holy Cross Episcopal) to the west. Many of our members come from parts of these counties as well as Barry County so we are certainly a needed presence of the ELCA in this area. We have worked hard to show our presence in our community through outreach projects, participation in the Lake Odessa parade, Praise in the Park in Lake Odessa, Art in the Park in Lake Odessa and very soon, being in the Woodland parade and having a booth of games in the park in Woodland for the Labor Day homecoming event along with providing a worship service in the park with the Woodland United Methodist Church on Sept. 5. We have been very busy this summer and I pray that God will bless the fruits of our labors to see growth in our congregation.

 Plans are moving forward for fall events with Sunday School rally day on Sept. 12, plans for a pet blessing service and fall festival in October and the free Christmas tree “farm” being held after Thanksgiving. I am hopeful that all of these things as well as regular worship will ignite our hearts with the fire of the Spirit. Of course, the “elephant in the room” that is hard to think about is keeping an eye on the Delta variant and a likely fall surge that may cause us to have to pivot and change plans as we have done so much over the past 18 months but I have seen this congregation be resilient and keep going and I have confidence that in all that may lie ahead we will continue to be faithful, to do things to love our neighbor and trust that God will be with us as we enter this new season of fall.

 Pastor Becky+

**TABLE SHOWERS**

 The ZLCW is planning on setting up Table Showers for both Ashley Griffin and Kayla Cole in the near future.  Look for their lists of needed items on each of their tables,  The tables will be left up until Sunday, September 26th.

**ZION COLORING CONTEST**

 The kids Noah’s Ark themed coloring contest is well underway.  Coloring kits were distributed at Art in the Park and at the 165th Celebration.  Kits will also be distributed at the Woodland Homecoming Celebration.  If you haven’t picked up a coloring kit yet, they are available in the Fellowship Hall or at the Woodland Park at our game booth.  There are four age groups from pre-school to ten and above.  Encourage your kids, grandkids and others to enter to win backpacks and fun school/art supplies.  The kits include three different Noah’s ark scenes.  Kids can choose to color and submit one, two or all three of the pictures.  Entries are due back to the church by September 13th.

  **Be sure to come to church on September 19th to help judge!**  All entries will be displayed by age group in the Fellowship Hall and those attending church can vote for their favorite in each group.  Prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third in each age group.

 We already have some kids entered and are looking forward to having lots of great pictures in every age group!

**WOODLAND HOMECOMING CELEBRATION, SEPTEMBER 4**

 Zion will have a float in the Homecoming Parade.  The parade starts at 1:00 pm.  We need people to walk in the parade to carry the church banners and to pass out candy.  If you can help with this, please sign-up on the sheet in the Narthex or let Martha Yoder know.

  This year we also have three fun games for kids of all ages to play for free.  This is a joint effort with Woodland United Methodist Church.  We need volunteers to work at the games in half-hour shifts.  If you can help with the games, please sign-up on the sheet in the Narthex or contact Martha.

  We are hoping to help lots of kids have a great time!

**LAST CALL FOR ZION MEMORIES!**

 It is not too late to share your favorite memories of Zion.  We will be compiling all the memories in a 165th Celebration keepsake booklet.  If you have a memory you would like included, please let us know.  You can submit your memory in writing to the church office or to Martha Yoder.  You may also email your memory to office@zionwoodland,org.  If you would rather tell your memory, please call Martha at 517-230-9274, and she will write it up for you!   We would like to have all the memories collected by September 30th.

**SERVICE TIME CHANGE &**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Worship will begin at 10:30 AM starting on September 12. Please plan accordingly. Sunday School begins that Sunday as well. Join us at 9:15 AM for Rally Day!

**CHURCH CLEANERS NEEDED FOR SEPTEMBER**

 Volunteers are needed to clean during the month of September.  We are so thankful to Dawn Brodbeck who has been volunteering to clean the church for more than a year.  She is not able to clean during September.  A sign-up sheet for September is in the Narthex.  In addition, we will be going back to our schedule of volunteer s to clean the church soon.  A copy of the previous list will be placed in the Narthex.  Please review the cleaning assignments and note any changes.  Thank you for helping us keep Zion clean and safe!

**PERSONAL CARE KITS**

 Zion received another Action Team grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans to make Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. Carol Engle is the team leader of this project and will use the $250 grant to purchase some of the supplies needed to assemble kits.  A table in the Fellowship Hall will be set up for anyone wishing to donate item.  Items needed:  Adult Size Toothbrushes, Large Nail Clippers with an Attached File, Sturdy, Large Toothed Combs, Bars of Soap, and Monetary donations to help cover the cost of shipping the kits. The Charity Circle Bible Study ladies will be the Action Team for this project and assemble the kits at their September Circle meeting.  The kits will be blessed during our worship service on October 10th, then will be packed and sent to the warehouse in Maryland, then sent overseas.  Thank you to all who contribute and help with this special project and to Thrivent for giving Zion this grant.

**CHURCH PROJECTS**

 At the semi-annual meeting, seven projects around the church were shared and members were invited to take responsibility or perhaps financially support a project.  To date, two projects have champions!  If you can help with any project listed below, sign-up in the Narthex or talk with a Trustee.

Project 1, Update Ladies Lounge – Ruth & Jimmy Hindman, Martha Yoder

Project 2, Paint Sunday School Rooms

Project 3, Paint One Wall in Fellowship Hall

Project 4, Paint Floor in Sunday School Gathering Area

Project 5, Paint Church Office

Project 6, Repair Hole in Drywall in Gathering Room – Mike Johnson

Project 7, Dust/Polish in Sanctuary

  In addition to the seven projects above, the Trustees are currently working on the following:

* Replace Church Boiler
* Repair Leaks in Sunday School Rooms
* Repair and Paint/Stain/Wrap Exterior Wood
* Replace Two Outlets
* Repair ceiling where roof leaked
* Repair/replace north door keypad/opener

**BOILER UPDATE**

The old boiler has been removed from the church and the new boiler system has been set in place and is in the process of being installed.  The new system consists of three separate boilers for various parts of the church, a much more efficient system.  The project is on track to be completed before the weather turns cold!  Thank you to the Trustees for their work to be sure this project has moved forward.

**ZION’S 165TH CELEBRATION**

 Our 165th Celebration on August 22nd could not have been a better day!  Pastor Becky planned a wonderful service filled with personal stories, memories, and good wishes for Zion.  Kayla Cole provided beautiful special music.  A highlight of the service was the blessing of the backpacks for all our students returning to school.  A great picnic lunch for all was provided by Tommie’s Catering from Portland.  There was time for visiting and to walk through the church to look at displays of memories and current projects.  A timeline outside on the lawn provided a quick history of our church.  An old-fashioned hymn sing capped off the day.  Thank you to all who came to make this day so special.  There were between 85-90 people in attendance.

  Our thanks to so many people who worked to make this day possible.  Our thanks first to Pastor Becky for her the wonderful messages and leadership in the service.  A huge thank you to all who worked to make this day happen including Carole Engle, Mary Makley, Karen Heise, Janine Frizzell, Jolene Griffin, Diane Griffin, Paul Meade, Mike and Roxanne Johnson, Jerry Engle, Dan Utterback, Terry Speese, Ruth Hindman, Lyle Sandbrook, Doug Makley, Lexi Griffin, Levi Griffin, and Martha Yoder.   And to all who willingly pitched in on Sunday to help with all the details.  A very heartfelt thank you to Claude and Mary Smith for providing the much-needed tent and the tables and chairs.

  This special day was a blessing for all!  We are excited to see what God has in store for Zion in the coming year!

**ART IN THE PARK**

 Zion had a booth at Art in the Park on August 7th to provide a break station for those attending the event.  Zion provided water and snacks at no cost.  Throughout the day, more than 500 bottles of water were distributed and more than 600 snacks.  We also distributed kits to enter the Zion Coloring Contest, flyers about Zion, and business cards.  Our booth was located along the main path through the park and was a busy spot.  It was a great day!

  In addition, there was a drawing for four backpacks.  There were 128 entries in the drawing.  Winners were from Hastings, Saranac, and Lake Odessa.  All the winners were very thankful for the new backpacks.  The winner from Hastings said that her son’s backpack was in bad shape and the zipper was broken and she truly appreciated the new backpack for him.

  Thank you to all who helped set up, worked at the booth and/or donated items including Pastor Becky, Rocky and Mike Johnson, Ruth and Jimmy Hindman, Lyle Sandbrook, Jerry and Carole Engle and their daughter Lorie Morse, and Martha Yoder.

**LAKEWOOD COMMUNITY WOMEN’S CONFERENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 18**

 The Lakewood Community Women are holding a one-day conference on September 18th at Lakewood United Methodist Church.  The event is from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm with the theme “Real Faith for Real Life.”  The speaker is Robin Dykstra.  For more information visit the Lakewood Community Women’s Facebook page or call 269-367-4800.

**SUNDAYS IN SEPTEMBER**

**September 5- Worship in the Park 9 AM**

**No Service at Church**

**September 12- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

**Sunday School Rally Day**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Safety Person: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle, Carlotta Willard

**September 19- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie, Mike Johnson

**September 26- - In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Michael Anton

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder