**ZION’S MESSENGER**

**April 2022 + Zion Lutheran Church + 269-367-4817**

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Spring is trying to spring and with it brings many signs of new life. Holy Week and Easter come in the middle of April this year so as we continue through Lent, we have the hope of the message of the resurrection!

I sent this information out via the prayer chain, but want to have this be our April message to keep these important ministries of our church at the forefront of our minds as we all are concerned about the people of Ukraine and people all over our world who are faced with disasters and hardships.

**Lutheran World Relief (LWR):**  You might be most familiar with this as this is the agency that received our quilts and that receives our school kits and health kits. This agency works to get needed supplies and relief to people in need in many countries. Currently this group is working to serve the people fleeing Ukraine as well as those who remain in the country. **Right now, any funds that are donated through congregations are being matched up to $258,000. You can indicate your gift to LWR on your offering envelope. As these funds are sent by our treasurer to LWR, we are asking that all monies are to be designated to Ukraine from March through May.** There are always places in need all around our world and in our own country and they are not being forgotten during this time.

**Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR):** This agency responds primarily to natural disasters within the US and abroad. They are at work following the winter tornados in Kentucky and most recently in Iowa but also wherever disasters occur in our world. This agency is one of the last to leave an area being served. In fact, there is still some support happening related to Hurricane Katrina! This agency does work together with Lutheran World Relief and are also helping those in Ukraine.

**Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS):** This group assists in bringing refugees to our country and helping them get re-settled. The most recent group of refugees who are being supported in the US and other countries are those from Afghanistan. They are now prepared to serve those refugees from Ukraine and will assist those agencies in Poland and other European countries that are taking in those fleeing from Ukraine. At some point, the US will be receiving these refugees. **Samaritas,** which is a Lutheran Social Service agency, here in Michigan (formerly named Lutheran Social Services of Michigan) has an arm of the agency called New Americans, and they work with LIRS to settle refugees around the state of Michigan. Church sponsorship and housing for refugees is always a great need.

**ELCA World Hunger**: Our Lenten offerings are designated for this ministry. There are always places where people are suffering from lack of food and resources to live around our world and within the United States. Supporting World Hunger, is a way to help get food to people in great need. The World Hunger organization is working together with other agencies to get food to those feeling Ukraine and those who remain in the country, while at the same time, continuing to be present in many other places where people are in need of food.

**Lutheran World Service** is the humanitarian and development arm of the **Lutheran World Federation (LWF).** 99 countries across the globe are a part of the Federation and Lutheran World Service works to serve people in need in these countries. Though Ukraine is not in the LWF, all of the surrounding countries that are currently assisting those fleeing from Ukraine are in the LWF so Lutheran World Service is on the ground to bring humanitarian aid.

As you can see, the Lutheran Church is very active in our country and our world to help people in with many kinds of needs. Each agency has its own unique mission but in times of crisis, they do work together to get the help to people in need. Whichever agency is in your heart to support, know that your dollars do get to the people who need it most. I hope these brief descriptions help you to see how our church is actively involved in helping people in need all over the world.

And I hope to see many of you through Holy Week and on Easter!

Pastor Becky+

**EASTER EGG HUNT**

Zion will host an Easter Egg Hunt following service on Easter morning, Sunday, April 17.We're asking the congregation to consider donating individually wrapped candy and coins for the eggs by April 3rd. Non-chocolate candy or gum are also requested.

Please bring your kids, grandkids or any other kiddos to our Easter Egg Hunt!

**EASTER BASKETS**

ZLCW board is putting together Easter baskets for some of our members. You may add cards and/or treats. The baskets will be in the fellowship hall on a table. Please have your cards or treats done by Palm Sunday so they can be delivered before Easter.

**SPECIAL MUSIC FOR EASTER**

If you are interested in providing special music on Good Friday and/or Easter Sunday, please let Pastor Becky know.

**LAY LEADER NEEDED**

Lay leader needed for May 22. Please see Pastor Becky if interested.

**TABLE SHOWER**

There’s a table shower to welcome Nick and Samantha Bite's newest child: Logan Dale Bite. The shower will run through April. Specific items needed are Size 2 or larger diapers, bath toys, Target gift cards for formula, and Summer outfits size 3 months or larger.

**CHURCH & PARSONAGE**

**CLEAN-UP DAYS**

It is time for spring cleaning at the church and parsonage. There will be sign-up sheets in the Narthex for these two days to help clean-up outside of the church and parsonage. This includes picking up debris, sticks and branches and tidying up landscaping where needed. Clean-up at the parsonage will be Saturday, April 23rd and the church clean-up day will be Saturday, May 7th.  If you have questions about what needs to be done, please see Mike Johnson.

**VISIONING FOR ZION’S FUTURE**

Council is excited that we are actively beginning work to create a vision for Zion’s future. And, your input and involvement is needed! You are encouraged to participate in discussions to help create a plan for Zion’s future. We are hoping every voice is heard during this process so the best decisions can be made and goals can be set.

 We are pleased that Pastor David Sprang from the Synod Office has agreed to serve as facilitator for our visioning process. Our first meeting with Pastor Sprang is tentatively scheduled for April 3rd following worship service. Please consider attending this important session. A light lunch will be provided to participants. If you are interested in attending, please add your name to the sign-up sheet at the church or let Paul Meade or Pastor Becky know that you are planning to attend.

**ZION LOVES A PARADE**

It may seem early to be talking about the Lake Odessa parade, but it is only two months away! The 87th Annual Lake Odessa Grand Parade will be held on June 22nd at 6:00 pm. We would like to have a float in the parade this year and need a small trailer or wagon to decorate for the parade.  If you have a trailer or wagon that could be used, please let Martha Yoder know.  hank you!

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES**

Zion participates with the Lakewood Community Women, which is a group of women from churches in the Lakewood area. The group began as a planning committee for an annual women’s conference but has expanded its focus to include opportunities to reach out to the community to share God’s love. There are several upcoming opportunities for churches to participate with the group including:

**-Swifty’s Clean Up Day** on Saturday, June 4th. This is a day for cleaning the playground area at the park in Lake Odessa. Join people from area churches to help with raking, cleaning equipment and other clean-up activities. This can be a great family, youth group or individual way to help the community.

**-Praise in the Park**, on Saturday, July 16th. Zion participated in Praise in the Park last summer. It is an evening of music provided by various community churches, with free ice cream and fellowship. Last year there were approximately 100 people in attendance. Zion has been asked to again provide music. If you have a musical gift, please consider joining us and sharing your music and message of God’s love with the community.

**-Dinners for New Parents**: The Lakewood Community Women are partnering with the Alpha Center in Lake Odessa to provide meals to new parents. The plan is to provide three meals a week for two weeks after the birth of a new baby. The Alpha Center estimates they will have approximately 5-10 families a year. It is hoped that local churches can join together in this effort. So far, four churches have volunteered to be part of this outreach. The meals provided will include information on the various churches that are involved in the ministry. If you are interested in participating in this new outreach effort, please let Martha Yoder know.

**FALL WOMEN’S EVENT**

This year’s Fall Women’s Event sponsored by the Lakewood Community Women will be on October 1st at Outreach Church.  The speaker is Jennie Afman Dimkoff and the time of the event has been shortened to 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.  Mark your calendar for this special day and watch for more information in the coming months.

**THANK YOU FOR**

**A JOB WELL DONE!!**

A special “thank you” to our Trustees Mike Johnson and Jerry Engle, and Elder Paul Meade for all their work to keep our church facility in good operating condition. During the past few months there have been a number of projects that have required them to spend considerable time at the church.  These projects have included continued work on refining our new boiler system, installing the new handicap accessible North door, making repairs to the ceiling near the Pastor’s office, attending to numerous maintenance issues, and more. We appreciate their faithfulness to our church and want them to know that we thank them for their time, talent and efforts. If you see these individuals, please let them know of your appreciation.

**NEW CAMERA SYSTEM FOR THE SANCTUARY**

You may have noticed the large microphone is no longer at the altar, the Pastor is back at the pulpit to deliver the sermon, and our Elders are back at the Lectern. This is possible with the installation of a new camera system that can be moved during the service to show different locations.

This new system enhances our live stream broadcasts and allows us to return to a more “normal” worship service format. A huge shout out of thanks to Paul Meade for all his work to research equipment, and to Paul, Mike Johnson, and Terry Speese for all their work to install and test this equipment.

**Sunday School Opening**

April 3: Dan Utterback

April 10: Pastor Becky

April 17: Easter, No Sunday School

April 24: Martha Yoder

**SUNDAYS IN APRIL**

**April 3- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion, Visioning Sunday**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Preacher: Pastor David Sprang

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder

**April 10 In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion,**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Safety Person: Ken Heise

Offering Counters: Diane Griffin & Carlotta Willard

**April 14- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion Maundy Thursday**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle, Carlotta Willard

**April 15- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion Good Friday**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie, Mike Johnson

**April 17- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder

**April 24- In Sanctuary & Drive-in, Communion**

Pastor Polly Standley

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Ken Heise

Offering Counters: Diane Griffin & Carlotta Willard