**ZION’S MESSENGER**

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

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A continued Merry Christmas and Happy New Year as we enter 2023.

I love paper calendars. I have not gotten into the practice of using the calendar on my phone but each year as I open all of my new calendars, and I have a calendar for almost every room of the house and my planning calendar, I love to feel the stiff, new paper and the smell of new pages. As I look through the calendar and see all of the blank pages, I wonder how those pages will get filled this year. I also look back at how the pages of my planning calendar and the main household calendar got filled up and reflect on the various events of the past year.

There is excitement and anticipation with looking ahead at blank pages and wondering how they will get filled.

As we enter a new year, we do think to the future and wonder what this year will bring. One thing is certain and that is that God is already in our future and will be with us through all of the different events that we will encounter in this new year. Some will be joyful, some will be challenging, some may be painful and some will just be routine and mundane.

The writer of Ecclesiastes begins the very well- known passage of chapter 3 with these words, “There is a time for every season and every purpose under heaven.” As we think of time and wonder about the seasons that will lie ahead, let us think of these seasons as having a purpose under heaven.

Last year, we were introduced to a theme verse to guide us as a congregation and as individual in all of our plans and experiences. The board of Evangelism decided to keep that verse as our theme verse for 2023. “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” Nehemiah 8:10. This is a wonderful verse to be our guide in the coming year.

I wish that you all experience a lot of joy in the coming year. Let us find strength in the joy of the Lord in all circumstances and joy as you open new pages on whatever kind of calendar that you use. Know that the Lord will be with you in all things.

Pastor Becky+

**SUPPLY PASTORS**

**Lay leaders/preachers are needed to start the new year off:**

**Feb. 26**

**March 26**

**Please let Pastor Becky know if you are willing to take on of these Sundays!**

**THANK YOU**

I want to thank you all so very much for the beautiful card of appreciation and the extremely generous gift card for my serving as a volunteer musician.  Your support and encouragement are appreciated very much.  It is a honor to be part of Zion’s worship service.  Thank you again.

~Martha

**ANNUAL MEETING**

The annual meeting is January 15th immediately following worship service.  Please plan to attend.  We need at least 25 confirmed members to be present for a quorum.  This meeting includes important votes on two proposals and the election of officers. One ballot proposal is asking the congregation for approval to spend up to $7,500 on landscaping in the front of the church.  The other ballot proposal as seeking congregational approval to spend not more than $5,000 for drain work on the southeast and southwest corners of the church to address water problems in the basement.

Immediately following the annual meeting we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a potluck dinner.  We hope to see you on January 15th!

**ZION CHRISTMAS TREE AND DÉCOR ANNUAL EVENT**

As you are putting your Christmas things away, if there are items that you no longer need, please consider bringing them to Zion for the 2023 Free Zion Christmas Tree Farm and Market give away.  Or if you are out shopping and you see some great after-Christmas deals, consider picking up a few things to donate.  This past year we gave away about 60 trees along with lots of ornaments, lights and décor to people from Eaton, Barry, Ionia and Montcalm counties who were so appreciative.  We are hoping to have at least 75 trees next year and are discussing ways to streamline and make the 2023 event even more successful.

**“SOUP R BOWL” COLLECTION**

We will be holding another “Soup R Bowl” collection of canned soup and other items this year.  The collection will kick off on January 22nd and end on Superbowl Sunday, February 12th.  Watch for more details in upcoming bulletins.

**WOMEN’S COFFEE FELLOWSHIP**

Our Women’s Coffee Fellowship will continue in 2023 on the second Thursday of the month.  Mark your calendar and plan to join us at the C&R Café on January 12th at 9:00 am for a short devotion and great conversation.

**THANKOFFERING**

The ZLCW will have their Thankoffering service on Sunday, January 22nd starting at 10:30 with the women and girls of Zion leading worship. It had to be postponed from our usual month of November because Zion canceled that day due to a snowstorm.

Special envelopes were given out in November, but more will be available in the Narthex.  The donations go to the Women of the ELCA to help with their many projects.  There will be a basket on the offering table for donations that day.  Please write checks out to ZLCW.

**HEATING SEASON REMINDER**

Reminder: During the heating season, for the basement, please leave the Sunday School classroom doors and Fireside Room door going to the opening area open when not in use. Otherwise, the center area gets very cold. For the upstairs, please close the doors to the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall when they are not in use. Thank you.

**SUNDAYS IN JANUARY**

**January 1- In Sanctuary No Communion**

Martha Yoder

Acolyte: Kole Hokanson

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Mary Makley & Martha Yoder

**January 8- In Sanctuary Communion**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Acolyte: Lexi Griffin

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Ken Heise

Offering Counters: Diane Griffin & Carlotta Willard

**January 15- In Sanctuary Communion**

Annual Meeting following service

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Acolyte: Anna Zylstra

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Mike Johnson

Safety Person: Dan Zylstra

Offering Counters: Mary Makley & Martha Yoder

**January 22 Thankoffering**

Acolyte: Levi Griffin

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Dan Zylstra

Safety Person: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle & Carlotta Willard

**January 29 In Sanctuary Communion,**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Acolyte: Kole Hokanson

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Safety Person: Diane Griffin

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie & Mike Johnson