# NEWSLETTER

## Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
## Stetsonville, WI

WELS
Christ's Love, Our Calling.

"*See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone,*
*and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame*." (1 Peter 2:6)

# NOVEMBER 2026

## BASEBALL AND FAITH

Did you know God is a baseball fan? Yup, the first verse of the Bible starts, "In the big inning…. Okay, maybe not, but I know he has a sense of humor. Have you looked at an aardvark lately? Nevertheless, let's try to examine a few analogies between baseball and faith.

Baseball is an incredibly complex game. The average fan probably doesn't even realize all the nuances. When a ball is hit in Little League, it may appear that almost no one is moving. The same hit in a major league game may send all nine players scurrying somewhere. Baseball has a ton of little things which add up to a big impact! At the same time, baseball, as George Carlin stated, is a simple game, just lap the bases once and go home. You do that more than the other team and you win! Likewise, faith can be extremely simple. "*[The jailer of Philippi] brought [Paul and Silas] out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household*." (Acts 16:30-31) That being said, we know God's Word has a lot in it. You could read it for fifty years and still find something new. The "details" of our faith can be complex.

Do we ever make mistakes in our walk with God? Often, too many to count! Baseball is often a game of failures. If you make less "errors" than the other team, you have a chance to win. The most successful hitters in the game usually fail about 70% of the time. Where else can you be successful 30% of the time and be paid millions of dollars? Like repentance, baseball mistakes are acknowledged and then serious work is invested in eliminating them. Jesus taught us the value of being humble. Baseball is a very humbling game. Ask anyone who's played for any length of time and they will tell you just how humbling it is to make an error in front of thousands of people – nowhere to run, nowhere to hide.

The umpire is the arbiter of justice on the field. It's a ball or a strike. You're safe or you're out. The ball is fair or foul. God, of course, is the ultimate umpire. He never makes a wrong call (and he can't be overruled by some automated strike zone or some guy sitting at a monitor in New York)! The main difference, of course, is the official scorer. When the Holy Spirit is doing the score book, he attributes our errors and strikeouts to Jesus, while giving Jesus' hits and home runs to us!

We can't possibly make analogies between baseball and faith without bringing in our closer, Jesus. For those of you who are not baseball fans, the closer is the relief pitcher who comes in and finishes the game, saving the win for the team and its fans. "*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit*." (John 19:30 ) The game is over. Jesus and his teammates (us) have won. Roll out the red carpet. Pop the champagne. Let the celebration begin!

My favorite and final comparison originated with George Carlin, the sometimes-questionable comedian of years ago. He said baseball, of all the sports, had the objective we all want. Go home and be safe. Wow! Truer words were never spoken!

## Quarterly Congregational Meeting

During a Congregational Open Forum the issues coming before the Voters were discussed.

Pastor Russow informed the assembly that due to no enrollment, Zion will not have a Sunday School this year. Pastor is continuing catechism instruction with three students.

The brickwork on the sign is crumbling and is in need of repair. An easement for the corner of the church's property at the intersection of County Road A and South Lincoln Street was purchased for grading work on the upcoming road work project. Tom Onsager informed the congregation about the plans to extend the landscaping Lynn Spath did in 2025. This landscaping is being done in an effort to stop water from leaking into the elevator shaft. What Lynn did was a big step toward the goal, but more still needs to be done. So, when the landscaping is being done, it would be a good opportunity to move the Church sign, so as to avoid any interference with the road work easement.

Jeff Lange explained his plan to hold a membership drive after Easter next year. Any and all ideas are appreciated. Newspaper ads and posting of flyers were two ideas offered at the meeting.

Here are some issues discussed at the meeting:

- All but one of the security cameras have been installed and are operating.
- Work continues on the new picture directory.
- We hope to have a new design for the window cling on the north entry door by Easter.
- We are currently accepting donations for the basket raffle; we will start selling tickets either the week of or the week after Thanksgiving.
- The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates to serve on Zion's Church Council.
- Volunteers are needed for the Alter Committee, Streaming Committee, HymnSoft Committee, Contact Committee, and Special Events Committee. These committees serve the needs of the church. Please consider helping any way you can.
- The previously approved purchase of artificial poinsettias for Christmas will soon be ordered. Purchasing artificial Easter Lilies was also discussed. An Altar Fund was established. This fund will receive donations from members to sponsor a plant in memory of or in honor of a loved one. A minimum donation of $10 was suggested. The money collected in this fund would then be used to purchase replacement artificial plants as needed, and also replace altar vestments as needed.
- The streaming equipment was moved into the Cry Room on the main floor of the Church. This was done to accommodate the physical needs of the volunteers who run the equipment.
- 2027 Budget preparation will begin in November. Please bring any budget requests to our Treasurer, Micheal Dieck.
- Chairman Lange then expressed his desire for the installation of a video display to be used during church services. A motion was passed to establish an Overhead Projector Fund.

## Custodian Needed

A custodian is being sought to clean the church and Fellowship Hall. $12.50/hr

## Fellowship

The Ladies of Zion (LOZ) are asking for volunteers to help with setup and serving of Fellowship, BUT, especially for help with cleanup. You may talk with a LOZ member, or just show up and help.

## Basket Raffle

Donations are being accepted for the planned basket raffle. We will start selling tickets either the week of or the week after Thanksgiving.

## Cancellations

Should weather cause the cancellation of worship, the closure will be announced on TV on WAOW channel 9 and on WSAW channel 7 and on waow.com and wsaw.com. You may also call the church.

## Bible Class

The Adult Bible Study is exploring the book of Galatians. The faith of the Galatians was threatened by the false teaching that salvation depends both upon Christ and good works. This false gospel, he wrote, was "*no gospel at all*." This study follows the Fellowship.

## *Meditations*

The next issue of ***Meditations***, entitled, *Uniting in Truth and Love*, is available on the counter in the entryway. We ask for a donation of $3.00 for each regular print and $5.00 for each Large Print. Devotions begin November 29th.

Jesus craved it so much he brought it up several times on the night he was betrayed. He longed for all his disciples to have the kind of unity he and his Father enjoy. This unity happens when his followers believe and hold to all his teachings and reflect his heart toward one another. Truth without love is not enough. Love

without truth isn't either. Since our Savior uses both to unite us, may these devotions teach us what he wants us to know and how his love inspires our love so that, more and more, we are uniting in truth and love.

The Bible texts for these devotions come from the Christian Worship Lectionary, Year B, and represent the vast variety of beautiful words from our gracious God who makes us one.

Consider giving a copy to someone you care about.

## *Forward In Christ*

The November *Forward In Christ*, entitled "*Serving God and Country*," is available. While Thanksgiving isn't considered a religious holiday, it does offer a dedicated time to sit back and reflect on all the blessings God has given, including

- people in the military who devote their lives to protecting their nation. Read about a retired officer's military career and her desire to serve both her Savior and her country (p. 18).
- pastors, teachers, and staff ministers who make the full-time gospel ministry their vocation. Learn about one newly graduated pastor and his circuitous path into the ministry (p. 9) and the work of five ministry recruitment counselors (including Pastor Russow's brother), who can help you encourage others to consider ministry (p. 25).
- pain and suffering. This may sound crazy, but this month's "Q&A" discusses how God can use suffering for your good (p. 14).
- the promise of eternal life in heaven when you die. Death isn't something to be afraid of and can even offer you an opportunity to share your faith through your Christian funeral service. Learn more about what your funeral could look like and start your planning now (p. 7).
- What are you thankful for this year? White you're thinking about it, turn to Executive Editor James Pope's article about how to give with thanks (p. 34).
- See what questions emerge as a new missionary begins his work of planting a new church (p. 22).
- Do you expect God to thank you for your service? Andrew Schroer explores that question (back page).

## Coats for Kids

Search your closets for winter coats, gloves hats and boots. The Coats for Kids collection box has been placed in the church entryway. Donations of new and gently used winter coats, boots, hats and gloves (for kids and adults) will be accepted.

## Examining WELS at 175: The Called Worker Paradox

Pastor and teacher vacancies are a familiar challenge across WELS, yet more men and women are serving as called workers today than at any other time in the synod's history. Growing schools, expanding mission fields, and changing ministry needs have created more opportunities for gospel work than the current workforce can fully meet. As WELS seeks to faithfully steward the people and resources God has provided, we need to pray boldly and think creatively about the opportunities God places before us.

Pray for future church workers, encourage someone you know to consider ministry, and share Christ's saving love with those around you.

## ☺ *For A Smile* ☺

A Sunday School teacher asked her pupils to name things they were thankful for. One bespectacled boy said he was thankful for his glasses. "Any special reason?" the teacher asked. "Yes, Ma'am," he replied, "they keep the boys from hitting me and the girls from kissing me."

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It was a busy lunch hour, made longer by one customer who couldn't make up his mind about what to order. After loudly polling everyone at his table, he asked the server, "What do you think I should have?" Before she could answer, an irritated man at the next table offered a suggestion: "How about a picnic?"

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Dogs lick you because they love you. Cats lick you because you had chicken for dinner.

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Thanksgiving Blessings

May the saddest day of your future be no worse than the happiest day of your past.

May the roof above us never fall in and may the friends gathered below it never fall out.

May your hand be always stretched out in friendship and never in want.

| November | |
|---|---|
| | 1. Romans 9:14-29 |
| | 2. Rom. 9:30-10:21 |
| | 3. Rom. 11:1-10 |
| | 4. Rom. 11:11-24 |
| | 5. Rom. 11:25-36 |
| | 6. Rom. 12 |
| | 7. Rom. 13 |
| | 8. Rom. 14 |
| | 9. Rom. 15:1-13 |
| | 10. Rom. 15:14-33 |
| | 11. Rom. 16:1-16 |
| | 12. Rom. 16:17-27 |
| | 13. Exodus 21:1-32 |
| | 14. Ex. 21:33-23:19 |
| | 15. Ex. 23:20-24:18 |
| | 16. Ex. 25 |
| | 17. Ex. 26, 27 |
| | 18. Ex. 28 |
| | 19. Ex. 29 |
| | 20. Ex. 30, 31 |
| | 21. Ex. 32 |
| | 22. Ex. 33 |
| | 23. Ex. 34 |
| | 24. Ex. 35:1-36:7 |
| | 25. Ex. 36:8-37:9 |
| | 26. Ex. 37:10-38:31 |
| | 27. Ex. 39, 40 |
| | 28. 1 Corinthians 1:1-17 |
| | 29. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16 |
| | 30. 1 Cor. 3, 4 |

## Through My Bible In 3 Years

To the left is a Bible Reading schedule for the month of November. It is hoped that such a schedule will help each of us "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*." (2 Peter 3:18) As we grow in God's Word, we will be anchored securely on the solid foundation of Christ crucified and arisen. Also, we will be better prepared to give the reason for the hope that we have. (1 Peter 3:15)

## Hospital

Please notify Pastor Russow of your hospital stay. By notifying Pastor Russow, he can visit you and include you in his private prayers, and in the Prayer of the Church in worship, if you so desire.

## Kwik Trip Scrip

The Ladies of Zion (LOZ) thank you for your continued support of their Kwik Trip Scrip fund raising program. Kwik Trip gift cards for the purchase of fuel or in store purchases in various denominations. Scrip cards may be purchased from one of the Ladies of Zion.

## Private Communion

If physical problems prevent you from attending services and you desire private Communion, please schedule a visit with Pastor Russow. To contact Pastor Russow, please call: (Office): 715-678-2208; (Home): 715-678-2204; or (Cell): 715-965-1782.

## Address or Phone Change?

Please inform Pastor Russow of any address or phone change you make. Please update your address with the church. If you no longer have a land line, or a cell phone is the best way to contact you, please inform Pastor Russow.

## Offerings

Please remember the ongoing financial needs of the church. If travel, illness or other reasons keep you from attending, remember God's amazing grace in daily forgiveness and in supplying your daily bread. Our offerings are part of how we thank Him.