

NEWSLETTER

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
Stetsonville, WI



*“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)*

MAY 2024

SHORT STORIES THAT SPEAK VOLUMES FOR OUR LIVES

Build on Solid Rock

Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock” (Matthew 7:24,25).

If you had to evacuate your home because of rising water following severe storms, imagine how difficult it would be to return and assess the damage: muddy floors, moldy walls, and worldly possessions headed for a dumpster. It would be emotionally devastating to observe the physical destruction that the waters caused.

Jesus told a story about building on a location to avoid destruction. He compared a wise builder and a foolish one. The foolish builder built his house on a nice sandy stretch by the water. It was a beautiful place to live until the storm hit. There was no defense against the rising waters—a complete loss (maybe even a loss of life!). In contrast, there was a wise builder. He built his house in the hills; he spent the extra time and money to firmly position it on solid rock. It was worth it. The building remained high above the flood waters and stood strong against the wind.

Jesus’ short story speaks volumes for our lives. He wants us to think carefully about the foundation on which we build our lives. It needs to be strong when life’s storms strike. When the company is downsized, we want the strength to keep a positive outlook. When conflict loosens family ties, we want tight knots to hold it together. When we’ve really messed up, the guilt must

not sweep us away. When bad news comes, there needs to be rock-like endurance to get us through.

There’s much advice today about successfully building our lives: build up a network of reliable family and friends, develop more of a positive attitude, get different forms of insurance for rainy days, and pursue proven avenues of achievement. But in the end, they’re all “sand foundations.” The storms that overwhelm human hearts and hopes are far too violent. We need something stronger to build on.

Jesus tells us to build our lives and futures on the solid rock of his word. It takes some time and effort to build that way, but Jesus says it’s worth it. Hearing of his sacrifice on the cross brings us the lasting peace that we’re forgiven. Hearing that Jesus rose and ascended to rule over all things gives us firm hope in the midst of life’s uncertainties.

Don’t build your life on shifting sand. Build on solid rock. That’s Jesus. His teachings give you the strongest foundation for life. Confidently build your life on him. We’d be glad to help you do exactly that!

With the Lord

On Wednesday, April 10, 2024, the soul of Dennis Kautzer was called out of this world to his eternal home. He was aged 89 years, 11 months and 15 days. Grave side services were held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at Evergreen II Cemetery.

Remember in your prayers those who mourn her passing. *“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. They will rest from their labor.” (Rev 14:13)*

Baptism

On Sunday, April 28, 2024, a child was given “*the*

washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5) in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.” (Romans 6:3, 5)

Confirmation

The Rite of confirmation will held on Sunday, April 21, 2024, in the 9:30 A.M. Sunday worship. This year we have 2 young people made their promises to “*Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*” (Revelation 2:10). Be sure to encourage them in their Christian faith.

We thank the Ladies of Zion for providing the corsages for the Confirmands.

Released from Membership

Three Communicant members were released from membership.

Congregational Meeting

The Congregational Meeting for the 1st Quarter (January -March) was held Sunday, April 28, 2024, following our morning worship.

During the Congregational Open Forum the issues which came before the Voters were discussed. All communicant members of Zion were given a opportunity to express their opinions and ask questions of concern. Below is a summary of the meeting.

We need someone to fill the Education position on the Church Council. Sunday School will be ending for this school year soon.

Zion’s new Facebook page is up and running. All members are urged to like and share Zion’s page on their own pages.

The neon cross above the northwest church entry has been repaired and replaced. This LED cross replaces the broken neon cross. This cross has the ability to change colors according to the colors of the Church Year. One air conditioning unit for the Church was repaired.

The cost of replacing the fellowship hall floor is not financially feasible. To replace it with new composite tiles would be about \$24,000. To replace it with an epoxy resin floor would be about \$25,000. The Voters resolved to purchase new tiles to replace the broken and

loose tiles, then, to extend the life of the floor, hire a contractor to scrub, seal and wax the floor for a cost of approximately \$2000.00.

Estimates will be sought on the cost of tuck pointing the church building.

We thank the Contact Committee for its work on the Basket Raffle, Bake Sale and Easter breakfast. Money raised from these events were applied to the purchase of the new copier. A balance remains on that purchase. Gifts toward this balance are appreciated. The Committee is planning another event for the fall.

Zion needs a delegate to attend the Western Wisconsin District Convention, held at Luther Preparatory School, Watertown, WI, June 10 & 11, 2024. Please contact Pastor Russow.

Many, if not all, Church Council members are currently serving past the term limits outlined in the church’s constitution. A motion to suspend the term limits imposed by Zion’s Constitution & Bylaws was passed by the Voters.

Forward In Christ

The May *Forward In Christ*, entitled, *Faith and Fellowship*, is available on the entryway counter.

When a congregation celebrates confirmation, it’s a good time to reflect on one’s own confirmation Bible verse. It’s a verse which should hold a special meaning and provides guidance in life.

That guidance is so important for Christian young people today. This month’s “Free in Christ” article looks at how congregations and parents are preparing young people for Lives of faith and service through confirmation classes (p. 10). “Parent conversations” continues the discussion, reflecting on how confirmation is not the end but just the beginning of a lifelong study of Scripture and walk of faith (p. 16).

Providing experiences for young adults to put their faith into action right now is another way congregations can equip teens for future involvement in their churches, schools, and communities. See examples from three different ministries (p. 18).

Not every WELS member has grown up surrounded by the Word. “Confessions of faith” introduces you to Linda, who jumped from religion to religion but never found peace until her neighbor Steve shared the true Word of God with her. Confirmed in 2023, Linda—just

like any new confirmand—continues to grow in her faith and service (p. 7).

God’s church continues to grow. President Mark Schroeder shares more about WELS’ connection with sister churches around the world (p. 6).

This month, take an extra minute to reflect on your confirmation verse and thank God for his love and guidance.

Service Streaming

Zion’s worship services are streamed at zionlutheranстетsonville.com. A copy of the most recent bulletin is available under the News tab.

A ministry partnership in Europe

How can WELS best reach and serve all its members across Europe? This question brought together a cohort in Munich, Germany, during the first week of April.

Rev. Joel Gaertner, director of WELS Commission on Special Ministries, and Mr. Paul Wolfgramm, Military Services Committee chairman, traveled to Germany for two weeks over Easter where they visited different places where the chaplaincy does ministry; attended the annual European Easter retreat held by the Military Services European chaplaincy; and also met with Rev. Luke Wolfgramm, Europe team leader; his wife, Jennifer, Europe team integrator; Rev. Rob Weiss, European civilian chaplain; and his wife, Rachel.

The WELS European Chaplaincy has been serving WELS military members and civilians across Europe for more than 50 years as a ministry of WELS Military Services, which is part of WELS Special Ministries. More recently, a new opportunity for mission work has emerged. In recent years, many members from WELS’ sister churches around the world have been moving to the U.K. In response to this opportunity, WELS World Missions planted a new mission field in the U.K. in 2022. Rev. Michael Hartman was called and Rev. Conifer Berg was assigned to begin serving the group already gathering in London, connect with contacts from other sister church bodies, and launch outreach efforts.

The representatives from WELS Military Services met with Luke Wolfgramm, the team leader for World Missions in Europe, to discuss how the group of WELS pastors working abroad can best serve all WELS members living across Europe.

Gaertner says, “The biggest thing is making sure that

we provide the opportunity to serve as many people as possible in Europe and in England with Word and sacrament.”

The group plans on meeting regularly to evaluate how it is working together. Gaertner says, “There’s going to be communication between Conifer Berg on the London team and Rob Weiss, the European chaplain, when we find out there’s a military person there. They will determine how the spiritual needs of that member can best be met. The big point is we will continue to serve them, but it will be based on where they’re located in England—whether the Europe team serves them or is it better for the European chaplain to serve them.”

Members in the military and their families are encouraged to go to wels.net/refer to be put in contact with WELS Military Services. Civilians moving to England can contact Rev. Conifer Berg to notify the ministry team of their desire for Word and sacrament.

Gospel Hands helps for worship

A new website called Gospel Hands is now available from WELS Special Ministries. This resource, produced by the Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MDHH), aims to share the gospel and better tell the message of Jesus to all who are deaf.

Gospel Hands provides videos of interpreters demonstrating the signs for more than 700 religious words and concepts, including a contextual sentence and a Scripture reference, if applicable. In addition, each sign is demonstrated from the front and the side. The signs are listed alphabetically and searchable by category.

Gospel Hands is the culmination of a three-year project by the committee. Back in 2003, the MDHH produced a book of religious signs for interpreters called Sign to the Lord a New Song. But knowing that a printed book of religious signs is no longer practical, the MDHH utilized the blessings of technology to record sign videos for this new website. Committee members collaborated on choosing the signs and context for each word.

Mrs. Verna Weigand, a religious sign language interpreter and a long-standing member of the MDHH committee, has been involved in Gospel Hands from the beginning. She is thrilled about this new resource and also appreciates that churches have become more open

to using interpreters in worship and providing other resources like words on AV screens, hearing loops, and printed sermons for those with hearing loss. “It’s really important that [those with hearing loss] know congregations will assist them and not just say, ‘We don’t offer that here,’” she says.

Weigand, a member at Mt. Calvary, Waukesha, WI, notes that Gospel Hands is growing as new resources, like videos of signed worship services, continue to be added. Mrs. Susan Willems, a member at Christ the Lord, Brookfield, WI, is thrilled about this expanding resource because it helps her and her family members share their faith with her one-year-old nephew, Parker, who has been deaf from birth. “We learn sign language so we can include Parker in every aspect of our family,” she says. “You also never know when the opportunity will present itself to share Jesus with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.”

Because it’s estimated that 85 to 90 percent of those with hearing loss don’t attend church because of a lack of religious resources for them, Rev. Joel Gaertner, director of the Commission on Special Ministries, knows what a valuable faith resource Gospel Hands is. “The work to put together an online religious sign language dictionary demonstrates the dedication of the members of the MDHH committee to provide as many resources as possible to help share the gospel with the deaf and hard of hearing community,” he says. “It’s wonderful to see how they are using technology to make this website possible.”

God-given workers for His harvest field

The number of vacancies for pastor, teacher, and staff minister positions continues to present a real challenge for congregations throughout our synod. At the direction of last summer’s synod convention, a special task force has been formed to study the issue of enrollment at our synodical schools and bring recommendations regarding how we can encourage more young people to prepare for the public ministry.

Thankfully, we are approaching the month of May when some relief will be provided for the vacancy situation. The Conference of Presidents will be meeting as the synod’s Assignment Committee to assign teacher and staff minister candidates from Martin Luther College (MLC), New Ulm, MN, and to assign pastoral

candidates at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS), Mequon, WI, to their first calls.

This year at MLC, 145 candidates will be available for assignment. Some of those will be teachers who will be assigned to their first calls; others who were assigned for one year last year will either be permanently assigned to the call in which they are now serving or be re-assigned to new locations. Thirty-seven of the candidates are restricted in where they can serve due to marriage or other circumstances. Many of these will be assigned in May; others will receive assignments in the weeks and months after call day.

At WLS, 27 men will be assigned as pastors. Most of those will serve in parishes; several will be assigned to one-year calls in one of our ministerial education schools as tutors. The Assignment Committee, with the input of the seminary, will also assign 40 men as vicars in congregations throughout our synod. Many of those will be assigned as “Vicars in Mission” to home mission congregations.

Assignment days at MLC and WLS are joyful days—joyful for the young men and women who learn where God will have them serve in the ministry and joyful for the members of the synod who see God keeping his promise to send workers into his harvest field. Keep giving thanks to God for these gifts to his church and keep praying that God will provide even more workers in the years to come.

☺ *For A Smile* ☺

An Amish man answered a knock on his door one morning. An electric company worker handed him a piece of paper stating that the electric company would like to run a power line through his pasture. The Amish man said, “No.” “Legally, that paper says we can.” replied the worker. As he turned and left returning to his co-workers in the field, the Amish man went to his barn and turned his bull into the pasture. As the bull rumbled toward the workers in the field, the Amish man hollered, “Show HIM your paper!”

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By the time a man realizes that his father was right, he has a son who thinks he’s wrong. - Charles Wadsworth

May

1. Deuteronomy 14, 15
2. Dt. 16, 17
3. Dt. 18, 19
4. Dt. 20, 21
5. Dt. 22, 23
6. Dt. 24, 25
7. Dt. 26
8. Dt. 27:1-28:14
9. Dt. 28:15-68
10. Dt. 29, 30
11. Dt. 31
12. Dt. 32:1-47
13. Dt. 32:48-34:12
14. Mark 10:1-16
15. Mk. 10:17-31
16. Mk. 10:32-52
17. Mk. 11:1-19
18. Mk. 11:20-33
19. Mk. 12:1-27
20. Mk. 12:28-44
21. Mk. 13:1-23
22. Mk. 13:24-37
23. Mk. 14:1-25
24. Mk. 14:26-52
25. Mk. 14:53-72
26. Mk. 15:1-21
27. Mk. 15:22-41
28. Mk. 15:42-16:8
29. Mk. 16:9-20
30. Judges 1:1-2:5
31. Jdg. 2:6-3:6

Through My Bible In 3 Years

To the left is a Bible Reading schedule for the month of May. 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)

Kwik Trip Scrip

The Ladies of Zion thank you for your participation in the Kwik Trip Scrip card program. Scrip cards are available from one of the Ladies of Zion.

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.

Private Communion

If physical problems prevent you from attending services or if other concerns keep you from joining the Lord’s Table in worship 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. Private Communion is available upon request after any worship service.

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.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Balance Sheet

March 31, 2024

Balance as of
March 31, 2024

Account (*=Inactive)

Assets	\$	135,737.08
Church Checking Account (8464	\$	17,313.17
Forward Bank RLOC	\$	-
Church BCMMA - Forward Bank	\$	14,957.04
Church Business MMA	\$	103,466.87
Unrestricted (Church Business)	\$	84,095.76
Capital Improvement Fund	\$	3,186.69
Carillion Fund	\$	676.14
Cemetery Fund	\$	1,261.63
Choir Fund	\$	212.42
Church Parking Lot Fund	\$	1,124.32
Missions	\$	1,742.00
Social Media Fund	\$	200.00
Sunday School Fund	\$	-
Undesignated Memorials	\$	4,751.13
Youth Group Fund	\$	6,216.78
Liabilities	\$	-
Assets less Liabilities	\$	135,737.08

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.