Generations in mission

Last month we began our mission adventure with the help of Greg Finke's *Joining Jesus on His Mission*.[1] We learned that Jesus hasn't asked us to go out on a mission *for* Him, but that He has invited us to go *with* Him, to join Him on His mission to restore people to His Father. Further, we heard that Jesus is actively working in the lives of the people in our neighborhoods, ripening them for redemption, and we encouraged each other to start asking ourselves every day:

What's Jesus already up to?
Who are these people around me?
And what are they almost ready for?

Learning to ask ourselves these questions every day prepares us to practice what Pastor Finke has called "missional living." Missional living, which is our focus for February, is living every day as if you were on a mission trip to your own community. You are a neighborhood missionary.

In order to help one another adopt this mission mindset, Pastor Finke introduced something called "missional communities." Missional communities are smaller groups of people who gather together regularly to support one another as they learn to live as neighborhood missionaries on a daily mission trip. We'll hear more about these in the coming months, but missional communities support one another by telling their mission stories, discussing what they've seen, who they've interacted with, and what Jesus is inviting them to do in their daily mission trips to their neighborhoods.

When we use the word "neighborhood," we're not limiting it to the people who live next door, although this would certainly be one of our neighborhoods. When we use the word "neighborhood," we mean a network of relationships to which we have access. So, we may have multiple neighborhoods, including our workplace, school, hangouts, or volunteer groups. As neighborhood missionaries we know that Jesus is working in the lives of the people in our neighborhoods and that He is inviting us to join Him on His mission to restore them to the Father.

In order to join Jesus, then, we are called to practice what Pastor Finke has called "neighboring." Neighboring is our efforts, whether planned or spontaneous, to get to know the people in our neighborhoods. Getting to know them and their story will help us be sensitive to what Jesus is doing in their lives and ready us to respond with a touch of grace, a word of hope, or a message of good news.

Through it all, though, we need to remember our new mission mindset. We are not going out *for* Jesus and then focusing on the results of what we accomplish. We are going *with* Jesus. He does all the heavy lifting. He does the Jesus-work. Our focus is on Jesus and His work for our neighbor. Because, as Pastor Finke reminds us, for Jesus, mission is not an abstract concept, a slogan, or a once-a-year sermon. For Jesus, mission is always about people – real people, the people you know and interact with on a regular basis. Jesus is at work in your neighborhoods. Are you ready to join Him?

[1] We kicked off the first Divine Service for 2016 with the *Joining Jesus on His Mission* video curriculum. We will begin the first Sunday of each month in 2016 with a video from this series and/or a special mission emphasis. Further, Zion's council, elders, and Sunday morning Bible class are studying and discussing *Joining Jesus on His Mission* every month.

February Ministry Apps—Zion Lutheran Church

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes:

"They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share" (1 Timothy 6:18).

There is no "app" for generosity. Generosity is generated by the love of God in Christ Jesus. The God who is generous in His grace to us blesses us to be generous in sharing His love in word and deed.

Celebrating Generous Givers

- Praise God for those who so generously supported the "general fund" ministry and ministry of Zion during 2015. $278,813.40 was contributed toward a $273,855 budget. Through God's grace and a generous response all financial obligations were met last year.
- Praise God for the additional contributions to the "Generations" campaign. God-willing the project will be completed this spring with NO debt. Generous "Generations" gifts continue to be accepted and celebrated.
- Praise God for the privilege of tithing our campaign. Following the Acts 1:8 mission directive the Church Council approved the most recent tithe portion to: Zion Youth ($2,000); C-3 ($3,000); Camp Okoboji ($4,400); Missionary Support ($4,468).
- Praise God for the privilege of tithing a generous bequest to Zion. The Mission Committee suggestions were also approved at the January Council Meeting. The Acts 1:8 mission model was again followed. Zion Preschool: $12,500; C-3: $1,000; Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church: $2,500; Missionary adoptions: $8,500.
- Trust God to provide through His generous people as we respond faithfully to continue the mission and ministry of Zion. The 2016 budget adopted at the December Voters' Assembly is $277,488.
- Thank God for the financial team who so generously donated time the past year in managing Zion finances: Jeff Hargens, Comptroller; Amber Neumann, Financial Secretary; and Karen Kienast, Treasurer. Shannon Walters assumed the treasurer's position on January 1.

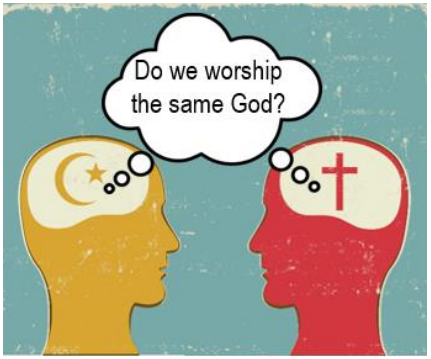
Offering envelopes for 2016 can be picked up in the fellowship hall. If you did not receive envelopes and would like a box, please contact the church office. Members are also invited to contribute generously and conveniently through electronic giving.

Celebrating Generous Children, Youth, Leaders, and Families

The January Christian Education Committee meeting noted the generosity of time and talents of many:

- 70 children shared the Good News of Jesus' birth at the children's Christmas service. Thanks to Susie Ulrickson, Jill Arp, teachers and many others for the special service.
- 50 school kits and 35 personal kits were assembled by Sunday school children on December 27. Thanks to Sandra Vahl for facilitating the special response.
- Youth shared Christmas songs at the Plaza on December 20 and 19 preschool through 1st grade children, teachers, and parents sang to the Plaza residents on January 3.
- Grade 7 and 8 Sunday school students hosted the after-service fellowship on December 13, gaining over $300 for the Manning Food Pantry. Several of the students also went shopping for food pantry supplies and assisted with shelving the items.

"God who is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).



Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?

"I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a Christian, are people of the book. And as Pope Francis stated… we worship the same God." – Professor Larycia Hawkins, Wheaton College

Professor Hawkins of Wheaton College spoke those words to justify wearing a Muslim hijab during Advent. Wheaton responded by placing her on administrative leave to consider the veracity of her theological statement. The liberal media, who are quick to cry foul over theological questions they know little about, did their best to feed the controversy. We discuss it here not to weigh in on Wheaton's response or Professor Hawkins' decision to wear a hijab, but because the questions that have been raised as a result of this incident are valuable ones.

Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?

And, does the pope teach that we do?

Let's attempt to come to an answer. We begin with a brief primer on the laws of logic. The three fundamental laws of logic are:

1. The law of identity: P is P.
2. The law of non-contradiction: P is not non-P.
3. The law of the excluded middle: Either P or non-P.

Don't be intimidated by these. You use them every day, even if you don't refer to them by name. When you say to your son, "Did you hit your brother or not?" You're using the law of the excluded middle because you know that he couldn't have hit his brother and have not hit him at the same time. There are only two options: yes or no. There is no middle. You understand the law of non-contradiction in the statement: "I am a married bachelor." That can't be because a married man isn't a bachelor and a bachelor isn't a married man. They contradict one another.

The law of identity simply says a thing is what a thing is. For example, I am Jonathan Conner and I am married to Rebecca and am father to Timothy, Josiah, Nathanael, Catherine, Gregory, and to-be-announced-in-May. That seems pretty straight forward. So, if you heard someone talking about a Jonathan Conner who was married to Rebecca and father to the previously named horde of children, you'd know he was talking about me. But if he was talking about a Jonathan Conner with a different wife and different children, you'd know he wasn't talking about me. And you'd know that by the law of identity.

Now, let's take the law of identity and use it in our discussion of God. Which God do Christians worship? We answer that question with detailed specificity in the Athanasian Creed where we confess:

> We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence… the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

This is the God we worship. He is triune – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is His identity, His essence. Is this the God Muslims worship? Well, consider what Muslims confess. They say that Jesus is not God and that He is not God's Son. They say that God is not Father. And they categorically reject the Trinity, confessing the absolute oneness of their god. Applying the law of identity, can the Muslim god and the Christian God be the same God? No.

Some cry foul, pointing out that Christians acknowledge that Jews worship the same God (albeit outside a saving relationship with Him). If we acknowledge that Jews and Christians worship the same God, how can we say Muslims, who claim like Jews and Christians to worship the God of Abraham, don't worship the same God?

The difference here should be plain to those familiar with these three faiths. The Jewish concept of God held the multiplicity and oneness of God in tension, as is clear in numerous Old Testament texts, until God's revelation in Jesus made His triune nature known. As such, Christian theology elaborates on the Jewish understanding of God, whereas Muslim theology outright rejects the Christian God.

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Pay special attention to that last sentence: Christian theology elaborates on the Jewish understanding of God, whereas Muslim theology outright rejects the Christian God. Some have claimed that these three faiths are worshiping the same entity, just describing him differently. After all, all three claim to worship the Creator who is the God of Abraham. But the law of identity won't allow that claim to stand. Christians confess that God *is* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Muslims reject that confession of God at every point. We're not just describing God differently; we're describing a different God.

Why then do some suggest we do worship the same God? Reasons vary. Some do it for political reasons. Others do it because it's culturally popular. Many do it out of a lack of understanding over what we've just detailed. They don't understand the triune nature of the Christian God as essential to His identity. Therefore, when Muslims reject God's triune nature, they think it's possible for us to still worship the same God.

If we were merely asserting that we, like Muslims and Jews, worship the God of Abraham, then we might have reason to believe that we indeed worship the same God, but this is not the Christian claim. The Christian God *is* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Muslim god *is not*. We are not worshiping the same God. Former Muslim turned Christian Nabeel Qureshi, who chronicled his journey from Islam to Christianity in *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, sums the matter up well:

> Christians worship a Triune God: a Father who loves unconditionally, an incarnate Son who is willing to die for us so that we may be forgiven, and an immanent Holy Spirit who lives in us. This is not what the Muslim God is; it is not who the Muslim God is; and it is not what the Muslim God does.

But what about the pope? Professor Hawkins claimed Pope Francis said that Christians and Muslims worship the same God. Is that true? As best I can tell, yes. Speaking at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan in September 2015, Pope Francis addressed "my Muslim brothers and sisters," assuring them of his prayers. Then he said, "I unite myself with you all. A prayer to almighty god, all merciful." He offered something similar a couple years previous when he addressed an ecumenical gathering, "I then greet and cordially thank you all, dear friends belonging to other religious traditions; first of all the Muslims, who worship the one God, living and merciful, and call upon Him in prayer…"

Of course, those familiar with the Roman Catholic Catechism know that this is in line with the Church's teaching. According to Rome's catechism,

> The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God…

In other words, not only does it seem to suggest that Muslims worship the same God, but it seems to suggest that Muslims will be saved by worshiping

their god. This is different than observing that Islam has retained elements of truth and elements of the true confession of God. That would be correct. Islam acknowledges that God created, that God saved Noah and promised Abraham great offspring, that the Bible is inspired, that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, that God sent Jesus, and that God reigns still today.

But to suggest that salvation can be found in a god who is categorically opposed to the God of the Bible is another thing altogether. Could you imagine the God of the Bible denying that Jesus was His Son? But that's precisely what the god of Islam does. I'm reminded of Saint John's words in 1 John 2, "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also." Islam denies the Son (both His divinity and His sonship) and thereby doesn't have the Father or His salvation.

This is also different from suggesting that those who cry out for the true God to reveal Himself to them will be saved. This is precisely what Mr. Qureshi, a former Muslim, did. He called out to the one true God to reveal Himself to him and God did – in Jesus. As Mr. Qureshi came to understand, as well as numerous Muslim converts over the last several years, God hears the prayer of the soul who seeks Him in truth. He does not tell them to keep worshiping the Muslim God; He calls them to worship the Triune God.

What does all this mean? First, it means that God loves Muslims. How do we know? Because He sent Jesus to be the propitiation for their sins. Jesus died so that Muslims could be reconciled to the Father. Muslims speak of God as the all-merciful one, and Jesus is where and how and in whom God shows mercy. Second, it means that if Muslims continue to worship the Muslim god, they will exclude themselves from this love and mercy. Third, it means that Christians need to love their Muslim neighbors enough to share the true God who loves them in Jesus.

The Minor Key of the Major Season

On Wednesday, February 10th, the joyful major chords of epiphany and Christ's grand transfiguration will drop into the valley of Lent's minor key. We will bury our alleluias and mute our glorias for a season. To the world it all seems unnecessarily morose. Why dampen you joy? Why be anything other than happy all the time? Why have a somber season?

Because the cross of Jesus has come into view. We cannot look beyond it. We cannot look away from it. We must look at the crucified Christ and ask with the hymnist Paul Gerhardt

> Who is it, Lord, that bruised You?
> Who has so sore abused You
> And caused You all Your woe?

The answer is as blunt as it is piercing:

> I caused Your grief and sighing
> By evils multiplying
> As countless as the sands.
> I caused the woes unnumbered
> With which Your soul is cumbered,
> Your sorrows raised by wicked hands.

Who could sing in joyful, major chords in the face of such realities? What can we do, but own our guilt and repent? The season of joy will come, but first the cross; first sin must be owned and mastered. This is Lent. It is the church's major season in minor key. When its message has been heard, then Easter will elicit genuine shouts of alleluias and truly joyful glorias, and will sound with its powerful and exultant major chords, but first the minor key of this major Lenten season.

Ladies Guild

January Highlights
Ladies Guild of Zion
January 13, 2016

President Buhr led the group in the LWML pledge. Pastor Conner opened the devotional period with prayer and then read from Matthew the account of Jesus' baptism. John the Baptist was hesitant to baptize the sinless Son of God, but Jesus responded that it was an act of righteousness. Jesus became our substitute.

In the stead of Christian Life Chair Margaret Backhaus, Bev Grundmeier, Carol Kahl and Barb Anderson reminded us of the "12 Days of Christmas" song and the meaning of the symbol of each day. Following the reading, the mite box prayer was read and the mite box passed.

President Buhr called the business meeting to order in the name of the Triune God. Roll call was answered by 17 members with their favorite Christmas foods. The secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting which were approved as read. Correspondence included thank you notes from Lutheran Family Service, Carlys Stribe, Pastor Riggert on behalf of C-3, Pastor Riggert again for his Christmas gift, clients of New Hope Village, from Marion Ream, pre-school teachers Mrs. Riesberg and Mrs. Nemitz, and Shannon Walters. Treasurer, Mary Grimm, reported a current balance on hand of $286.83 and shared that $4200.00 in gifts had been given to various missions at the end of the calendar year. Kitchen treasurer, Darlene Vollstedt, reported her balance. Circle #3 served the Ellen Fielweber funeral. Circle #1 will have the next funeral. Human Care Chair, Audrey Roe, said the quilters have started and tied 4 quilts the first day. She handed out a list of things that may be purchased by guild members to complete school and health kits. We have until the 1st of May to assemble the kits. President Buhr announced that Becki Ehlers is Sunshine Chair and Becki announced that she has already sent two cards this month.

Old Business: We are again collecting postage stamps, Campbell soup labels, box tops for education, computer ink cartridges and soap.

New Business: Audrey Roe moved that we purchase a new clock for the fellowship hall with money from the kitchen fund. The motion was seconded and passed. Judy Musfeldt moved that we send $100.00 to the Carroll Zone treasurer for our donation to the Activity Money fund. The motion was seconded and passed. Susan Schilling moved that we send $20.00 for world relief transportation money. The motion was seconded and passed. President Buhr called for a committee to help with the Spring Rally at Manning on April 16th. A number of members volunteered. After perusing theme suggestions handed out by President Buhr, "Camping Out With Jesus" was selected. Manager of Camp Okoboji Doug Kading will be asked to be our mission speaker of the day. President Buhr also asked for a volunteer to help with rolls, coffee and juice to be served at a zone pastor's conference to be held in Manning on January 19th. Connie Ahrendsen volunteered her services. Additional business was brought before the group. Altar Guild asked if a shade might be purchased for the window in the room where the communion cups are washed. It was moved, seconded and passed that a shade be purchased and paid for from the kitchen fund. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The Lord's Prayer and table prayer were recited. Lunch was served by Janet Gruhn and Darlene Vollstedt.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Puck

Over Christmas break I rearranged the classroom and swapped out several of the toys and games in the preschool room. It was so fun to see the looks on the children's faces and hear their reactions to the changes I made. It felt like a whole new space.

In preschool during the month of January we talked about snowmen, snowflakes, penguins, and mittens. Brrrr... Spring can't come soon enough! The children had a great time making the paper plate snowmen and coffee filter snowflakes for our preschool bulletin board. I always enjoy seeing how each child puts his/her own special touches on their creations! It is fun to see the personalities come out through their artwork!

One plus side to all the cold weather we have been having is that it allowed us to introduce the parachute to the preschoolers. It was been so much fun watching the expressions on the kids faces. I don't know that I will ever forget the many looks of pure amazement the first time we lifted the parachute all the way up and looked underneath. So innocent and absolutely priceless!

We are looking forward to singing in church February 21st. We have been practicing, and the kids are getting really good! I am excited to share our songs with the congregation, preschool families, and any other visitors that join us that morning! Thank you again for all your support of the preschool. I cannot express how much it means to me! Keep warm... Spring is coming!

God's Blessings in Christ
Mrs. Riesberg and Mrs. Nemitz

For the Sake of Our Girls

I've written this article many different ways in my head over the years, but I could never bring myself to publish it. On the one hand, I'm raising a sensitive subject – our girls and how we raise them – and I want to treat it with all the sensitivity it deserves. On the other, I feel that someone needs to speak truth for the sake of our girls to protect them from the lies many in our culture are feeding them, even if the truth teller pays a price because of it.

I think I can say without much controversy that our girls have been and are being sexualized. That is, they are being framed as sexual objects, as individuals whose value is attached to their sexual appeal. The effort it took to find an appropriate image for this article is enough to prove my point. A simple search for "girl silhouette" yielded many highly suggestive and sexualized images. And I've said nothing about magazine covers, movies, and music (and even less about the subtle ways cartoon female heroines are cast in unrealistic and suggestive proportions)!

And while I think we can all agree that our girls are being sexualized, we continue to remain blind to the fact that *our* girls are being sexualized. I suspect it's something like the frog in the pot problem. If the frog had been dropped straight into the boiling water, he would have hopped out. But he was dropped into warm water and slowly boiled to death as the water was gradually heated.

Perhaps we've slowly lost our sense. When did uncovered leggings qualify as pants? When did skirts that scarcely skirt the posterior qualify as clothing? When did water-resistant underwear qualify as swimwear? When did skin-tight clothing pass for anything more than cotton spray-paint?

When did uncovered leggings qualify as pants? When did skirts that scarcely skirt the posterior qualify as clothing? When did water-resistant underwear qualify as swimwear? When did skin-tight clothing pass for anything more than cotton spray-paint?

I have no answer for these questions. And I know that simply asking them may cause many to brand me as legalistic. How dare I suggest that you or your daughter dress differently! Some will dismiss me for being male and thereby knowing nothing of the complexities of the female wardrobe. Some will question me for even noticing, despite the fact that everyone with eyes notices, even when we try not to. If someone has to pay the price for speaking truth, it looks like that person is me.

But when you come down to it, if you want to get to the truth, I raise these questions because I care for our girls. They've been lied to. They are not objects to dress up to impress other females or to lure males. They are not "sexual beings." That was a lie pawned off on our culture by discredited and deviant sex researched Alfred Kinsey.

And it was his institute that, with the help of Mary Calderon (the first director of Planned Parenthood) and Hugh Hefner (the founder of Playboy magazine), founded SIECUS. SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States) is the most significant driving force behind sex education in America (and even partners with the United Nations, setting global sex education standards). Its website endorses abortion as health care, homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexuality as healthy sexual lifestyles, and "sexually explicit" materials (i.e. pornography) as "valuable educational

or personal aids."[2] And many schools in our nation use curriculum developed by SIECUS.[3]

> Our girls are not "sexual beings." They are created, redeemed, and sanctified beings… *This* is their identity. And this makes our girls beautiful.

Our girls need better than this. Our girls are not "sexual beings." They are created, redeemed, and sanctified beings. They bear the image of God. They have been washed by the blood of Christ. And they have been made holy through the Spirit's working in Baptism. *This* is their identity. And this makes our girls beautiful. Consider the words God uses to describe the Church, which He calls His bride:

> Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Our girls need to hear this over and over and over again because the truth is that our girls' beauty is bigger than their body. Our girls' worth is bigger than their "sexiness." And teaching our girls to dress modestly helps reinforce this. Yes, modesty can be taught legalistically. But we're not aiming at legalism; we're aiming at our girls' Gospel identity in Christ. Dressing modestly doesn't rob our girls of their worth or lessen their "sexiness;" it acknowledges their profound worth and saves their sexual expression for marriage.

I'm reminded of what the apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:8-10,

> I desire… that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works.

And in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

> You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Paul wasn't driven by legalism. His mind was filled with the glories of our redemption in Christ. This reality defined Him and it defines us and directs every aspect of our lives.

Yes, our girls need to be taught about sex (so do our boys, lest they grow up thinking women are objects that exist for their pleasure!), but it doesn't begin with the lie that we are sexual beings. We don't begin with the desires of the flesh. We begin with the Word and work of the Creator. We consider that relationship primary. We find our worth and beauty there. Our goal isn't sexiness; our goal is holiness.

I know this is a sensitive subject. Maybe it touched your nerve. Maybe it opened your eyes. Maybe it raised more questions. Let's talk. This is a conversation we need to have – for the sake of our girls. – Pastor Conner

[2] http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageId=494&parentID=472

[3] For more information on this, check out this website: http://www.stopsexualizingchildren.org/ssc/history.cfm

Charles, Cheryl, Caleb, Caitlin, Carissa, and Cassie Ferry

Missionaries to Indonesia

Selamat Tahun Baru dari Sumatera Utara! (Indonesian for "Happy New Year from North Sumatra!")

Great opportunities and great changes abounded in December of 2015. Early in the month, we accepted an invitation to visit a congregation of the Gereja Kristen Luther Indonesia (GKLI), our emerging church partner here in Indonesia. The local pastor, Rev. Eben Ezer Aruan, has become a good friend, and he was happy to have us share a Sunday morning with him, receiving the gifts of our Lord Jesus in His Means of Grace. We were warmly welcomed, and the kids did well despite the two-hour-long drive to reach his congregation in the outskirts of Jakarta (and the corresponding drive home!)

That next weekend I traveled once more to Singapore to deliver Word and Sacrament to the LCMS Lutherans scattered there, and stayed an extra day to meet with the bishop of the Lutheran Church in Singapore. It was another warm welcome, and we had some great conversations about how we might be able to work together in the coming months, even despite our theological differences.

Once I returned home to Jakarta, it was moving time. The rest of our efforts this month have been spent readying and packing our house in Jakarta, as well as relocating to Medan, North Sumatra (a different island farther north). See the special "maps" page of this newsletter for some visuals. The move went rather smoothly on the Jakarta side, but it became tough once we arrived in Medan: we've visited Medan often in the past, but never lived here before. So there are many things we have yet to learn, such as where to buy groceries, how to get online, etc.

To support our work financially, send a tax-deductible gift to: The LCMS, P.O. Box 790089, St. Louis, MO 63179

SELAMAT

Most of us have dealt with these difficulties before, but dealing with them where you aren't a native with the language and culture really complicates things.

We are so thankful that we have some good friends up here, and that the gracious Lord continues to provide more just when we need them. We have a wonderful home in which to live, and our security officers from Jakarta were able to accompany us here and continue working for us. Little by little we are settling in, learning our surroundings, and beginning to meet our neighbors.

And in the midst of all this, we were able to sneak in a celebration of our Lord's Nativity. Christmas Eve heard us doing a family hymn sing, and it's been fun to exchange Christmas greetings with those around us.

We take great comfort in knowing that we are in your continued prayers, and for the scores of folks who have sent along their Christmas wishes for us. As the New Year comes upon us, your teammates the Ferry Family pray for you: that the Lord's peace and joy would follow you all your days, knowing that He loves you, and was born in human flesh so He could die and rise again for your forgiveness. Thank you for your partnership in getting that message out!

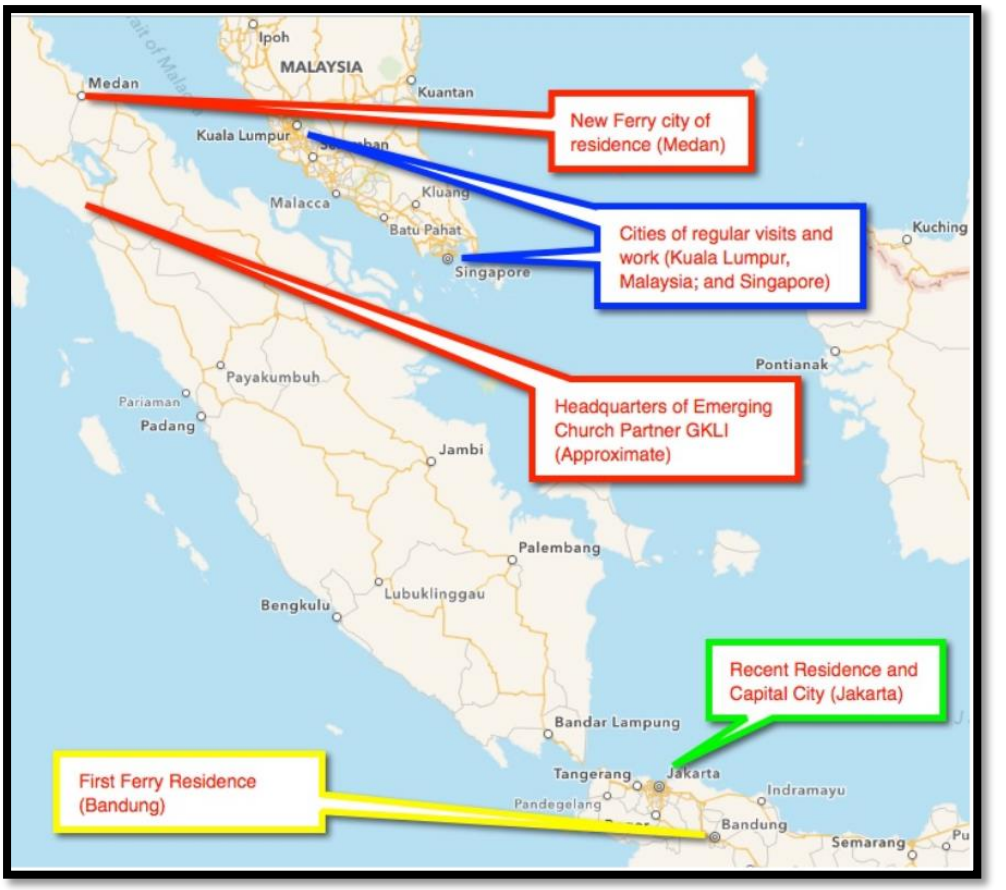
Prayers, Praises, and Thanksgiving

- For Cheryl and the new Baby C, that the Lord would protect and keep both of them in health and safety
- Thanksgiving for a safe move to Medan, and for our new home
- Thanksgiving for the incredible team members we have in the US who allow us to live and work here
- That our gracious Lord Jesus would grant His wisdom and grace, so many would be blessed by the work we're doing in Indonesia, Singapore, and all of Southeast Asia

Or:
Mission Central, 40718 Highway E-16, Mapleton, IA 51034
Make checks payable to **The LCMS**, and mark them "Support of Charles Ferry." Gifts can also be given securely online through our online giving page at *www.lcms.org/ferry*.

Selamat Map Supplement:

With all the moves in these past two years, we thought it was time to let some visuals accompany the names of places mentioned in our newsletters. In the map to the left, "A" marks Bandung, where we started in 2014. Then we moved (orange arrow) to Jakarta "B" and just recently have moved to Medan "C." Singapore is "D" and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia is "E;" both places see visits from Pastor Ferry rather frequently. From the map below, perhaps you can see why this new location is a better fit for the work we've been called to do at this time.



!Amigos En Cristo!
News from ***La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:*** *Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church:* **Pastor Daniel Vogel**, Denison, Iowa

Iowa District West, LCMS
Year 12, Issue 2, February 2016

Our Advent POSADA: Our Advent POSADA in the Perez home filled the house with more than 30 friends, neighbors and church members. We enjoyed a sacred evening of song, Biblical study for children and adults in preparation for Christmas. This traditional Posada is a popular pre-Christmas event and ours also included a special traditional Advent Mexican meal.

Christmas Celebrations in Storm Lake & Denison: God blessed our Christmas worship and celebrations with traditional worship and with cultural events. At left Mike Segebart from Denison came with me to Storm Lake to play the piano with sisters Denisse (flute) & Cinthia (violin) for the Christmas Eve service. At far right cousins Reynaldo & Dominic were the acolytes for the service.

The middle picture shows some of the worshippers watching the piñata following the Christmas service in Denison.

Family Joy: We celebrated our family Christmas with 5 of our 6 children in Iowa City & Cedar Rapids. Our celebration began in Iowa City as Danny, our 4th son received his doctorate degree in Physical Therapy from the U. of Iowa on Friday, Dec. 18th. On Sunday we all went to church together and heard grandson Hunter (in front) present the Christmas story with his Sunday School. Following the service our eldest son Jon & Nicole (back on right) hosted us for a Christmas party at their home in Cedar Rapids.

More Joy: Paula and I went to Seward, Nebraska to celebrate with our son Tim and wife Nicole and family because they could not celebrate with us in Cedar Rapids. Our grandson Caden (left) came down with a severe kidney infection and could not travel. Thankfully he looks happy in recovery with sisters, Adelyn and Elia and proud grandparents.

Choice Dollars from Thrivent: Thrivent Financial has accepted our church to receive "CHOICE" dollars for our ministry. If you have any questions on how to do this contact your local Thrivent Financial representative or call them at 800-847-4836.

Please Pray: +For the joys of our Advent/Christmas celebrations in Denison and Storm Lake with members and new contacts. +The Hispanic church in Storm Lake as they celebrate their partnership with Grace and as they consider options for calling a pastor. +For our new visiting families that they would become a regular part of our ministry. +For the new year and our goals for serving our Hispanic communities with the Gospel love. ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of the Iowa District West who monthly support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison & in our other 3 missions. +++***

***Please Continue to Support* our new church**: For our mission friends financial support checks should now be sent to: Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church, 1004 1st Avenue South, Denison, Iowa, 51442

CONTACT ME:
Rev. Daniel Vogel
32678 Aspen Ave. Manning, Iowa, 51455
1-712-653-2354 or Cell: 712-309-1292
E-mail: daniel.vogel@ziondenison.org

"...and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 10:22, ESV)

All you have to do is turn on the news, open your social-media account or a newspaper and you can see evidence of the erosion of our rights as free people of the United States.

It seems in today's society that you can no longer even disagree verbally with your neighbor, family or friend without being labeled a "hate monger" or "bigot." How is it, then, that we are to stand firm in the public square and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Nearly two centuries ago those who would eventually form The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) came to the United States seeking the religious freedom guaranteed in our nation's Constitution. Today, the religious freedom they sought is being eroded amid continual assault. That is why the LCMS is establishing the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty in Washington, D.C., the very epicenter of where a compelling Christian witness will be needed most in years to come.

The purpose of the center is to monitor and protect our First Amendment rights in the public square. Where the government, the culture and faith conflict, Lutherans can and must speak up and out in support of religious liberty.

Will you join us in the good fight as we stand firm in the faith and establish the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty? Your partnership will help us establish an enduring, faithful Lutheran presence in Washington, D.C., and fuel a uniquely Lutheran response to increasing intrusions, limitations and challenges by the government and others in the life of the Church. And the center will do this while educating, encouraging and equipping God's people in the LCMS to take informed and bold action in support of life, marriage and religious freedom.

Out of Christian care and concern for the sanctity of human life, biblical marriage and our religious liberty as Christians, an anonymous donor is ready to match any gift dollar for dollar up to $500,000. You can double the impact of your gift on matters of life, biblical marriage and our rights of conscience in matters of religious liberty through an online donation today! To give online go to https://www.lcms.org/give/lcrl or call the LCMS and give over the phone: 888-843-5267. Or mail checks, made payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Campaigns and Special Initiatives
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
**On the memo line of the check or in an accompanying note, write "LCRL" or "Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty."*

To learn more about The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, go to http://www.lcms.org/lcrl or take a look at the brochure in the resource tract rack.

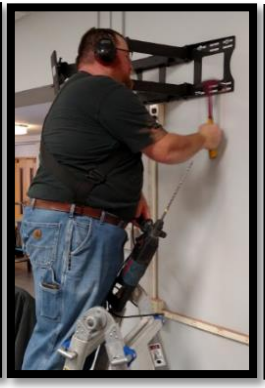
Generations Update

Progress continues. Below you can see Greg Peters mudding the education wing bathrooms, Dick McConnell and Curt Struve laying the floor tile in the education wing bathrooms, workers installing the east entrance roof, the heater in Pastor Riggert's office, the toilets in the bathrooms, and the new TVs. Also pictured are Miranda, Kamryn, Chole, and Renee smiling in front of one of the new TVs. You can also see Bruce Grimm and Dave Gore hanging shelves in the church offices along with volunteers Stan Musfeldt and Stan Baack assisting in various projects.

At Zion's January council meeting, the council, following an Acts 1:8 model, approved the following tithe of our Generations receipts:

Local (Jerusalem):	Zion youth group for national gathering attendance	$2,000
Community (Judea):	C3 summer concert and wolf pack for hunger	$3,000
District/region (Samaria):	Camp Okoboki's Discover Camp Campaign	$4,000
Ends of the earth:	Pastor Brian Gauthier, missionary to Panama	$4,468

Well done, people of Zion! Your generosity will touch lives from Manning to the ends of the earth!



Acts 1:8 . . . "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Zion's Mission Committee is thrilled to announce its privilege to disperse $25,000 to support Christ's mission both locally and globally:

Jerusalem	$12,500.00 Zion Preschool
Samaria	$1,000.00 C3
Judea	$2,500.00 Amigos en Cristo Lutheran Church (Pastor Vogel)
Ends of the Earth	$2,500.00 Dr. Stephen Oliver in Taiwan
	$2,500.00 Pastor Charles Ferry in Indonesia
	$2,000.00 Eric Stinnett (Missionary suggested by Gary Thies)
	$2,000.00 Doug Thompson (Missionary suggested by Gary Thies)

Well done, people of Zion! The balance remaining in Special Missions account will be dispersed in 2016.

Loving Lessons: Teaching Stewardship to Children

Children can easily mistake love with receiving "things." Obviously love can't be bought. The greater gifts of time and attention can't be substituted with another toy. Lutheran Church Extension Fund, a ministry of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, is a family stewardship partner. LCEF offers "family emergency" accounts, "steward" saving opportunities, and retirement investments. Visits www.lcef.org for more information.

The Young Investor Club provides an investment opportunity for children of all ages (through 18). In addition to earning a generous 3.5% interest, children receive stewardship lessons. Children can also receive LCEF bonuses for good grades and service to church and community service.

The Young Investor Club is very active at Zion with over 30 young investors. The "club" meets the 3rd Sunday of each month. Warren Puck greets children, parents, and grandparents with their monthly investment. Families can contact Warren for more information.

The service on February 21 will include an update on the Zion Young Investors and the opportunities for children and families. Lutheran Church Extension Fund has been a strong Zion ministry partner for generations. The "Generations" endeavor included LCEF architectural services and capital campaign assistance. Carole White serves as Iowa LCEF Vice President. She can be contacted at: carole.white@lcef.org or 515-240-2229. Pastor Bob Riggert also serves as an LCEF contact.

Loving Lessons: AMAZING GRACE Lenten Worship

God's Word is a series of grace stories all centered around the AMAZING GRACE of God demonstrated on the cross of Calvary. The services in the series will include monologues by characters—from the Old and New Testaments—who participated in the story of salvation. The participants explain the different ways in which they encountered God's AMAZING GRACE. As we gather around God's word each Wednesday, we will hear of God's AMAZING GRACE for each of us. The services will begin on Ash Wednesday, February 10, and continue for the six weeks of Lent. Worship will begin at 5:45 with the fellowship meal to follow. Midweek students and families are reminded that midweek classes will be held from approximately 7 to 8 p.m.

Additional information on the specific service themes is included in the newsletter. Bring the family. Invite your friends and neighbors.

February Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

1. Gerald Beck
   Paige Mohr
2. Carl French
   Brooklyn Riesberg
   Kendra Walters
3. Ray Christensen
4. Todd Gruhn
   Andrew Puck
5. Jean Hargens
6. Michaela Chapman
   Curt Struve
7. Sasha Backhaus
   Marlyn Fielweber
   Ardith Lage
8. Dena Diersen
   Russ Spies
   Rexanne Struve
10. Joe Ewoldt
    Devontay Hocken
    Olivia Paska
12. Tammi Powers
    Donna Schmarzo
13. Jason Opperman
14. Ken Puck
15. Kristin Backhaus
16. Ryan Borkowski
17. Cory Beyer
    Carol French
    Adam Gruhn
    Jeanne Gruhn
18. Zach Dreier
    Carolyn Kerkhoff
19. Shaunda Martin
    Curtis Weems
    Roger Wegner

20. Janice Monson
21. Jean Ferneding
23. Tom Wegner
24. Scott Opperman
    Barb Page
25. Kodilynn Rosener
26. Deanna Frank
27. Rylie-Shea Muhlbauer
    Scott Stribe
    Jeremy Wulf
28. Adam Albertsen
    Gary Dammann
    Katie Sextro
29. Karen Vollstedt

In Our Prayers

Athena Bess, Franklin Mohr, Walt Noelck, Mandi Sandage, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Steve Rutz (Karl Rutz's Brother), Susan Lamb, Arlene Mohr, Ora Weston (David & Joene Bohlmann's son), Larry Genzen, Bev Rix, Russ Mohr, Georgia Lohrmann, Jim Deevers, Curt Struve, Jenni Erb

2. Errol & Anna Belle Wegner
4. Joe & Becky Karsten
5. Paul & Monica Christensen
9. Bill & Deb Ranniger
   Lowell & Betty Schroeder
12. Lenus & Kristie Borkowski
14. Dave & Bev Grundmeier
15. Bob & Gloria Ewoldt

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Official Acts

Baptisms:

Alaina Rae Salter; daughter of Rebecca Genzen and Matthew Salter; January 23, 2016; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Jaide Nicole Paska; daughter of Trevor Paska and Jessica Soll; January 30, 2016; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Funerals:

Ellen Marie (nee: Wenzel) Fielweber; Died January 5, 2016; Buried January 8, 2016; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Ruth Marie Anna (nee: Kanning) Hansen; Died January 20, 2016; Buried January 23, 2016; Pastor Jonathan Conner; services held at Trinity