Generations in mission

Mission Mindset Changes

In March, we introduced three mission mindset changes: 1) "Don't go *for* Jesus; go *with* Jesus." We don't need to do the heavy lifting because that's Jesus' job. Our call is to seek, recognize, and respond to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of people around us.

2) The river has moved. Over the last several decades, America has moved from a largely churched culture that responded to invitations to church and church programs to a largely unchurched culture that doesn't respond to invitations to church and church programs.

3) Be with and enjoy people. Jesus spent lots of time with people. By American standards, he was inefficient with His time, but He was very effective in His ministering. Pastor Finke reminded us that it was "the inefficient investment in friendship that leads to effective missional results in people's lives."

For April, we are asking how to seek, recognize, and respond to what Jesus is doing in the lives of the people we are enjoying. The challenge here is our attentiveness. Do we remember that Jesus is working in people's lives? Do we remember that God's kingdom has come among us in Jesus?

Before we can seek, recognize, and respond to Jesus' Kingdom work, we need a total mind reorientation around the Kingdom. Pastor Finke writes,

> Jesus is inviting us to completely reorient our minds and lives *around* this new reality of the kingdom being redemptively present and active around us. He is saying, 'Reorient your thinking and presumptions around it. Reorient your values and priorities around it. Reorient how you interpret what you are seeing and hearing around it. Reorient how you interpret what you are seeing and hearing around it. And believe this good news I am telling you.'

Jesus is on a mission to restore all people to the Father. He is accomplishing it through the spread of His Kingdom. As Pastor Finke reminds us,

> "The Kingdom of God is God himself [who] came into the created world through Jesus. When Jesus arrived here, He unleased the promised season of world redemption. It is happening now. Wherever God is redemptively present and active, His kingdom is at work. We can seek it, recognize it and join with it."

God is reigning in Jesus. He is coming near to people in Jesus. He is working redemptively in Jesus. Wherever we see need for redemption and hope, we can be sure that Jesus is at work, that the Kingdom of God is coming near.

Our call to seek, recognize, and respond to Jesus' working is accomplished by regularly asking ourselves, "Where is grace needed? Where is hope needed? Where is truth needed?" This doesn't mean we must solve people's problems. It does mean, however, that the Kingdom God is drawing near, that God is working in Jesus.

That means, as Pastor Finke writes,

> We don't have to worry about how to get Jesus into our offices, classrooms or neighborhoods. He's already on the move there. We don't have to concern ourselves with how Jesus will ripen people for their next-step toward faith. He's already on it. All we really have to do is look for what Jesus is already showing us. In other words, seek the kingdom. Look for what is already happening. And join in.

That's the mission. And Jesus is inviting us to join Him on it.

April Ministry Apps—Zion Lutheran Church

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

There is no "app" for life. Life is God's gift. The signs of spring shout life created and recreated by God. The seven weeks of the Easter season celebrate that the One who rose on the third day gives abundant life here and eternally for all who believe in Him.

Life Together as the CHURCH

We all live in God's grace in all seasons. Praise God for the wonderful attendance at this year's Lenten series. 150 worshippers heard the weekly Biblical grace story. Thanks to Bary and Karen Kienast, Zion youth, and youth families for providing the weekly meals which were a special blessing. Our youth express their thanks to the congregation for their financial and prayer support of youth ministry. Several youth will represent our congregation at the LCMS national gathering this summer.

Praise God for the continuing progress on the east entrance and other areas as our "Generations" campaign continues to provide the funding for our improvements.

Life for all God's CHILDREN

Children of Zion and the community will experience life in the barnyard. "Barnyard Roundup: where Jesus gathers us together" is the theme for the June 6-10 VBS experience. Many volunteers will again be needed. Contact Pastor Bob and Diane Riggert if you are able to assist. A VBS planning committee meeting will be held on Thursday, April 14 at 6:30 p.m. A new supply of paint shirts are needed for the children (any size button-up shirt). Thank you for your support of and assistance with this important ministry.

Praise God for the faith nurture of parents, Sunday school, midweek teachers, and other mentors which leads to the confirmation witness of this year's class. Confirmation vows will be shared at the April 24 service.

Life Together in our COMMUNITY

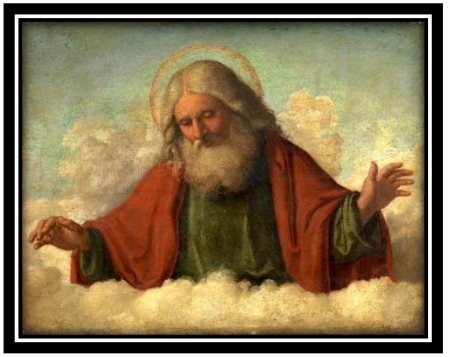
Coordinated by the C-3 organization, the "Wolf Pack for Hunger" event will be held from 2-6 p.m. at the IKM-Manning gym on April 6. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to join the packaging line. Financial donations are also welcome as $12,500 is needed to buy supplies to package 50,000 meals. A 25 cent donation fills a package which feeds 6 people. Visit http://tinyurl.com/wolfpack4hunger to sign up as packaging volunteers. Checks to support the packaging can be made out to C-3 and left in the church office.

The community will gather on Sunday evening, June 6, for the annual C-3 concert at Heritage Park. More information will be coming in the weeks ahead.

Life for the WORLD

Missionary Gary Thies hosts missionaries from around the world at "Mission Central" near Mapleton. Responding to midweek students request, "We want to go back," a field trip has been scheduled for Wednesday May 4 (leaving Zion about 3 p.m.) Parents and other interested adults are invited to join the grades 5-8 students.

Jesus calls us to Abundant Life together!
Pastor Bob Riggert



The God We Don't Believe In

Depending on which poll you pick, an exceedingly strong majority of Americans profess belief in God. "In God we trust" is still emblazoned on our currency, our Pledge of Allegiance still professes that we are "one nation under God," and politicians and presidents still end speeches with "God bless America." Some have tried to suggest that these realities show that we are a Christian nation. It's certainly true that Christians have played a decisive role in making America great, but the mere existence of the word "God" on currency, in pledges, and at the conclusion of speeches doesn't make our nation Christian. One need only ask which God we our invoking on our currency, in our pledge, and at the end of our speeches.

Sociologist Christian Smith asked that very question and his findings are eye opening. While nearly 90% of Americans profess belief in God, Mr. Smith discovered that

> a significant part of Christianity in the United States is actually only tenuously Christian in any sense that is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian tradition, but has rather substantially morphed into Christianity's misbegotten stepcousin, Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

What is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism? As you can see in the phrase, it's the belief in a distant God (deism) whose main focus is on helping us (therapeutic) to morally better ourselves (moralistic). It's characterized by five main beliefs:

- A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when He is needed to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

What's wrong with that? Perhaps Richard Niebuhr said it best nearly 80 years ago when he described this view as: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross." In other words, it leaves us with nothing! Sure, the shell of Christianity remains, but the substance has been removed. It would be like biting into a juicy burger, only to discover that it was hollow plastic. There's nothing to sink your teeth into! The substance is gone. To be quite blunt: *This is not the God we believe in.*

A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.

Yes, a god exists who created and ordered the world. Yes, he watches over human life on earth, but this watching isn't from a disinterested distance; He has come near in Jesus and is reigning now through Jesus. He is involved in His creation. In the Divine Service, He is present forgiving sins and granting the promise of Heaven's inheritance. He is working in people's hearts and minds, ripening them for the Gospel of the Kingdom. He is not a distant, disinterested God simply watching over His creation as someone might watch fish in a pond. He has jumped into the pond among us!

God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.

Further, God didn't send Jesus to help us be nice. This is not the heart of Christianity's message. The fact is many nice people will be in hell. God is not a therapist focused on moral improvement; He's a Savior set on eternal salvation. So He sent Jesus not to help us get along, but to be the propitiation for our sins, to be the one who turned His righteous wrath against sin away so that we could be saved. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism guts the Gospel out of God and leaves us with distant moralistic therapist.

GOD IS NOT A THERAPIST FOCUSED ON MORAL IMPROVEMENT; HE'S A SAVIOR SET ON ETERNAL SALVATION

The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.

Even more, the central goal of life is NOT to be happy and to feel good about oneself. You don't need the Christian God for that. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, "I didn't go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don't recommend Christianity." Christianity will bring a deep and abiding joy along with a living hope in the resurrection of Jesus, but it might not make you happy and it certainly won't make you feel good about yourself. God's law will only reveal our moral failures and sins and there's nothing to feel good about in that. But God's Gospel will reveal His forgiveness and salvation in Christ and there is cause for great joy and hope in that.

The goal of life, then, is to be reconciled to the living God (thus Jesus' preaching on repentance and the Gospel of the Kingdom) and to know Him intimately and to commune with Him through His Word and Sacraments.

God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when He is needed to resolve a problem.

Because of this, Christians confess that God is deeply involved in their life. He is not called upon merely when we've exhausted our resources and need someone to bail us out. He is praised for His loving provision through people's vocations. God still turns water into wine today, not instantly, but it is no less His work. We trust Him not merely to provide our daily bread, but even our daily breath. Further, we have the privilege of praying to Him and knowing He hears and answers.

Good people go to heaven when they die.

Despite what people tend to believe, good people don't go to heaven when they die. Why? Because there are no good people! Scripture declares, "None is righteous, no, not one…" (Romans 3:10). Apart from the justifying death of Jesus Christ, we have no hope of reconciliation to God. We are accustomed to thinking of our sin as a character flaw (if we think of it at all), but our sin is no such thing. Our sin is a death sentence from which we have no power to recover. If God doesn't act, we are damned – and rightly so. The truth is, God would be acting righteously to damn lawbreaking sinners. That's what a righteous judge would do. But He chooses to love us by taking action against our sin on Jesus. In His love He sees that justice for our sin falls on Christ.

OUR SIN IS A DEATH SENTENCE FROM WHICH WE HAVE NO POWER TO RECOVER.

The fact of the matter is, the god of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism isn't really a god worth worshiping, at least not consistently or passionately. It's no wonder people are struggling to take their faith seriously. A god who merely wishes from a distance that we would be nice and happy, isn't one worthy of serious worship. The Christian God, however, is worthy of our most profound and heartfelt worship. He has not left us with the gospel of "be nice to one another," but the Gospel of "be saved in Christ." It is precisely that free gift of salvation that we celebrate as the people of God. And it is precisely the God who has come near in Christ who we worship.

Ladies Guild

Highlights
Ladies Guild of Zion
March 9, 2016

President Cheral Buhr opened the meeting by leading the recitation of the League Pledge. Pastor Conner gave the opening devotion on the parable of the Vineyard from Luke 20. Margaret Backhaus gave the Christian Life. Margaret's reading was entitled "the circle of light." Margaret challenged members to choose a light, whether it be a porch or yard light or other light seen frequently and use the light to remind us to pray. The mite box prayer was prayed by members as the offering was given.

President Buhr opened the business meeting in the name of the Triune God. 14 members answered the roll by sharing "what was your favorite pastime this winter." Audrey Roe read the minutes and correspondence in the absence of Sue Puck, secretary. The minutes were approved as read. The correspondence were thank you notes from the families of Larry Genzen, Fern Jensen, and Myrtle Otto for serving. Mary Grimm and Darlene Vollstedt gave the general treasure and kitchen treasure reports. Birthday and anniversary date of members were noted by President Buhr. Committees reported: Human Care chair, Audrey Roe reported that 28 quilts were tied in the month of February. The health and school kits continue to be filled and the completed kits will be sent in May when the quilts and soap are sent to LWR.

Old Business:
A draft for guidelines for serving funerals and other events was presented by Audrey Roe. Members edited the draft and made further suggestions. The guidelines will be posted. The guidelines are generalities. Family requests are always honored and if no requests are made, these guidelines will be of assistance to those serving. For special events, serving is on a volunteer basis. President Buhr asked the committee members to meet following lunch to discuss the Spring Rally plans. Also to remember that the collections of postage stamps, Campbell soup labels and box tops of educations, soap and computer in cartridges will be given to those in charge of sending them on at the Spring Rally.

New Business:
President Buhr reported on the World Day of Prayer and the officers meeting that followed which took place on March 4th. The theme was Plow, Sow, Plant, and Reap, which was the theme of the 2015 national convention. At the meeting it was suggested that each society have their own LWML banner as the banner that has been shared has become tattered. Margaret Backhaus located a LWML banner on line. It was 28 x 42—nylon costing $30.00 plus postage. Mary Grimm made a motion that we purchase this banner. Joene Bohlmann 2nd the motion and motion carried. Other business from the officers meeting was to collect purses to take to the convention at Okoboji. Darlene Vollstedt volunteered to place a box for collecting the purses and place next to the other collections. President Buhr gave new forms for reporting to Human Care and to the Treasurer. Forms are available for those donating a quilt to the quilt auction at Okoboji. Another business item was the "Harvest" magazine. It is no longer published, however, it is available on line. To subscribe go to : christine-fayeschultz@gmail.com and ask to be put on the distribution list.

The 2016 LWML district convention is at Camp Okoboji on June 23-25. The delegates will be Cheral Buhr and Sue Puck. An alternate is needed as well. Contact Cheral if interested. Camp Okoboji is requesting participation in their Theme Basket which will be April 1. Joene made a motion to send $100.00 seconded by Charlene Hickman. Motion carried. The quilt auction will be June 18th. A question of a need to put up racks to hold the coffee servers was tabled until the next meeting in order to gather more information.

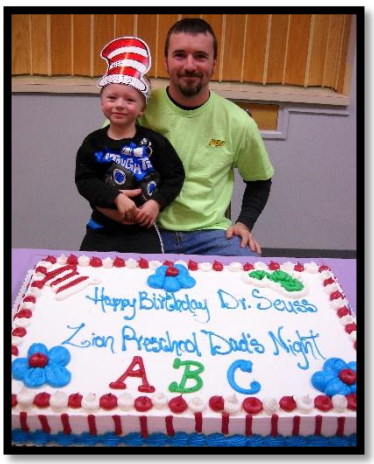
Further information:Quilt tying every Thursday and 1 PM, Next funeral lunch—Circle #3, Plaza Bingo—No bingo for March—Good Friday, There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned and the table and Lord's prayer was prayed.
Respectfully submitted, Audrey Roe, Secretary pro tem

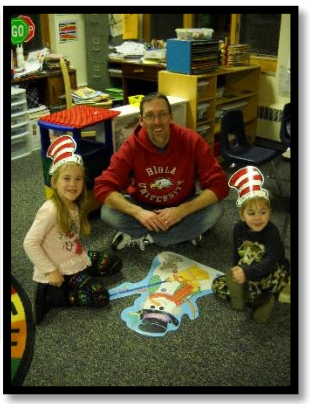
March, march, march march! In preschool this month we often marched up and down the halls when transitioning to celebrate the month of March! It really sank in for the kids what month we were in! On March 3rd we had Dad's night. We celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday that night! We got each child a hat to wear, and even had cake and ice cream! The children had a lot of fun doing a little dance with their dads or grandpas. I'm pretty sure some of the men had just as much fun as the little ones did! The preschoolers had a chance to show their guest their preschool room and what they like to do while at school. We also made Dr. Seuss creations out of toothpicks and marshmallows. It was a great night!

The preschoolers helped get our room ready for spring by making and decorating rainbows! Marshmallow and cotton ball clouds hang from the ceilings and windows with rainbow colored pipe cleaners and yard dangling from them. Several rainbow mosaics help decorate our cupboard doors. It is amazing how some cute artwork helps brighten up the room! The children are always so proud of their creations! They did a really nice job!

We talked about palm Sunday and Easter and the kids had a great time waving their palm branches and singing "Hosanna." They were quick to point out the pictures of Jesus dying on the cross to take away our sins. The children had a great time finding eggs hidden for an Easter egg hunt. Easter baskets had been donated for the preschoolers and we handed those out the last day before our spring break.

Our second round of parent teacher conferences were held March 23rd and 24th. It is always nice to be able to visit with the parents. Our 2016-2107 registration will be held Wednesday, April 6th from 4-6 in the preschool room. We have had several inquire about registration! It is hard to believe how quickly that time is coming! We look forward to serving the next round of God's little ones! We hope everyone had a blessed Easter!
God's Blessings to you all! Mrs. Riesberg and Mrs. Nemitz





ZION Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

Registration for the 2016-2017 preschool year is set for April 6th.

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

Missionaries to Indonesia

Tiga gereja melayani bersama! (Indonesian for "Three churches serving together")

Now that the house has been unpacked, and people are back home and healthy, February was a time to attack the work we've been called to do, and take advantage of an opportunity that was several months in the making.

Accompanied by two Lutherans from Malaysia, I headed out to Lake Toba in North Sumatra to help the Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI) host a week-long workshop on Stewardship that their leadership had been asking for. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malaysia has worked hard over the last few decades to improve their own stewardship, and now were willing to share their principles and practices so our Indonesian friends could learn from their example.

We hosted nearly 150 participants from the GKLI, who had come from all over North Sumatra: pastors, lay leaders, and treasurers. They heard presentations on Biblical Stewardship and money management for churches, and got to learn from the current practice of the ELCM in Malaysia. They asked lots of insightful questions, wrestled and struggled with their own practices, and asked for more teaching in the days ahead.

But it wasn't just finances; we also had the chance to try out an Indonesian translation of the Office of Matins each morning, which I led in Indonesian for the first time. The church has been asking for more hymnal resources to be made available in their own language, and they took this opportunity with great excitement. They prayed and sang each morning, and were ready to try it again the next day. No one laughed at my Indonesian chanting (at least not out loud!).

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

SELAMAT

The people of the GKLI were very grateful to have had this opportunity to learn and grow in some important lessons, and it was incredible for us to bring together churches from three different countries for this week Indonesia, Malaysia, and the USA).

These are incredible ways we're serving our neighbor and building them up, and it's only possible by your partnership in this work. There's much more yet to do!

On the home front we celebrated the beginning of the Season of Lent just like you did in your churches in the US. But for the ashes we needed, we went to our front yard and pulled some palm fronds from our own tree and burned them. We draped our crosses and the altar in purple, and have been observing this solemn season in preparation for the great Feast to come next month.

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 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 other parts of Southeast Asia

Pastors of the Indonesian Christian Lutheran Church (GKLI)

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*.

Introducing Zion's newest missionary!

SERVING THE LORD IN

PANAMA

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

March 2016
Vol. 1 Issue 2

"Why Panama?" "Why would you want to be a missionary?" I am asked these questions quite a bit as I share about the Lord's work in Panama and the transition our family has been experiencing these last few months. My response? Baptizing and teaching. Our Lord Jesus, before his ascension, commanded the Apostles to make disciples by baptizing and teaching. These are the means by which the Holy Spirit creates faith and grows the church.

Last month, I had the privilege of baptizing my niece at Bethany Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL during network support building. To steward the means by which the Holy Spirit creates faith and saves sinners is an incredible responsibility and joy. Recall what Dr. Luther said about baptism in the Large Catechism, "here in Baptism there is brought free to every one's door such a treasure and medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive." Why is baptism significant? To baptize is to bring the treasure of the Gospel to people!

Baptism is then followed up by teaching the Christian faith in preparation for receiving the Lord's Supper, another precious gift that Christians cling to as they sojourn in this world. This is why I have accepted the call to be a missionary. In this new call, I am privileged to mentor pastors and provide theological education as they baptize and teach in their own congregations.

Additionally, I work with seminarians preparing to serve as pastors who will baptize and teach in congregations throughout Panama. This is why we are going to Panama, to work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Panama as they baptize and teach. It is very exciting to bring the treasure and medicine of the Gospel to people's lives through the gift of God's Word and his precious sacraments. The weeks, months, and years to come will undoubtedly be challenging, but we are comforted in knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. This is the precious treasure of the Gospel that will preserve us always.

As we have recently discovered, the life of a missionary is one of uncertainty. Leaving the comforts of home to move to an unfamiliar country of people we have yet to meet, and having to learn a foreign language is intimidating to say the least! The good news is that as we move to the unknown we do not go alone! God already knows his plan and we are known to Him through his son Jesus. We also have the prayers and support of you...our wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ! Thank you!!!

This month Brian, Ezra and I attended missionary orientation at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, MO. Our two weeks of training were wonderful and we are now better equipped to serve in Panama. The incredible staff at the International Center took great care to facilitate our training and prepare us for missionary service. It was also encouraging and comforting to meet all the other missionary families going through the same process. Though it is daunting to think about all the unknowns yet to come, we daily give thanks in knowing the saving news of Jesus' death and resurrection.

What's heaven like?

For many Christians, heaven is an absolute mystery. They've heard the word thousands of times, but the specifics of what happens there remain vague. What happens when we die? Is it one interminably long worship service? Will we still be ourselves? Will we know each other? Are people in heaven aware of what's happening on earth? The Bible talks about heaven in many places and it reveals more about heaven than many people realize (and less than some suggest!). So, let's take things one question at a time.

What happens to Christians when we die?

Let's start with some very simple truths about heaven. First, when a person dies he does not cease to exist; his body dies, but his soul (the non-material essence of a person's being) lives on. Because of the saving work of Jesus, the Christian's soul is welcomed into Jesus' presence in heaven.[1] Saint Paul wrote about his longing to be "away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8) and Jesus promised the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in Paradise. St. John writes in Revelation 14 that saints in heaven "rest from their labors." That doesn't mean they have nothing to do; it means they rest from the sin-cursed labor of life on this fallen earth. And in Luke 16:25 Jesus, through his parable of Lazarus and the rich man, tells us that we are "comforted" in heaven.

What does this mean so far? It means that being with Jesus in heaven will be better than life on this sin-cursed earth. As we'll see, however, it's not the end of the story. God has a plan for our bodies.

Will heaven be one eternal worship service?

Saint John answers this question in Revelation 7:9-12. In that text we see people "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" worshiping God. So we know that people in heaven are worshiping God. Does this mean heaven is an interminable church service? No. Heaven will certainly be defined by worship, but not limited to our conception of a church service because worship is not limited to a church service. So, we will worship forever in heaven, but it won't be confined to a worship service. In addition to worship, we learn from Jesus in Luke 15 that heaven rejoices when a sinner on earth repents. This celebration includes the angels, and in all likelihood, the saints in heaven.

Since we're discussing worship in heaven, it's important to remind ourselves that in the Divine Service our worship joins heaven's. Before we receive Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, the pastor prays, "therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing…" And then we join in heaven's song: "Holy, holy, holy!" Our voices join the angels and saints in heaven as they worship God.

Will we still be ourselves?

When we look at the content of heaven's worship, we learn something else about the saints in heaven. Saint John tells us that the saints in heaven are crying out, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" The word *salvation* is

[1] Heaven's location isn't a matter of geography (up or down, north or south, etc.) Heaven is where God is.

very instructive because it's wrapped up in earth's story (creation, fall, redemption, and resurrection). If the saints in heaven are praising God for His salvation, they must retain not only the memory of earth's story, but also of their identity as God's redeemed (the ones included in that story).

We see other evidence of retained identity in Revelation 6:9-11. John writes that he saw

> the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Notice how these martyrs remembered their martyrdom? Their memories were not wiped and their identity as the martyred of God did not vanish. They retained their identities. Or consider the mountain top guests at Jesus' transfiguration: Moses and Elijah. They were still Moses and Elijah. They retained their identity.[2] Or think of the hall of faith detailed by the author of Hebrews – Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc. – the author encourages us by reminding us that we are surrounded by this "great cloud of witnesses." He assumes that they retained their identity in heaven.

Further, when Paul discusses the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, he speaks of the body that we sow into the ground (i.e. the body we burry) being raised. Pay careful attention: the body that is sown into the ground is the very same body that is raised (albeit changed into the resurrected body Paul describes). All evidence in Scripture points to the retention of our identity.

Will we know each other in heaven?

If we retain our identity in heaven, it seems reasonable that we will know one another. In fact, Paul writes of the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead in 1 Thessalonians 4 and he tells us that "*we* will be with the Lord forever" (4:17). The *we* refers to the saints in heaven and the saints still alive on earth. Then he tells us, "encourage one another with these words" (4:18). Notice again the emphasis on *one another*. He intends that we would be encouraged by the reality not only of Christ's return and our coming resurrection, but by the fact that we will enjoy the resurrected life with Jesus together.

Are people in heaven aware of what's happening on earth?

From the texts we've cited thus far, it seems that people in heaven have at least a basic knowledge of earth. The martyrs in Revelation 6 knew that their blood had not yet been avenged. The saints included in heaven's rejoicing over a sinner's repentance (Luke 15) at least knew that a sinner had repented. On the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elijah visited with Jesus about His coming exodus (cross and resurrection). To do this, they must have had some knowledge of earth's happenings.

Does this mean people in heaven have detailed knowledge of what's happening on earth? Not necessarily. The extent of their knowledge is not specifically revealed to us, so we must refrain from overstating our certainty. The reason people typically object to saints' knowledge of earth is because they think their knowledge would spoil heaven for them. This is a false argument. Happiness in heaven does not depend upon ignorance of earth. People are happy in heaven because they are with Jesus and they know the victory is His.

The best is yet to come.

Even though heaven is better than life on sin-cursed earth, the best is yet to come because our great hope isn't simply to die and go to heaven, but to live and to see heaven come to earth. Our great hope isn't to live eternally separated from our bodies; our great hope is to live in our resurrected bodies. So, we might say that our hope isn't in life after death, but in *life after* life after death.

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[2] Or consider the witch of Endor event with Samuel (1 Samuel 28). Samuel was still Samuel; he retained his identity.

!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 4, April 2016

District Mission Celebration: Each year a special Missions Banquet is served to highlight the mission grants that are awarded to churches applying for funds to do a unique mission in their church or community. This year Grace Hispanic Church in Storm Lake received a grant for $25,000 toward the calling of a bilingual pastor. 28 other District churches received grants. We are praying that God will soon send a bilingual pastor to Grace's special ministry in Storm Lake.

Supporting Our LWML Missionaries: On Saturday, February 20, our Hispanic ladies in Denison prepared and served an authentic Hispanic luncheon to the LWML leaders of Iowa District West. It was a special morning for the LWML ladies and for our ladies who worked so hard to prepare one of the best meals I have eaten. It included dishes from Mexico, El Salvador and other Central American countries. They and other families prepared all the food. Our Hispanic ministries in Iowa District West have been blessed by the work of the LWML as we have received much support and encouragement for our special ministries to share the Gospel of Jesus' love to the Spanish-speaking immigrants of western Iowa. May God continue to bless the LWML!

Blessing Marta's New Home: At 73 years old, Marta Perez should have the quiet life of a grandma. But during the past 15 years that I have known her, she has lived as a "nanny" in various homes making only enough to get by in addition to her meager Social Security check. Sadly, her family who live nearby is unable to care for her. We were blessed that we were able to help Marta apply for senior housing at the Eventide Lutheran apartments in Denison. Last month she moved in and we held our Wednesday morning Bible study there with a special house blessing. She is so proud to have her own place and enjoyed serving us. Since she had few possessions and clothes in a couple of boxes, our members have enjoyed helping her fill her new home. We celebrate with our sister Marta!

The Catechism for Dinka Christians: We take for granted the blessing of Luther's Small Catechism to guide us in our spiritual education. Now the Sudanese Dinka tribe has this special book translated in their own language. Our Hispanic church purchased five copies to present to Pastor Gabriel and his growing Dinka church at Zion in Denison. Moises, a youth recently confirmed in our congregation, helped me present the catechisms to the leaders of the Sudanese church. God bless our Sudanese brethren.

Please Pray: + For our congregational goals for 2016: growth, leadership and stewardship in Denison and Storm Lake. + For Grace Hispanic church in Storm Lake as they continue with the process of calling a pastor. + For our new visiting families that they would become a regular part of our ministry. + For the District Missions Committee as they develop plans for sharing the love of Jesus among our churches and ethnic ministries. ***In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who monthly support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and in our other three 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

Congregational Field Trip to Mission Central

Wednesday, May 4th

Leave Zion's parking lot at 3:00 p.m.

Gary Thies is excited to welcome you!

LWML Spring Rally

Camping Out with Jesus

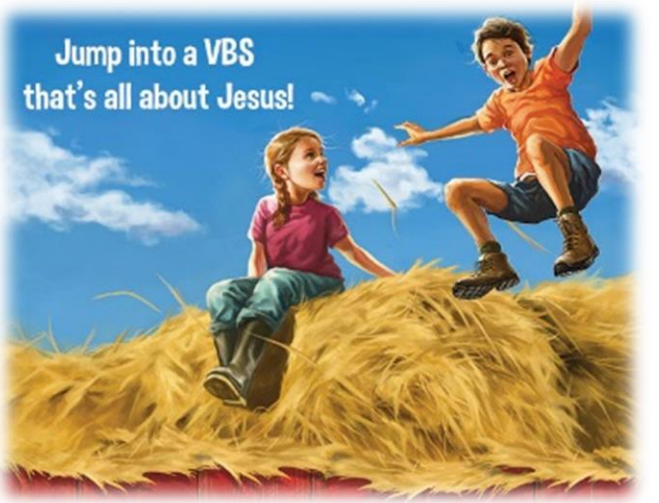
Where:	Zion Lutheran Church, Manning
When:	Saturday, April 16
	Registration at 9:00 a.m.
	Lunch at noon
Speaker:	Doug Kading, Camp Okoboji
Cost:	$5

Zion's pre-k – kindergarten class celebrates the arrival of new artwork for their classroom.

Stop by and see what they're so excited about!

Witness Night: April 20 at 6:30 p.m.
Confirmation Sunday: April 24
Confirmands:

Grant Behrens
Miranda Benton
Lucy Borkowski
Lillian Genzen
Renee Grimm
Adam Gruhn
Kamryn Lesle
Jordon Weller



Zion Lutheran Church's VBS

June 6-10 8:45 – 11:30 a.m.

The leaders of Zion are gearing up for another Jesus-centered, child-focused VBS and they need your help. Below are several ways you can get involved.

1. **Volunteer!**
   There's something for you to do. Volunteer all five days or as many as works for your schedule. Youth are encouraged to help.

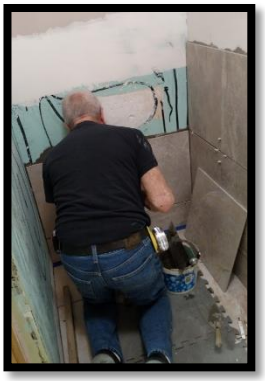
2. **Spread the word!**
   Get on the phone. Hop on social media. Create a buzz and get people talking about Zion's VBS.

3. **Donate!**
   Immediate needs include:
   - Paint shirts (men's or women's button down)
   - Plastic paint cups/containers (small sour cream, yogurt, etc.)
   - 8 foot plastic table cloths (durable enough for children)

4. **Watch!**
   More details will be coming soon, so be alert and watch.
   Talk to Pastor Riggert, Shelly Gruhn, or Margaret Backhaus with questions.

Generations Update

Progress continues at Zion as the pictures below illustrate. As the weather warmed, concrete trucks showed up and started pouring. Below you can see a portion of the east parking lot, the preschool entrance, and the entrance to the garage being poured. In the center you can see two of our key servant leaders, Bob Genzen and Bruce Grimm, pausing to discuss the project. Many thanks to these men for the countless volunteer hours they have given to our Generations project. On the bottom right Dick McConnell lays tile in the kitchen bathroom while in the picture to the left drywall is being hung in the new east entrance. On the bottom left is a sunrise as seen through our new east entrance (to see it in color, view it online at www.zionmanning.com under the newsletter section).



China Lutheran Seminary's second semester started well and we are looking forward to our big *Sola Scriptura* seminar on March 14 (presenters: Samuel Liu, Jukka Kaariainen, Thomas Yu, Immanuel Scharrer, and Stephen Oliver). We were shaken by a big earthquake in Taiwan on February 6, which news dominated the Chinese New Year celebration vacation (news of toppled buildings, emotional rescue stories, and over 100 killed in the Southern part of Taiwan), but thanks to the Lord that we are in the North and are all ok.

Thanks for your prayers for my cancer stricken Father-in-Law, Haiting Hsieh. He just had an MRI today to see if any is in his brain, and he is moving forward with targeted therapy and radiation treatments.

Pray for him (especially for the Gospel to enter his heart) and for our *Sola Scriptura* seminar.

Thrivent Financial Fraternal Stats

2015 CHOICE DOLLARS
Zion $6,333 + Zion Preschool $3,327 = $9,660

This program started Oct. 2010 with a total of more than $52,000 to our church and preschool. (These are fraternal dollars earned by members that they can donate to a qualified 501C3). Our members support many other organizations such as Camp Okoboji, Orphan Grain Train, Veterans, etc.

ACTION TEAMS

Zion (church, preschool, Generations, C3/Food Pantry, Trinity)	$29,000
Manning Community	$10,000
Total	=$39,000
+ additional Carroll County & churches	+$40,000
Total	=$79,000

Since the Action Team program began late Sep. of 2014 till Dec. 2015, over $79,000 has been brought in $250 at a time through Janet Smith's client's Action Teams in Carroll County. She assisted in writing many more. This is seed money available to Thrivent members to assist teams of volunteers serving organizations that serve others, or individuals in need. Janet was the #1 rep. in Iowa for members with Action Teams, and Zion Lutheran Church of Manning was the top recipient of Action Team funding in multiple categories. Call Janet/712-655-9411 for assistance. Now that we know how to utilize them…..Let's Serve HIM and His children!

April Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

2. Connie Ahrendsen
Larry Hansen
3. Aaron Ahrendsen
Lillie Ceminksky
4. Dorothy Knudson
Duane Otto
5. Bob Henkelman
6. Darla Neumann
Viola Ostebee
Dennis Tibben
7. Jeff Bradley
Jesse Page
Hadley Wiig
8. Judy Bald
Mikasia Jacobsen
10. Stephen Grimm
Dorothy Larsen
11. Vicki Tibben
12. Cory Otto
Vila Ranniger
Kael Renze
Thomas Ulrickson
Nathan Vetter
13. Drew Greving
Vernon Larsen
Deborah Ranniger
14. Katelyn Dreher
15. Jerry Backhaus
Natalie Bauer
Nancy Muhlbauer
Dan Peters
Karen Reinke
16. Duane Wegner
17. Tim Kienast
Sue Puck

18. Curt Janssen
Cheryl Kerkhoff
Susan Lamb
19. Saylor McManigal
Colton Otto
Diane Riggert
20. Tanner Bald
Franklin Mohr
21. Joene Bohlmann
22. Conrad Kurth
23. Shauna Borkowski
Ashley Johnson
Roger Sinow
Daniel Vogel
Judith Wegner
24. Collin Borkowski
Ericka Irlbeck
25. Jackie Hagedorn
Virginia Johnson
Becky Karsten
26. Ron Schilling
27. David Gore
Georgia Lohrmann
Rylan Stoberl
28. Glen Ahrendsen
Eric Lage
29. Craig Wegner
30. Andy Booth
Emily Brus
Madison Grabill
Nancy Opperman
Sara Puck

8. Todd & Tammy Winter
12. Ron & Susan Schilling
20. Merlin & Jean Borkowski
25. Brian & Diane Vetter
28. Greg & Sandra Sextro

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

Official Acts

Transferred in:
Eugene Herbert Mahnke from Trinity Lutheran Church, Manilla, March 4, 2016

Baptism:
Lueka James Feller, son of Ann (Ranniger) and Chris Feller, March 26, 2016

Funerals:
Lynn Everett Christensen, Died February 28, 2016, Funeral March 3, 2016
Loretta Sophie Pauline (nee: Ewoldt) Vinke, Died March 14, 2016, Funeral March 18, 2016
Marla Mae Juhl, Died March 18, 2016, Funeral March 22, 2016

In Our Prayers

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), Bev Rix, Jim Deevers, Jenni Erb, Marlin Kahl, Dorothy Larsen