~~God Loves You This Much…~~
In This Way God Loves You…

Next to the 23rd Psalm, John 3:16 is perhaps the most well-known Bible passage on the planet. Even the Biblically illiterate can recite it: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." What makes this particular verse so powerful is its succinct and beautiful communication of the saving Gospel of God.

And yet it's misunderstood. Well-meaning Christians, and even preachers who should know better, interpret Jesus' words this way: "God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to die for you." But that's not what Jesus was trying to communicate. Yes, God's love for us exceeds the processing capacity of our three pound brains, but Jesus wasn't attempting to tell us the extent or the size of God's love.

The problem arises with the word "*so*." Americans often employ this word to communicate extent or degree. We say, "I love you so much!" or "It was so cold today!" But that's not what the Jesus is saying. The Greek word (*houtos*) rendered "*so*" in English translations means "in this way, in this manner, thus." Therefore, Jesus' words should be heard as follows: "For God *in this way* loved the world, that he gave his only Son…" He was communicating the manner in which God loves us. He was trying to tell us the way in which God actively loved us.

Why does it matter?

Besides the obvious need to interpret the Bible rightly, this common misinterpretation actually distorts the very Gospel Jesus was trying to communicate. If the cross is merely the expression of how much God loves the world, then Jesus' outstretched, nail-pierced arms are nothing more than a God-sized, blood-stained hug for the world. People start to wonder, "Why did Jesus have to die like that to show us how much God loved us? Couldn't He have told us without the cross? Why kill Jesus to tell us how much He loved us? It doesn't make sense."

So what happens? Preachers and songwriters preach sermons and write songs about God's amazing love, but they say less and less about the crucified Christ (much less about the human sin He was enduring justice for on the cross). Pop-American Christian worship becomes heavy on generic love-language and disturbingly light on cross-talk. And people start to conceive of God as a God of generic love who exists to affirm our desires and dreams.

Hearing Jesus rightly changes everything. God loved the world by taking action for the world. Why was this necessary? Because the world was awash in sin and unbelief! The world was awash in evil and immorality. The world was inciting the wrath of a just and righteous God (wrath, by the way, is the right and proper response of a just God toward evil). God would have done the right thing if He had poured His wrath on the world. But God chose *to love* the world by pouring that wrath on a substitute, Jesus. Jesus received God's full wrath against our sin on His cross. Justice for our sin and evil was done on Christ. So God has acted justly by seeing that justice for evil has been done.

What's the result? Anyone who receives what Jesus has done for him is restored to God and able to live in fellowship with Him both now and even into eternity. Preachers and songwriters dwell extensively on the cross. Worship centers on sin and grace, Law and Gospel. And people see the cross as the beautiful intersection of love and justice. *In this way* God loves you and me: that's what Jesus was saying in John 3:16.

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (March 2017): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

At The Crossroads

We are familiar with crossroads at the intersections of our rural roads. Careful drivers approach the crossroads slowly; look carefully in all directions; and proceed ahead cautiously.

On Ash Wednesday, March 1, we begin a significant journey. We journey with Jesus to His cross. As we make that journey we find ourselves at the crossroads with those who followed Jesus. We approach the spiritual crossroads humbly; we look intently in the direction of the cross; and we proceed prayerfully. Services will be held each Wednesday through Lent with a 2 p.m. service at Trinity and a 5:45 p.m. service at Zion. A fellowship meal hosted by the Zion youth and their families will be served immediately after the service (approximately 6:30 p.m.). Services will be "family friendly" with special applications for the children. We will meet the following in our journey: David (March 1), Judas (March 8), Pilate (March 15); Malchus (March 22), Peter (March 29), John (April 5). The schedule and emphases for Holy Week worship will be shared in next month's newsletter.

Join us "At the Crossroads." Invite family, friends, and neighbors to join us. Each day we find ourselves at the crossroads of discipleship. Will we faithfully follow Jesus in the direction of His truth or will we turn away from Him? As adults we also determine the direction of our children and grandchildren. Lent is a special time for personal and family devotions.

Great Prayers

Thank you to the more than 20 members of Zion and Trinity who asked with Jesus' disciples, "Teach us to pray," and who gathered on Wednesday morning to reflect on the petitions of The Lord's Prayer. We confessed to be prayer "wimps" and sought the Spirit direction to be prayer "warriors." The Zion Fellowship Club (typically meeting the 2nd Monday of each month) will meet "Great Pray-ers of the Bible" in the topical study. Guests are invited to the monthly meeting for study and fellowship. The group supports the Lutheran Hour Ministry and other mission projects.

Each week the worship bulletin includes a prayer list of various members and friends of Zion. As the names are read at the altar concentrate on the name and need. During the week regularly include them in your personal and family prayers.

Thank You

I am blessed to join other community leaders in facilitating the activities of the C-3 organization. C-3 focuses on three ministries: 1) Food Pantry; 2) Wolfpack for Hunger; 3) Summer Concert. The Food Pantry was blessed to receive some community grants which will enable a remodeling of the space (behind the State Farm Insurance business—with entry from the alley). Thank you to generous Zion members who regularly put food items in the "Food Pantry" box by the east entrance. Presently funds are being gathered for a food packaging event with school students and staff on April 19. Donations of $12,500 will enable us to package 50,000 meals. The summer concert (again featuring Jennie Williamson) will be held on Pentecost Sunday, June 4. Zion members have been extremely generous in supporting C-3 activities.

Pastor Bob Riggert

Family Bowling Day Enjoyed by Many

On Sunday, January 29th, over 60 members of Zion gathered at the Manning Bowling Alley for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. Parents visited. Children chattered. And relationships were strengthened.

Thank you Zion Board of Education for making it possible!

ON THAT NOTE

Treasuring our Musical Treasure

Martin Luther once wrote, "I truly desire that all Christians would love and regard as worthy the lovely gift of music, which is a precious, worthy, and costly treasure given to mankind by God." The hymns preserved in our hymnal give the opportunity to do precisely as Luther wished. This month we mark the transition from the joy of Epiphany to the solemnness of Lent with the hymn "Savior, When in Dust to Thee" (*LSB,* 419). Written in 1815 by Englishman Sir Robert Grant, it somberly recalls Christ's sufferings during His earthly life and passion as it implores Jesus to hear our cry of penitence. In addition to the hymn's somber language, its tune marks the stark transition from the bright major keys of Epiphany to the subdued minor keys of Lent. Our highlighted hymn for February ("Alleluia, Song of Gladness"), for example, was in the key of D (or D major). Our highlighted hymn for this month is in D minor. The change is intentional as the minor key will help communicate solemnity and penitence. We will sing "Savior, When in Dust to Thee" on Ash Wednesday (March 1st).

Savior, when in dust to Thee
Low we bow the_adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies
Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;
O, by all Thy pains and woe
Suffered once for us below,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our penitential cry!

Savior. We begin by acknowledging our deepest human need – a Savior. Sin infects our souls and we have no recourse but to cry out for a Savior. That Savior is Jesus and we implore Him to hear us as we come before Him marked with the ancient symbol of repentance – ashes. With ashes staining our foreheads (giving outward expression to the sin that has stained our hearts), we stand repentant before our Savior, ashamed to turn our eyes heavenward.

We have nowhere else to go. There is no other Savior. Earth doesn't have detergent strong enough to remove sin's stain and man doesn't have the ability to erase sin's mark. So we cry out to Heaven, to the Savior who has suffered for our sin. We beg Him to bend downward from His Heavenly throne so that He would hear our penitential cry, our confession of sin – in this song and throughout the Lenten season.

On That Note

By Thy helpless infant years,
By Thy life of want and tears,
By Thy days of deep distress
In the savage wilderness,
By the dread, mysterious hour
Of the_insulting tempter's pow'r,
Turn, O turn a fav'ring eye;
Hear our penitential cry!

In verse two we begin to recount our Savior's earthly life. He took on flesh like us, becoming helpless in His infancy. Such a confession is startling and stark. The God who sent the planets circling round the sun became the infant who Mary swaddled in her lap. Such is the mystery of the incarnation.

Even more, this enfleshed God traced our childhood pattern, experiencing the vicissitudes and privations of lie. He grew up to live an itinerant life, with no permanent place to rest. He wept over death and rejection. He endured great hunger and even greater temptation at the hands of Satan in the wilderness. He knew want. He knew sorrow. He knew opposition. He knew temptation. He knew what it was to be human. And yet, He did it without sin. He got right everything that we continue to get so terribly wrong.

So we beg Him to hear our penitential cry, as it echoes in our song and throughout Lent.

By Thine hour of dire despair,
By Thine agony of prayer,
By the cross, the nail, the thorn,
Piercing spear, and torturing scorn,
By the gloom that veiled the skies
O'er the dreadful sacrifice,
Listen to our humble sigh;
Hear our penitential cry!

Verse three takes us to the Garden of Gethsemene and then to the cross. The words *dire, agony, piercing, torturing, gloom,* and *dreadful* are coupled with *despair, prayer, cross, nail, thorn, spear, scorn,* and *sacrifice* in an attempt to capture the nature and extent of the suffering endured in that garden and on the cross by our Savior – for us.

Having acknowledged the extent of our Savior's suffering – and suffering endured on our behalf – all we can do is humbly ask Him to hear our cry of penitence in our song and in our solemn journey through Lent.

By Thy deep expiring groan,
By the sad sepulchral stone,
By the vault whose dark abode
Held in vain the rising God,
O, from earth to heav'n restored,
Mighty, reascended Lord,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our penitential cry!

On That Note

Verse four takes us from Christ's last breath on the cross to His "sad sepulchral stone." It places us momentarily outside Christ's tomb. He's dead. Sealed in. Done. For a fleeting moment we feel death's bitter sting. For a moment our grief is absolute. God is dead.

But! Death's grip is broken! The death vault "held in vain the rising God"! Jesus has risen! And He has returned to His Father. Not only is death defeated, but sin's curse is undone. Our Savior lives not merely to hear our penitential cry, but to forgive our sins. So we can approach Him – even in Lent – in confident hope that He hears from Heaven; He hears and forgives. So with confidence and joy we can sing, "Hear our pentitental cry!"

Food Pantry Volunteers: Tim Kienast (left picture), Dan Dawson, Bary Kienast, Darlene Vollstedt, Gloria Ewoldt, Karen Kienast, Carlys Stribe

We love our volunteers! Organize a team or join one and sign up in Zion's fellowship hall to volunteer!

Milk
FoodPantry
Manning
IT'S REFRESHING!

Eliminating the Fear Filter

In his book, *Jesus among Secular Gods*, Ravi Zacharias recounts the following vignette:

> I have been told that someone once wrote anonymously to twelve highly powerful people, saying "All is discovered. Flee at once." All twelve of them left town.

The account may be fictional, but the point holds: fear is powerful. It can terrorize your mind and coerce your behavior. The same holds true in marriage. Many are the marriages that are destroyed by fear, as husbands and wives filter their spouse's words and actions through their greatest fear. Let's see how.

A Woman's Greatest Fear: Being Objectified

We use objects every day. Our coffee comes in a disposable cup. We pour our mourning cereal in a bowl. And we use our computer to surf the internet. In every instance we use an object for our desired purposes. Few are those who appreciate the object being used. Who, after all, treasures the coffee cup, the cereal bowl, or even the computer? They are simply things we use to get what we really want.

C.S. Lewis observed that this, unfortunately, sometimes happens with men and women. He explains,

> We use a most unfortunate idiom when we say, of a lustful man prowling the streets, that he 'wants a woman.' Strictly speaking, a woman is just what he does not want. He wants a pleasure for which a woman happens to be the necessary piece of apparatus. How much he cares about that woman as such may be gauged by his attitude to her five minutes after fruition (one does not keep the carton after one has smoked the cigarettes).

Feeling like the used carton of cigarettes is precisely what women fear most. They question, "Does he love me as a person or for the pleasure I bring him? Does he value me for who I am or does he see me as an object to be used for his personal gratification, to do his laundry, cook his meals, pick up after him, and provide physical intimacy for him?" Women who feel objectified in their marriages (or in any relationships) will instinctively pull back. Resentment will build and physical intimacy within marriage will suffer. No woman wants to feel used.

Sadly, we live in a culture that objectifies women routinely. Their bodies (often suggestively clothed) are paraded through movies, music videos, and TV. They are used to sell everything from cars to beer. And their images on magazine covers (again suggestively clothed) perpetuate the lie that women exist as objects of pleasure to be used by men, and disturbingly, envied by women.

All this wreaks havoc on marriage. Husbands believe their wives should look and behave like the lie they've seen on TV or the magazine cover – beautiful, available, and perpetually happy. Women believe their worth comes from their physical appearance and performance. So they continue to seek their worth in their appearance, all the while hating women who are skinnier or prettier and resenting their husband for noticing other women and treating them like an object. Resentment builds and bubbles over not only in words, but in her tone of voice, her posture, her facial expressions, and more. The husband feels the emotional distance and is angered by it, so he pulls away emotionally because he believes the problem is completely her fault.

Fear reigns. And fear's reign is destructive.

A Man's Greatest Fear: Being Controlled

Men fear, too. They don't fear being objectified, like women; they fear being controlled. More specifically, they fear being made to feel emasculated, impotent, and incapable and they filter much of their interactions with women, specifically their wife, through this fear.

As such, men are especially sensitive to women's disrespectful tone and caustic words. They are deeply wounded when their wife laughs at them. They might not speak of it openly, but they feel the sting, and like anyone who believes he's about to be stung by a scorpion, he pulls away. He pulls away emotionally from his wife. And he will pull away from any activity over which he feels the slightest bit of uncertainty. He doesn't want to be laughed at or disrespected.

Sadly, women are given the green light on disrespect in our culture. Women routinely belittle their husbands in the home and in public. In fact, husband bashing has largely become acceptable small talk in our culture. All this is exacerbated by a sitcom world that lampoons manhood and routinely depicts women disrespecting men as buffoons and good-for-nothings.

No man likes this, but no man feels like it would be okay for him to say so openly. So ingrained is the culture of disrespect among women, that men fear that disrespect would only worsen if they were to complain.

Incidentally, this is why women are often tagged with the label of "nag." Here's what happens: a wife asks her husband to fix a leaky faucet. He agrees to do it, when he has a moment. Time passes and it doesn't get done. She asks again. He reiterates his intentions to complete the task. More time passes and it still doesn't get done. She gets annoyed and begins to fling barbed arrows out her mouth and shoot angry laser beams out her eyes and he calls her a "nag."

Why?

It has to do with control and respect. Her request was registered as a statement of control (especially if she didn't make it in a respectful tone), the kind of thing a superior would make to an inferior, which men resent. So he logs away the request until enough time passes so that the decision to fix the faucet can be fully his decision. He remains in control.

This fear of being controlled and disrespected lies behind much of the conflict in marriage. Women rarely realize the way their words and attitudes are interpreted by their husband. Barbed words and laser eyes are disrespectful. Honorable men live by an honor code that calls them to step down in the face of an angry woman, lest the conflict escalate (as it would with a man) to a physical altercation.

Women, of course, resent this, thinking he's pulling away, and fearing he's withdrawing his love from her. For men, however, it's about shutting down a situation that that has the potential to turn ugly, not about withholding love. But, if this situation repeats itself, the husband will begin to feel controlled, even emasculated, and he will resent his wife. He will resent "being told what to do." He will resent, what he perceives, as her attempt to assert power over him.

It doesn't have to be this way!

In fact, God didn't design it to be this way. Marriage is a created good of God (Gen. 1 and 2), a created good modeled after the greater good of Christ's marriage to the Church (Eph. 5). In this greater good we see God's intention for earthly marriage. We see a groom esteeming his bride as a woman of splendor, without spot or wrinkle or blemish. We see a groom sacrificing his wants for the wellbeing of his bride. We see a groom loving his bride through words and deeds, not treating her as an object for his pleasure, but as a person for his treasuring. Further, we see a bride honoring her groom and tenderly submitting to him, regarding him as her loving, sacrificial head who is eager to lead and work for her wellbeing. We see a bride respecting her groom through words and deeds, in private *and* in public. And we see two people loving and respecting one another in a beautiful marriage.

What we don't see is fear.

Want to talk more about eliminating the fear filter and building a beautiful marriage? Come visit with me. – Pastor Conner

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love
Ladies Guild

Members read the last verse of the LWML Hymn together to begin the February Guild meeting:
Lutheran Women Coast to Coast
In the Lord a mighty host,
Let us all united be
in the Holy Trinity
One in faith, in hope and love, Working for the Lord above
Till our earthly labors done,
We in heaven shall all in one. Amen

Pastor Jonathan Conner led a study on the Righteousness of God. Together we pondered what place personal revenge has in our lives knowing that God has not turned a blind eye to sin. Bev Grundmeier and Barb Anderson presented a reading for Christian Life using an essay called "**Dishtowel Devotion."** This can be found on the LWML website. It was written by Joyce Wollenburg, who wrote that her mother had dish towels she embroidered for her "Hope Chest" when she was a young girl. Joyce used them for a visual aid to match Bible verses which corresponded with the day's work, i.e. Tuesday we iron the clothes--("I press on to take hold of that which Christ Jesus took hold of me" from Philippians 3: 14; Sunday is Rest Day, Bible verse from Exodus 20:8-11 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy...")

The Mite box and Mite box prayer were offered. President Buhr called the business meeting to order in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A thank-you note from Susan Lamb was read. 11 members answered the roll. The financial report was given and placed on file. Birthday and anniversary dates for members and associates were noted for the month of February. Committees reported. Human Care—Audrey Roe reported that work continues with quilt tying each Thursday afternoon. Anyone is welcome to come to help—a good time of fellowship and good work. Becki Ehlers reported sending 13 greeting cards. Circles reported activity.

Old Business: A change of servers for coffee fellowship was tabled from the January meeting and reintroduced by President Buhr. A motion by Cynthia Genzen, seconded by Susie Schilling was made to enlist the aid of volunteer Sandra Vahl to schedule servers for the coffee fellowship. Guild members will be responsible for the 1st and 3rd Sundays each month and other groups from Zion will take the 2nd and 4th Sundays. An amendment to review this schedule in 6 months was made by Cynthia. The motion was passed by show of hands in favor. The monies received from the free will offering from coffee fellowship may be given to a cause the servers wish to support and will be posted by the offering basket. There will be also a sign-up chart on the information table.

Circles chairmen were given a new list of Zion members to use for calling for help serving and donating food for funerals and coffee fellowship. Guild Collection Items continue. They are postage stamps, Campbell soup labels, box tops for education, soap, computer ink cartridges, prescription pill bottles with labels removed.

New Business: Day of Prayer will be at Zion, Manning on Friday, March 3 at 9:00 a.m. Refreshments offered at registration. Information for the National Convention is available. Contact President Buhr. Plaza Bingo is February 24—Monica Christensen, ch, Becki Ehlers, Cynthia Genzen, and Laurene Meeves. Next Guild Meeting, March 8th, hostesses Barb Anderson and Bev Grundmeier.

Audrey Roe, Secretary pro tem

Preschool Praises February 2017

February was full of love and fun! Not only did we talk about the love that we have for our families and neighbors, but also the love that Jesus has for us.

The first week we learned about groundhogs and the letter "G" as well as number and shadow matching. We practiced writing the letter "G" with paint sealed in a plastic bag. The kids really enjoyed how this felt. We also spoke about Jesus healing the sick woman and bringing Jairus' daughter back to life.

The second week we talked about Valentine's Day and the letter "O". We worked on color and letter recognition as well as how to draw a person. We painted hearts using marbles which the children really had fun with. You can see their paintings on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. We spoke about the Lord's Prayer and how you don't have to use big fancy words to speak to God, just talk to him like you would a loving Father.

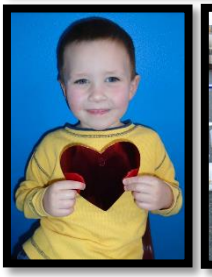
The third week was our Valentine's Day party and the children were so excited! We exchanged Valentine cards and gifts in the boxes that they each decorated. As a present to their parents, the children made key chains with their pictures on one side and their thumb print on the other saying "Thumb-body loves you". They were pretty adorable! The letter "V" for Valentine was our focus and we also decorated a vase with flowers they painted with vegetables that were cut in half and dipped in paint then stamped on to the paper vase. Again we worked on pattern recognition. We enjoyed reading some Bernstein Bears books with moral lessons to them.

The children got to show how hard they had been working when they sang in church on the 19th and did such a wonderful job!

The last week of February we studied the Alphabet and specifically the letter "Q." They learned a new game called "Alphabet Kaboom" to help with letter recognition. Q-tips were used to paint the letter "Q" and we also did coin rubbings to talk about presidents since President's Day was on the 20th. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount taught the children that they are the most important to God and that they don't need to worry, but trust in God to provide for their needs.

Fall Registration was held on the 22nd and was a HUGE success! We have 27 children signed up for preschool next year so far. We are very excited to be working with some of the same children and many new faces next year! God has blessed us with a wonderful program and I am so glad that I am a part of it.

Blessings, Mrs. Gore & Mrs. Nemitz



!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 13, Issue 3, March 2017

New Mission Partners: In Denison last month we welcomed the new Senior Pastor (Joshua Keinath) and his family to Zion (Amber and two sons Josiah, age 3, and Elijah, age 1). Pastor Keinath was installed on December 18 and has been busy working with former Senior Pastor Kurt Kaiser who has stepped down to become Zion's Associate Pastor. Pastor Keinath served for the past 6 years at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Yuma, Arizona. Since 2000 when our Hispanic ministry was started in Denison we have been so blessed by the support of our local Lutheran churches in Denison, Zion and Our Savior. Zion has given us a great fellowship room to carry out our gatherings: our Bible studies, ESL classes and fellowship events. The church has also provided me with an office. Our Savior has also supported our ministry, among other things by hosting our Western Iowa Mission Committee for all these years.

This committee of local pastors and lay folks have supported our Hispanic ministry. We pray for the leadership of Pastor Keinath and this special mission church in a very unique multi-cultural community in western Iowa.

Presentation of the Lord: Another annual Epiphany tradition is the celebration of the Lord Jesus, 40 days after His birth. Last month, we celebrated the Epiphany of the Lord with a "Rosca" cake. This special cake is traditionally baked with small plastic babies in the cake. Those who receive the babies in their piece of cake win the "honor" of bringing tamales for the celebration of the Presentation of the Lord. I use this historic festival of the Christian church to bring the children of the church to the altar to present them to the Lord as we remember their baptism and to pray for them. Following the service, we traditionally eat tamales and a Mexican corn based hot drink, "champurrado."

Let the Children Come to Me: On the Sunday of the Presentation of the Lord we celebrated our children. As Baby Jesus was brought to the Temple in Jerusalem to be given to the Lord, we invited our families to bring their children to church for this special service. Heber and his sister Jessica are our weekly acolytes. They joined the other children and youth present at the altar for a special remembrance of their Baptism and a prayer of blessing. Our children are an important part of our ministry. We work with Zion Lutheran School to recruit Hispanic children and we have Sunday school and Thursday evening children's classes. My wife Paula works very hard to teach these classes. Our goals for 2017 are to begin a sports program for children, youth and adults to exercise and fellowship together. We are blessed to have a wonderful gym at Zion and we hope to take advantage of it to bring our families together.

Please Pray: + For the blessing of being able to lead a weekly service at Trinity, Manilla. We pray for their vacancy. + For the Grace Hispanic church in Storm Lake as they continue the process of calling a bilingual pastor. + For Rosa in Storm Lake and Dario in Denison as they study for adult membership. + For the blessings of the Epiphany season and plans for the Lenten season. + For our nation that God would unite and unify all our people. + In thanksgiving for the mission hearts of the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who support the Lord's work among Hispanic immigrants in Denison and in our other two missions in Sioux City and Des Moines.

***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

China Lutheran Seminary
Our Missionary in Taiwan
Dr. Stephen Oliver

中華信義神學院
China Lutheran Seminary

The Olivers: Isaac (9), Ginny (5), Maggie, Gary (7), Stephen.

Highlights of 2016

+Evangelism Fellowship (January)
+Luther's Discovery Lecture (February)
+Commissioned Missionary (March)
+ Scripture Alone Seminar (April)
+Dad Hsieh Baptized (May)
+Dad Oliver's 80th (June)
+Short Furlough (July)
+Cambodia Galatians (August)
+Singapore Schools (September)
+Singapore Reformation (October)
+7 Seminaries Meeting (November)
+Campus Outreach (December)

The highlight of our 2016 was the baptism of Maggie's Father on May 14! So many of you have been praying for him. When we got married 10 years ago, Maggie was the only Christian in the extended Taiwan family of over 50 relatives. Dad Hsieh is the senior member and his baptism is the culmination of many years of prayer and witness. Glory to God! May the light of his witness shine upon the whole extended family!! As I write this in the hospital, Dad Hsieh has already been intubated in ICU for 11 days from pneumonia (fighting lung cancer for 2+ years). Continue in prayer for him and the whole family as more have already come to faith!

SERVING THE LORD IN

PANAMA

NEWS FROM THE GAUTHIER FAMILY

Jan./Feb. 2017
Vol. 2 Issue I

A person uses the Spanish expression *en camino* when he or she is 'on the way.' Interestingly, this expression, as it is used, offers no timetable for arrival. The person using it might arrive in five minutes, in forty-five minutes, or in two hours. The last year of our lives could be summed up by the expression '*en camino*.' I began serving as an LCMS missionary on January 1, 2016. We then spent the next 389 days *en camino* before arriving in Panama on January 24, 2017.

Over the last 389 days we were filled with anticipation to get started, albeit a bit anxious about raising all of our support. Throughout the months of travel and network building we were grateful for hospitality and love shown to us, but also exhausted waking up in a new city every few days. When we were funded, but told to wait until the end of the summer to deploy we were sad and in November when we learned we would have to wait until the end of January to go to Panama we were disheartened. However, when we finally set foot in Panama we were overjoyed, relieved, and filled with excitement. We are no longer *en camino*. We are here!

This year has provided me the opportunity to think about the Christian life as one that is *en camino*. In a sense, baptism sets us en camino, that is, on the way. The forgiveness of sins, adoption, and the promise of eternity are given and Christians holds these precious gifts while they are on the way in life, ever looking forward to the New Heavens and New Earth. What was the big difference between our year as a missionary family en camino and the Christian life en camino? The little word "if." A missionary family en camino can only go "if... they have the funds, the field is ready, etc." Christians en camino do not think in terms of "if" but on what has already been done for them by Christ in their baptisms.

Pastor Gauthier's installation

Though we are en camino as the baptized, we hold for certain the promises given to us in God's Word and Sacraments because He has spoken them. So we go en camino and in full confidence. To God be the glory!

Update on the latest family transition

After returning to the US on January 6th to do some congregational visits, take care of some medical appointments, and send off our container of books and household goods, we departed from Fort Lauderdale Intl. Airport on January 24. We arrived in Panama City that evening where Edilberto Mendez, director of Cristo Por Todas Las Naciones (Lutheran Hour Ministry), picked us up and took us to our hotel. We spent the next day getting the essentials (some food and sim cards for our cell phones) before moving into our apartment on January 26th. We have been slowly making it a home as we await the delivery of our container. Our home is a high rise apartment building in the city of Clayton. Clayton is one of the canal zone cities that used to be part of a US military base. We enjoy the small-town feel of Clayton as well as all the green space for us to enjoy.

On Sunday, January 29, Brian was installed as missionary pastor at El Redentor Lutheran Church in Balboa. Over the next few weeks he will be visiting the various congregations, getting to know their members, and preparing to begin various theological education activities in March. Ezra has transitioned seamlessly. He loves playing outside and making new friends here in our new home. After 389 days, we are finally in Panama!

VBS Best Practices

Free Workshop!

Rhonda Mohr
Education, Youth, & Family Life
rhonda@iowadistrictwest.org
515-576-7666 (office)
515-573-0010 (cell)

Who: **VBS directors; those with a heart for sharing the Gospel with children; All interested in planning VBS**

When: **Saturday, April 8, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

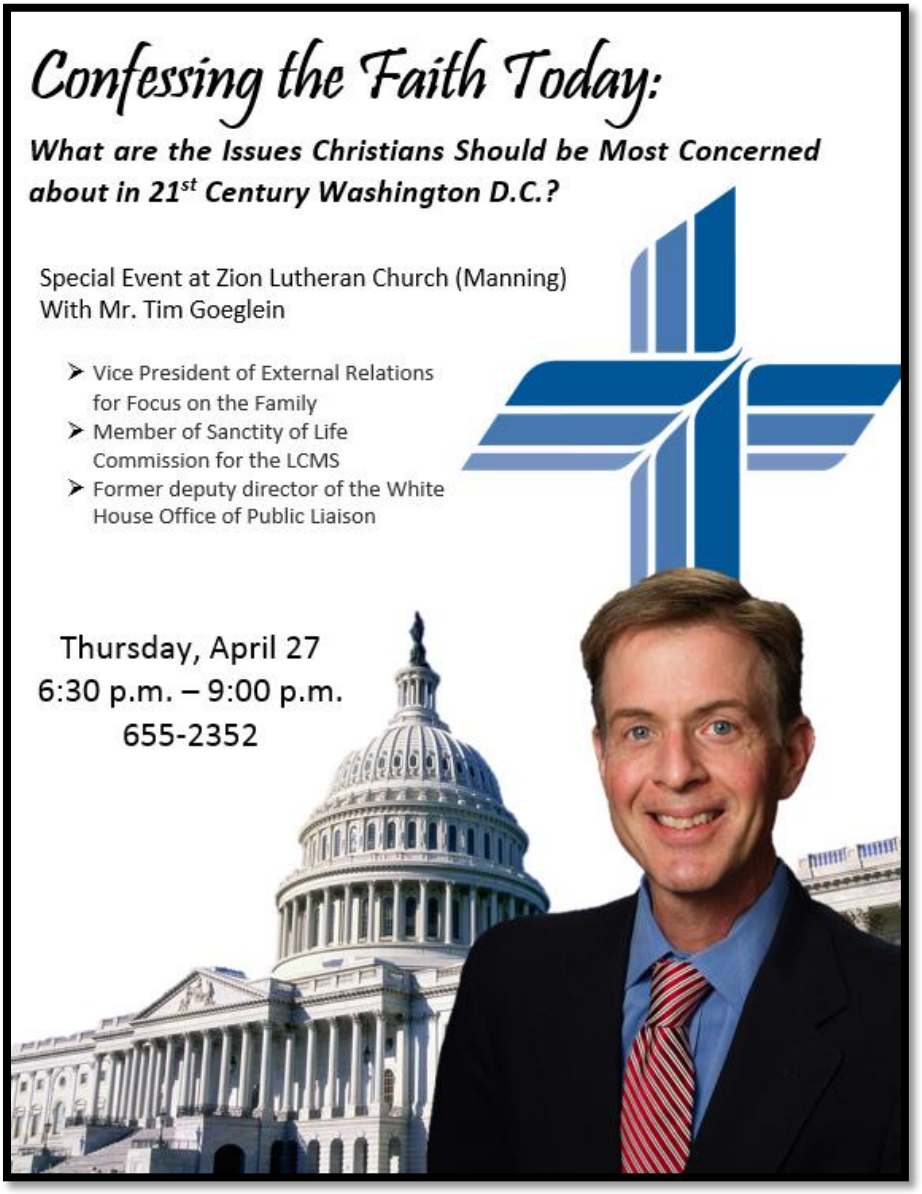
Where: **Zion Lutheran, Manning (1204 Center St., 51455)**

What: **You'll hear ideas on how to work as a team, working within a budget, communication, follow up, recruiting and training volunteers, decorations, safety, and more!**

Register: **Email Sue Light (sue.light@idwlcms.org) by March 31. Include your church name, city, and names of those attending**

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANNING, IOWA
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redeeming Love

IOWA DISTRICT WEST



Tim Goeglein champions God's role in the public square. His years of public service and private initiative have been devoted to faith, freedom, and family.

Tim is the Senior Advisor to the President and Vice President for External Relations at Focus on the Family in Washington. He served in high-level government posts for the past two decades. He worked as Special Assistant to President George W. Bush, where he was the Deputy Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison from 2001 to 2008. He was the President's principal outreach contact for conservatives, think tanks, veterans' groups, faith-based groups, and some of America's leading cultural organizations. He was a member of the President's original 2000 campaign and White House staff, serving for nearly 8 years.

March Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion

Birthdays

1. LaVern Bald
2. Jennifer Behrens
3. Lori Genzen
4. Katelyn Crawford
   Marion Ream
6. Camden Alexander
   Josiah Conner
   Matthew Gore
   Paige Hinners
7. Larry Lesle
   Errol Wegner
8. John Anderson
   Lenus Borkowski
   Beverly Bruhn
9. Lynna Miller
   Craig Musfeldt
10. Stan Baack
    Randahl Peters
11. Cynthia Grau
    Curtis Grimm
    Jeff Hargens
12. Floyd Forman
13. Shannon Walters
14. Justice Cornelius
15. Dean Grau
    Tyler Saunders
16. Julie Lamp
    Chad Morrow
    Kelly Nissen
17. Nancy Grimm
    Dave Grundmeier
    Katherine Vogel
18. Lyle Bald
19. Anna Belle Wegner
20. Barbara Grove
    Cynthia Karsten
    Virgene Kroeger
    Abby Lapel
    Chloe Otto
    Ella Stammer

21. Dustin Petersen
    Russell Ranniger
23. Robert Nissen
    Linda Vinke
24. Jonathon Asmus
    Travis Borkowski
    Nathanael Conner
    Claire Gore
    Alix Puck
25. Carla Backhaus
    Danielle Hargens
26. Lucas Kluver
27. Noah Gore
    Dwight Gruhn
    Ashley Lage
    Aaron Rutz
    David Tibben
28. Michael Alexander
    Rebecca Conner
    Rachel Stoberl
29. Beth Booth
    Judy Borkowski
    Brenda Ehlers
30. Lacey Hinners
31. Joelle Puck

Anniversaries

4. Thomas & Susie Ulrickson
8. William & Shona Weitl
29. Chad & Kelli Morrow
    Kenneth & Joelle Puck
30. Scott & Terri Rosener
31. Lorrell & Judy Borkowski

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

Official Acts

Funeral:
Kenneth Grage, died January 31, 2017; Funeral February 3, 2017 (Ohde Funeral Home); Pastor Jonathan Conner, Trinity Lutheran Church, Manilla

In Our Prayers

Walt Noelck, Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Arlene Mohr, Jim Deevers, Joy Umland, Gabriel Albers (Pastor and Rebecca's nephew), Eric Lage, Justeen Schwieso, Dorothy Larsen, Athena Bess, Delores Kuhn, Susan Lamb, Ken Knudson, Duane Otto