



Social Media & Gaming's Intentional Elimination of Stopping Cues and Our Call to Be the Stop

The average child, according to data shared by ScreenStrong,¹ spends over 52 hours a week in front of electronic media. Some of it is required for school,² but a disturbingly large percentage of this screen time is spent in front of social media and/or digital games.

Should this concern us? Yes!

Take a few moments and read the paragraphs below from www.screenstrong.com. They give you a glimpse into the brain's development and the ways excessive screen time negatively impacts it.

The brain matures from the back to the front, from less complicated skills to more complicated skills. It takes approximately 25 years for the frontal cortex, the executive/judgment center in the front of the brain, to reach full maturity. Parents need to take control of their child's screen time because the child's judgment and impulse control center

is not fully functioning yet—the child physically cannot self-regulate.

Your child's activities will create the neuronal structure for their future brain. Healthy activities make for well balanced fully connected brains while excessive screen use leads to imbalanced and fragmented brains. Young brains need plenty of movement, touch, attachment to family, varied activities, and exposure to nature for optimal development of neuronal pathways.

Around puberty the brain experiences neuronal pruning—the pathways that are most used will be kept and strengthened, and the ones that are not used will be pruned away in order for the brain to function efficiently. There is only a short window of opportunity for important developmental activities to occur. Screens can get in the way of more important activities in a child's developmental life.

Activities that help develop executive function are found in real life and are generally not found doing screen activities. In fact, screen activity can interrupt executive function skills formation by creating a long-term toxic stress state, isolating your child, and exposing him to trauma and violence. In addition, when a child is left on screens all day there is an opportunity cost. She is missing out on the opportunities for executive function building activities. So, even if the screen content is acceptable—not chronically

¹ ScreenStrong is a nationwide community dedicated to helping parents find "alternative ways to raise children in a screen-dependent world."

² Many careful thinkers, researchers, and teachers are beginning to rethink the role of screens in schools (including laptops and phones in schools). Here are a few reasons: 1) Smartphones, with their never-ending stream of notifications, are a major distraction in class. 2) Kids believe devices (especially small-screened devices like chrome books) exist for entertainment, and

therefore find it difficult to switch gears in the classroom. The dopamine reward is VERY strong and addictive (the promise of something new, of a reward, or of a surprise triggers it) and extended time in front of a screen that offers the possibility of dopamine reward is very hard for kids to resist. 3) The ease of accessing information online diminishes kids' abilities to develop strong memories, i.e. the ability to remember and access important information, even the ability to formulate original thoughts.

stressful or violent—the time taken from healthy brain activities can stunt a child’s development.

In short, excessive screen time changes the brain – and not for the better.³ But how are we and our children duped into spending so much time in front of screens? Social media and digital game designers have eliminated the stopping cues, and as it turns out, we need stopping cues. The human brain needs stopping cues. Without them, we struggle to know when and how to stop.

Books have stopping cues at the end of each chapter. You can choose to stop or to continue, but the stopping cue gives your brain the opportunity to consider the question. Traditional television shows have credits that appear when the episode ends. These credits give you the opportunity to stop watching or to choose to watch another show. Even our bodies come with stopping cues. We know to stop eating when our body signals that it’s getting full. We know to rest when our body tells us it’s getting tired or sick.

If these stopping cues were removed, we would sink into excessive and unhealthy behaviors. If a book had no chapter breaks, we would struggle to put it down (and, thereby, not tend other necessary tasks). If one television show melded seamlessly into the next, we would find it difficult to stop watching. If our body didn’t tell us that we were getting full, we would overeat. And if our body didn’t tell us that we were tired or sick, we would not stop to get the rest our body needs to remain healthy and functional.

But this is precisely what social media and digital/online games have done. Social media is bottomless. You can scroll and scroll and scroll and scroll some more and you will never reach the

bottom. NEVER. And this is greatly distressing to the human brain because it has an innate desire to reach the end, to discover the bottom, to find a good stopping point. And social media never offers that point. This, by the way, is one of the reasons that social media leaves us so unfulfilled. It never offers us closure. It never gives us a feeling of completion. It never allows us to feel like we have finished something. And that is very unsettling to the human brain.

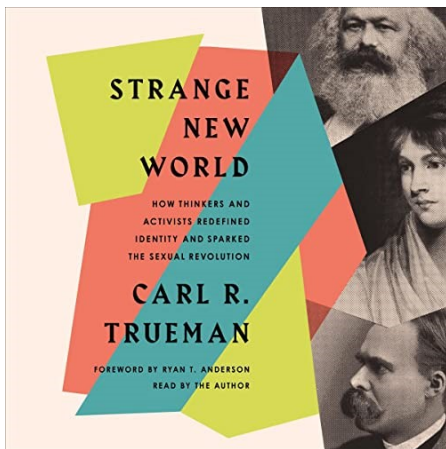
Digital games function similarly. You never win the game. You advance levels, improve your status, and accrue more points, but you are never done. And this is by design, because it keeps us engaged. Further, it maximizes their profit at the expense of minimizing our relationships with the real people around us. Many are the parents who fear they have lost their children into the two-dimensional world of the screen at the expense of the three-dimensional world of the family.

For the sake of our children and families, it’s time to stay stop. Social media and gaming will not do it for us. They have removed all stopping cues. It’s time for us to be the stopping cues because real lives and real families are being lost in the bottomless pit of social media and gaming.

How do we do it? Become a ScreenStrong community. Want to learn how? Talk to me. Check out www.screenstrong.com, be a part of a conversation group (I’ll tell you how), read Zion’s blog for articles and suggestions, read your monthly newsletter for continuing articles, ask me for book recommendations. Social media and digital/online gaming will never say stop. For the sake of real relationships in the three dimensional, world we must be the stop. – Pastor Conner

³ Want to learn more about the science behind screens and brains? Want to talk about what to do about it? Talk to me (Pastor Conner). I’m starting a ScreenStrong

conversation group that, with ScreenStrong’s science-supported curriculum, will equip us to know better and to do better when it comes to screens.



A few years ago, Carl Trueman deciphered the times we find ourselves in through his work, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. Now he has condensed his thoughts from the first book in his new piece, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution*. This readable social and ecclesial commentary is a must-read for anyone who finds “the Western world in which we now live has a profoundly confusing, and often disturbing quality to it.”

Trueman tracks the theme of “expressive individualism” throughout the work of thinkers like Descartes, Marx, Nietzsche, and others. It is expressive individualism which dominates our thinking and how we view the world. It is also how our kids and grandkids are taught how to do life. Trueman writes, “the modern self is one where authenticity is achieved by acting outwardly in accordance with one’s inward feelings.” He goes on, “the increasing social sensitivity to criticizing anyone for their personal lifestyle choice reflects a view of the world where each person is free to perform life in whatever way they choose; and any attempt to express disapproval is therefore a blow not simply against particular ways of behaving but against the right of that person to be whatever they wish to be.”

Now you might be wondering why this is a must read. Here are some reasons:

- Understand how our kids and grandkids view the world
- Appreciate why there is national disunity within the United States
- Understand how we arrived where we are culturally because of past thinkers
- Identify responses the Church can make
- Anticipate the inevitable decline of free speech and freedom of religion in the United States
- Understand why psychology has boomed in our modern world
- Check yourself and how you personally view the world and determine whether or not those views are actually Christian
- Appreciate why we idolize sexuality as a culture

Trueman does a nice job of concisely summarizing where we are as a people in the Western world, the pitfalls, and how we can begin to respond to our cultural moment.

Some copies will be made available at Trinity if you’re interested. – Pastor Johnson

Sunday School has started at Trinity





And this word is the good news that was preached to you. - 1 Peter 1:25

The musical *The Fiddler on the Roof* features a Jewish community, Anatevka, bombarded with bad news. Russian officials forced surrounding Jews from their homes. The first half of the film ends with thugs crashing a wedding. The unwelcome guests destroy the wedding party's dinnerware and decorations. The violence continues as the brutes burn down some of the Jewish community's businesses. The violence is on top of the already difficult circumstances of living in 1905-impoverished-Europe. The film ends when the Jewish community members of Anatevka are evicted with only three days' notice. Throughout the story, one community member literate in Russian reports ongoing struggles for fellow Jews reported in the paper. He is met with criticism for not reading from a paper that prints good news.

Unlike modern movies which just sort of depict pain and suffering for the sake of depicting pain suffering without resolution, *The Fiddler on the Roof* surprisingly ends on a hopeful note. Despite their forced exodus from Anatevka, the main characters take with them their traditions and their God. The Russians may be able to deprive the people of their property, but they cannot touch their faith. Like a fiddler on the roof, the people are able to straddle persecution and hardship. This hope that powers the people past devastating obstacles is nicely expressed when the bad news of the eviction arrives. A man asks the community's rabbi, "Rabbi, we've been waiting for

the Messiah all our lives. Wouldn't now be a good time for him to come?" The elderly rabbi responds, "I guess we'll have to wait someplace else." The rabbi is confident that his people have the resources necessary to wait for the Messiah even though that waiting will have to take place in their new homes. They are equipped with good news in the midst of the bad.

Since December I can't help but to feel like the townspeople of Anatevka heckling the one bearing the bad news from the paper. There was the initial bad news that cancer had redeveloped in my body. This news precipitated the news that I would be undergoing chemotherapy and then a bone marrow transplant. For days I was told my immune system was effectively non-existent. Then came the news that the transplant was unsuccessful. So, more chemo. I have forgotten what it feels like to feel well. On top of the health news, there were deaths at Trinity.

You don't have to look very long to find bad news in the Bible. Abraham feared for his family's safety when he was told about the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Don't get me started on Joseph. The Israelites found themselves as slaves in Egypt due to the Pharaoh's paranoia. Job lost his livelihood and family. Ruth followed Naomi only after Naomi had lost her husband and sons. Assyrians and Babylonians forced the Israelites from their homes. They tossed Daniel into a lion's den, and his friends into a fiery furnace. Esther's people were going to face extermination. I could go on.

But for as much bad news that saturates the pages of the Old Testament (and the New), good news or what we call the *gospel* outshines the bad. This is the case because God intervenes. Isaiah the prophet envisioned good news this way: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who

brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (Isaiah 52:7). The good news is that God reigns. He's not indifferent, aloof, negligent, uncaring, powerless. He reigns.

He reigned for Abraham (Lot was rescued). God reigned in Joseph's life (released from prison, elevated to a place of authority in Egypt, reunited with his family, buried in the Promised Land). The LORD drowned the Egyptians. God reigned for Ruth by providing her a husband and an heir in the genealogy of Jesus. God ended the Babylonian captivity after 70 years (as He promised). Daniel and his posse escaped their unique punishments. And even though God is not mentioned in the account of Esther, He reigned by preserving the Jews from genocide. Good news outshines the bad, or at least that's the trend with this God.

Of course, these moments of good news in the Old Testament anticipate the fuller, final good news of Jesus. Jesus' birth is so significant that a choir of angels celebrate among shepherds. As much as God intervened in the lives of those previously mentioned, Abraham and company faced an ultimate enemy called death. The writer to the Hebrews, however, writes, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood [people of faith in the Old Testament and us], [Jesus] himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Hebrews 2:14-15). The good news is that, to borrow Luther's summary, Jesus has "purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil."

The good news or gospel of Jesus is like a prism through which light shines. There are a variety of colors that stand out. In other words, the gospel is

more dynamic than just the forgiveness of sins. It includes resurrection too. Jacob Preus' stellar work, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel*, highlights metaphors for understanding the fullness of the gospel; images like new birth, light, bread and water, adoption, justification, ransom, inheritance, and so on. Point being, if you try to pin God's work in Jesus down to *just* He died for my sins, you will find yourself overwhelmed by the richness and quantity of God's good news because the "cup overflows."

This overwhelming nature of the gospel provides us with the resources to straddle disappointments and even evil in this life. Bad news would like to convince you that it has the final say. There are days where it feels like living with an incurable disease has the best of me. But the good news is that which is incurable in the here and now will one day have to give an account to the Great Physician. The good news is that Jesus has "partook of the same things" as me; He's not aloof. He is keenly aware of that which I'm experiencing; He will deal with it (in His timing). And whether I have a disease or not, I will have to face, and you will too I might add, death. Jesus will raise me, or as Hebrews put it, "deliver" me (you too, or at least He can if you desire Him to). Every ounce of bad news now is met with a one-hundred pounds of good news in the future.

You have the resources to slosh through bad news. The good news does not pollyanna-ize the bad, like what you're facing is unreal or it should be brushed off. Brushing off the bad news we face in this world will turn you into a hard, unsympathetic person, but that's probably for another newsletter article. But the gospel – all that Jesus has accomplished like dying, rising, ascending, and returning (still pending) – equips you to hope in hardships and march through the mania that fills this world. – Pastor Johnson



Deaconess Tiffany hosted her annual Water Wars event for the high schoolers. The kids were able to water slide down one of Manilla's terraces and shoot paint at each other.

Staley's Chicken

TRINITY LUTHERAN - MANILLA
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7 FROM 5-7PM
\$12.50/MEAL
DRIVE THRU & DINE-IN

Comes with
Chicken,
coleslaw,
corn, roll, &
brownie



Trinity's Priscilla Guild and Weavers will host their 2nd Staley's Chicken Dinner on Friday, October 7 from 5-7pm. We will have drive-thru and dine-in options. Meals are \$12.50 and include chicken, coleslaw, corn, roll, and a brownie.



Glorified Dirt Creatures

Image from:

*You have made him a little lower than the
heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.*

– Psalm 8:5

In the above passage David reflects on the esteemed status of man in God's creation. And, to put it bluntly, it's startling, especially given our humble origin out of the dirt! In the verses immediately previous he considers the heavens:

When I look at your heavens, the work of your
fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in
place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?

- Psalm 8:3-4

Man, the son of man – literally, *the son of adam*,⁴ the dirt creature ("The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground..." - Genesis 2:7) – when he stares at the luminaries in the sky, he is overcome by his smallness, even his seeming insignificance. Surely we have all had this experience. And the more we learn about the immensity of space and the majesty of the luminous bodies that race through it, the more intense this experience becomes. We are small indeed.

But David is not simply humbled because he stands in awe of the flaming gas balls in the heavens that we call stars; he's humbled because these luminous stars are symbols to him

of the luminous beings of God's heavenly divine council.

But few of us have given much thought to the divine council. Before returning, then, to the symbolic function of the stars, let's first marvel over the majesty of God's divine council to which these stars point. Consider the words of the psalmist:

Let the heavens praise your wonders, O
LORD,
your faithfulness in the **assembly of the holy ones!**
For **who in the skies** can be compared to the
LORD?
Who among the **heavenly beings** is like the
LORD,
a God greatly to be feared in **the council of the holy ones**,
and awesome above **all who are around him?** Psalms 89:5-7

We may be accustomed to thinking in terms of *angels* and *demons*, but Scripture has a far more nuanced, expansive, and fascinating understanding of spiritual beings. The above psalm speaks of *the assembly of the holy ones*, of sapient beings in the skies (it asks about "who in the skies" not *what*), of *heavenly beings*, of *the council of the holy ones*, and the conscious beings who surround Yahweh. In short, Yahweh is not alone in Heaven.

Psalm 82 adds to the picture:

God has taken his place in the **divine council**;
in the **midst of the gods** he holds judgment...
- Psalm 82:1

⁴ The Hebrew word for *man* is *adam*. So, our English Bibles have not translated the Hebrew word for man;

they have transliterated it. So, they merely present the Hebrew word (אָדָם) in English letters (ADAM).

Here we learn of a *divine council*, of *gods* who surround Yahweh.⁵

Psalm 29 speaks of heavenly beings / sons of God,

Ascribe to the LORD, O **heavenly beings**

[literally “sons of God”],

ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

- Psalm 29:1

In the book of 1 Kings, the prophet Micaiah declares, “I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and **all the host of heaven** standing beside him on his right hand and on his left...” (1 Kings 22:19). He goes on to describe God speaking and interacting with these heavenly hosts, these spiritual beings, who surround Him.

In text after text we see these spiritual beings surrounding God, interacting with Him, and making decisions with Him (see also Job 38:4-5, 7; Jeremiah 23:18, 21-22; Job 1:6-7). Dr. Michael Heiser, a Biblical scholar who has written extensively on the divine council, explains what it means:

When all of these texts are read together, a fairly clear picture emerges. God is consistently depicted on his heavenly throne, surrounded by his staff team who participate in discussing and then carrying out God’s plans. The divine throne room is the place from which Yahweh governs the world with his heavenly council, the place where ‘Yahweh’s decrees directing the human community and the divine world are set forth and through whom they are communicated or

enacted (*Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, 163).

What do the sun, moon, and stars have to do with these heavenly beings? More than you might imagine. When we look up at the heavens, we see flaming gas balls (stars) and racing rock balls (planets and meteors). When God’s ancient people looked into the heavens they saw this and much more. Consider carefully the way Scripture speaks:

And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be **for signs** and for seasons, and for days and years...

- Genesis 1:14

And God made the two great lights—the greater light to **rule the day** and the lesser light to **rule the night**—and the stars.

- Genesis 1:16

The bold words are significant. The lights in the sky do more than mark the seasons, they are signs that point to a greater reality. And the “rule” they have been assigned provides a clue as to what that reality is. Consider the way Scripture speaks of man:

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- Genesis 1:28

⁵ It’s important to understand that these little *g* “gods” are real spiritual beings, but they are created. Deuteronomy 10 says, “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God (10:17). So, Yahweh is the God of gods. He reigns above all His created gods/spiritual beings. Scripture, then, details various rebellions of some of

these gods in Genesis (see Genesis 3, 6, and 11 – Deuteronomy 32:8-9 and Psalm 82 expand on Genesis 11 to add the spiritual dimension). It’s no wonder Yahweh commands Israel in the Ten Commandments to have “no other gods.” They were not to worship these created, but rebellious, spiritual beings/gods.

Man is given dominion over the earth. The sun, moon, and stars, which are also symbolic of a greater reality (an unseen reality), rule over the heavens. There are parallel rules in play here. Before we spell out what this means, though, let's first consider two more passages in Scripture. Psalm 148 and Job 38 connect the dots for us.

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
Praise him, **all his angels**;
praise him, **all his hosts**!
Praise him, **sun and moon**,
praise him, **all you shining stars**!
- Psalm 148:1-3

And God, speaking to Job, asks,

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone,
when the **morning stars sang together**
and all the **sons of God shouted for joy**?
- Job 38:4-7

Pay attention to the bold words. The parallel thought lines of the Hebrew poetry connect them. Scripture is showing us to what greater reality the starry hosts point: the divine council of God! To make the connection more explicit, the stars in the sky point to the unseen realm of God, to the divine council of exalted spiritual beings/gods who God has created to govern with delegated authority.

They stand as luminous symbols of the luminous beings Scripture calls angels, hosts, gods, heavenly beings, sons of God, and the council of God.

Now return to David's awe-inspired words in Psalm 8. He stands looking up at the starry-wondered sky and his mind swirls with thoughts of the exalted spiritual beings who surround Yahweh whom the stars symbolize. *Who is man? Why have you so highly honored such lowly dirt creatures, making us but a little lower than your exalted heavenly spiritual beings and giving us such an exalted status as rulers over your earth?* These are magnificently big and humbling questions!

But let us tease out an implication that we may have missed in our starry-eyed wonder. We quote a reflective Biblical scholar at length:

The human is both a consequence of Yahweh's decision in and to the council and a reflection of the divine world as it is embodied in the heavenly assembly. The *ben 'adam* ["son of man; human one"]⁶ is like the *ben 'elim* [son of God; divine one"], a notion expressed explicitly ... in Psalm 8...

The creation of the human creature is the establishment of a representative from the divine world to rule the created order. The image of the divine ones is placed on earth to embody and represent the divine ones in subduing, ruling, and governing the earth. The creation of male and female provides for the

⁶ *ben 'adam* is Hebrew for "son of man," a phrase David uses to describe mankind in Psalm 8. *ben 'elim* is

Hebrew for *son of God*, which is often translated *heavenly beings*. Psalm 8 uses a variation of this idea.

sustaining of that rule in the perpetuation of the creation.⁷

Process what you read. *The image of the divine ones is placed on earth...* This is talking about us! It harkens back to the creation narrative. God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), speaking to His divine council says, “Let *us* make man in our image, after *our* likeness” (Genesis 1:26). It's important to note as the creation narrative continues that it is God and God alone who actually creates, but man, the dirt creature, is created in the image of God *and* of His divine council!

Further, we've been given a parallel rule/dominion to the divine council. The divine council has been granted authority by God to rule the heavens (a reality symbolized by the sun, moon, and stars) and man has been granted authority to have dominion over the earth. As Bible scholar Michael Heiser writes, “Humans and intelligent spirit beings are representatives of God in their respective domains.”⁸

And this is what has mystified David in Psalm 8. Man, the dirt creature, has been highly honored by God with a dominion parallel to the luminous spiritual beings in the heavens! And, without taking us too far afield from the focus of this article, the great hope and promise of Scripture is for these two parallel dominions to be reunited (as they were in Eden) in the Kingdom of God. And, surprise of surprises, for the dirt creature – man – to reign over it all with Jesus!

Michael Heiser writes again,

Angels will actually be in a subservient status to glorified believers in the eschaton [the age to come]. The writer of Hebrews notes, ‘it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come,’ a thought that is to be framed by Paul’s exhortation declaring that believers will ‘judge angels’ (1 Cor 6:3).⁹

In short, Scripture is emphatic that man – the dirt creature – will reign with Jesus over the entire renewed creation and over these spiritual beings. Maybe now you can see why David marveled! What God has in store for His redeemed is astonishing! As Scripture notes, though, we’re not there yet. The author of Hebrews writes,

At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

- Hebrews 2:8-9

So we have God’s promise of reigning with Him and God assures us that that promise will come to fruition in His Son Jesus who was made temporarily lower than the angels (like the dirt creature, man), but who has been exalted far above them in His resurrection and glorification, a reality we will share when Jesus returns and establishes the fullness of His kingdom in the renewal of all things. It’s truly astonishing and thrilling, so great are God’s promises for us! It’s no wonder David begins and ends his psalm, “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” – Pastor Conner

⁷ Miller, *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology*, quoted in Michael Heiser, *Angels: What the Bible Really Say about God’s Heavenly Hosts*, 31.

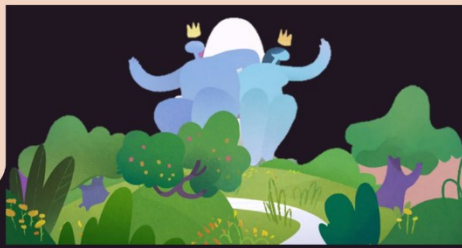
⁸ Michael Heiser, *Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God’s Heavenly Hosts*, 30.

⁹ Michael Heiser, *Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God’s Heavenly Hosts*, 131.



Seen and Unseen: The Bible's Two Realms and the Beings Who Inhabit Them

A Zion Bible Study: Beginning Sunday, Sept. 11 after
worship



BIBLE
PROJECT

Images from:

RALLY DAY

Sept. 11

Bells before worship
Teachers installed
Sunday School begins!

LWML Sunday

Celebrate and
support the mission!

Sunday, October 2
*Bring your loose change
for our noisy offering!*



September 2022: Fellowship Club Update

The Zion Fellowship Club will meet **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th at 7:00 p.m.** (Please note the time change from our typical afternoon meeting time.) Special guests will be Mike and Bridgett Gore. In recent months, we have noticed an additional family member seated with the Gore family in worship. Their son, Robbie, was adopted into the Gore family. Mike and Bridget will share their adoption journey with the Fellowship Club. Friends and guests are always welcome!!!



Recently Fellowship Club members transported the clothing donations to the Orphan Grain Train warehouse in Ida Grove. Thank you for the donations which will continue to bless those in need around the world. Orphan Grain Train continues to respond to the needs of refugees affected by conflict in the Ukraine. There will be additional opportunities to share clothing donations in the upcoming months.

How much does Orphan Grain Train give? Here's their 2021-2022 summary:

- ❖ 257 full shipments (40 or 53 ft. containers) of donated relief supplies and food were shipped within the United States and internationally.
- ❖ 158 – 53ft. semi-loads were distributed to domestic locations.
- ❖ 99 – 40 ft. shipping containers went to 24 different countries overseas.
- ❖ More than \$35.3 million worth of donated humanitarian aid, food and disaster relief assistance was distributed.
- ❖ Total of 121,773.70 volunteer hours were given with a value of \$1,095,963.30 if paid \$9/hour.
- ❖ More than 5.9 million Mercy Meals, Kids Against Hunger meals, Manna Packs and Harvest Meals were shipped worldwide.
- ❖ 29 regional OGT locations from California to Connecticut collecting and distributing food and reusable goods worldwide.

And you were a part of it! Thank you!



9.18.22

Mission Door Offering

for Rev. Mark and
Megan Mantey,
serving in Uganda



SEPT



FAMILY &
FRIENDS HAYRIDE

25



4:30-6:30 @ ZION
HOTDOGS, S'MORES, FUN!

Preschool Praises for September

Although we have only had a few days of preschool in August, we have been busy this last month getting prepared! This year we have a total of 26 children. There are 13 in the morning and 13 in the afternoon. We are blessed to have 2 great volunteers, Mrs. B (Marlene Borkowski) in the morning and Mrs. P (Barb Page) in the afternoon. The week before our classes started, we had classroom visits with individual families and ended the week with an Open House for all children and families to enjoy! The children loved coming in to check out the classroom and become familiar before classes began.



The first week is all about getting used to the routine and learning the classroom rules. Children spent time exploring centers, finding their favorite toys, meeting new friends, and learning while having FUN! Some of the favorite centers are the sensory table filled with sand, reading in the loft, and using their imagination in the house center and dramatic play!

We have been learning how to give us 5: legs are crossed, hands are still, ears are listening, eyes are watching, and lips are zipped when coming to circle time. Of course we don't always stay quiet, we get up and SING & DANCE! Songs we have been singing a lot of include 10 Little Fishies and Jesus Loves Me!

During the first week of school we named our classroom fish. The winning name was Bubbles! We learned the song 10 Little Fishies, sponge painted fish, and even enjoyed a bubble machine outside! The kids really enjoy watching Bubbles swim around by Miss Amy's desk!

In addition to learning classroom rules and crafting, we have been learning about Jesus and how he loves all of us! We read from our Children's Bible and heard the story of Jesus and the Children. We got to visit Pastor Conner this week for Chapel and sang Jesus Loves Me with him as well! The kids are excited to spend time with him each week at Chapel.

We will be practicing more songs to sing at our upcoming Pancake Breakfast on October 16th. Mark your calendars! We do still have an Amazon Wish list if anyone is wanting to donate to our classroom. Thank you in advance for your help.

Don't prefer to purchase items through Amazon? Give from the list below!

- School glue
- Hand soap
- Post it notes
- Plastic spoons
- Paper plates/ individual serving containers (for example: nacho chip trays or paper baskets)
- Stickers any and every kind
- Clorox anywhere spray.



Giving Opportunity!



You make it possible for us to share Jesus with every one of these children! Thank you!



Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

Life: failures, bad decisions, coming up short. And all around us we see images of people thriving, looking like they got it all figured out. So, we find ourselves stuck in a game of comparisons, judging our everyday, messy lives against other people's glamour lives. It's an understandable behavior because we naturally compare ourselves to others. It is how we develop an understanding of who we are and what we are good at and not so good at. When, however, we undermine our abilities by looking at everyone else's achievements, it can start to affect our mental health.



As we start to intentionally appreciate ourselves (especially as we acknowledge our esteemed status as a beloved child of God and inheritor of His Kingdom!) and step out of the shadows of comparison, it can be helpful to understand the difference between self-acceptance and self-comparison.

Self-care is the type of appreciation for your life that grows from taking care of your well-being, appreciating who God has made you, and what He has in store for you. And, it means establishing healthy boundaries, so that, for example, if someone asks you to go shopping and you do not have the energy, declining the offer is okay. You don't need to feel guilty because you are taking care of yourself.

Self-acceptance is grace applied to the self. By demonstrating self-acceptance, we give ourselves permission to be human and to fail. So, when you accidentally forget something that you promised to do for someone, instead of beating yourself up, you remind yourself that you made a very human mistake and then you work to remember next time. Self-acceptance means accepting our limitations and weaknesses rather than heaping scorn on ourselves when we fail, forget, or falter.

The next time you find yourself struggling to accept your limitations, take the practices below into consideration and notice how it feels to do things a little differently:

- Recognize the things you do well – nothing is too big or too small; make a list.
- Create your own truthful affirming statements – the way we speak to ourselves holds great power.
- Incorporate a growth mindset – Instead of saying, "I'm just not good at this," say "I'm not good at this YET."
- Focus on your own habits – notice the areas that you are comparing yourself to others and develop habits to change or improve that area of your life.
- Confess the truth of your identity in Christ (memorize hymn 594, "God's Own Child I Gladly Say It").

Want to talk? Give Pastor Conner a call and he will help point you in the right direction.

Janet Brus, RN
Psychiatric Medical Care / Manning Regional Healthcare Center
Program Director – Senior Life Solutions





中華信義神學院
China Lutheran Seminary



Maggie, Stephen, Isaac,
Ginny, Gary

Update 2022

It's here: LCEF Mobile Banking!

Would you like to check your LCEF balance or make a transfer on the run? Now you can! With LCEF's Mobile Banking App you can even make remote deposits. It's so easy to use. LCEF Mobile is currently available to individual investors in LCEF who are enrolled in LCEF MyAccount. If you are not already enrolled in LCEF MyAccount, go to <https://lcef.org/log-in/> and click on "Enroll Now". Once you are enrolled in MyAccount, sign up for LCEFMobile. It's free! You can download the app from the app store on Apple products or download the app on Android devices. You may use the app on your phone or tablet. Keeping it simple, you will use the same password that you use for MyAccount. And you can authorize Touch ID for LCEF Mobile to provide fast, secure access to your LCEF account information. Bill pay is available if it's set up on MyAccount. And you can easily make internal transfers of \$10,000 or less between your LCEF demand accounts. For more information, contact Carole White at 515-240-2229 or carole.white@lcef.org or call an LCEF Customer Relations Specialist at 800-843-5233.

Gary and I went back to the US for a short period of home service this summer, including Mission Central, being speaker at the Iowa West LWML convention, a visit to some churches and my parents' home. My parents, Gary and I all got Covid but with light symptoms, including my 86-year-old father who has a heart condition (had some of the lightest symptoms), but all are recovered, healthy and strong now.

Pray for me as the mission has asked me to finish my teaching here at the end of this coming school year, leave China Lutheran Seminary and move two hours south to Chiayi into "The Luther Building" which is our Asia mission headquarters building, to support the plans for a new seminary there. We will make our decision with God's help within the next two weeks. – Professor Oliver

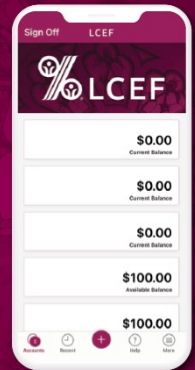
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The LCEF Mobile App:

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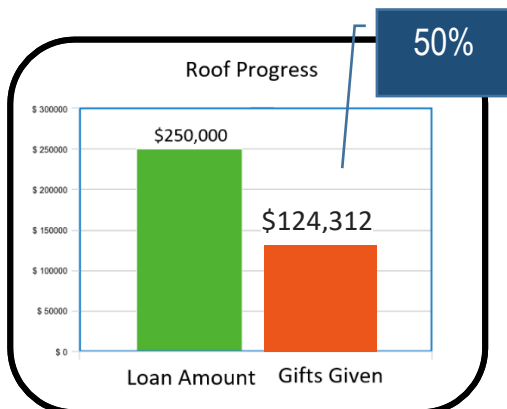
Perpetuating Your Gift through Zion's Endowments



Because of the foresight and planning of Zion leaders and the generous gifts of Zion supporters, Zion is blessed with three ministry-supporting and mission-expanding endowments. Our traditional endowment supports capital improvement projects (like our roof). Our newer legacy endowment supports our budgetary needs. And our Zion Preschool Legacy Endowment supports our preschool's budgetary needs. These endowments enable us both to meet today's needs and to plan for tomorrow's initiatives. Thank you for remembering these endowments in your giving and estate planning. The seed you plant today will produce fruit in the future. Below you will see the disbursements we received in 2022:

- The Zion Endowment: \$12,179 (helps fund our roof payments)
- The Zion Legacy Endowment: \$1,371 (supports Zion's budgetary needs, i.e. concreting 12th St., replacing windows in the parsonage)
- Preschool Legacy Endowment: \$7,070 (Preschool budgetary needs)

If you would like to learn more about these endowments, visit with Pastor Conner, Drew Puck, or Jeff Hargens.



Please consider making a special gift to the roof or to other ongoing and upcoming mission and ministry expenses at Zion. Ask in the office for a detailed list of giving opportunities. Thank you for your partnership!



- Uncomfortable with the way screens are affecting your children and your family?
- Unsure about social media?
- Concerned about gaming?
- Ready to talk?
- Join a ScreenStrong conversation group as we study the science of brains & screens, explore effective strategies for managing screens, and challenge each other to become a ScreenStrong community.

Contact Pastor Conner
 Call: 655-2352
 Email: connerjonathanidw@gmail.com
 Learn more: www.screenstrong.com



If you've talked to me much (or listened to me teach/preach), you know that I am deeply concerned about the impact excessive screen time is having on us as individuals, as families, as schools, as communities, and even as a church. In her data-drenched book *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*, Jean Twenge marshals extensive research on the effect of excessive screen time on young people as she writes: "There's not a single exception: all screen activities are linked to less happiness, and all nonscreen activities are linked to more happiness... If you were going to give advice for a happy life based on this [data], it would be straightforward: put down the phone, turn off the computer or iPad, and do something – anything – that doesn't involve a screen" (78).

That's why I'm starting a ScreenStrong Conversation group. Doing nothing will accomplish nothing. We need data and a game plan and that's the point of starting this group. If you're interested, talk to me. I'm finalizing meeting details and would love to hear what works for you. – Pastor Conner

Priscilla Guild Summary:

DATE: 8/16/2022

The meeting was called to order by President Cathie Segebart in the name of the Triune God. We recited the LWML Pledge. Roll call was taken with 8 members and Pastor Johnson present. The minutes from the previous meeting were read and approved as corrected. The treasurer's report was given showing the available balance is \$494.32. The replacement fund balance is \$1,021.62. Pastor thanked the LWML for helping with the organ repair which cost around \$700.00.



COMMITTEES: On October 1 at the LWML Service we will have a noisy offering. We will also display the quilts that are finished. The LWML is going to help with the offering and pose for a group picture after the service. The Sunday School will start this next Sunday. There is a signup sheet for breakfast on the bulletin board with many slots still open.

CORRESPONDENCE: Cathie Segebart heard from Spencer Owen in reply to her email of July 18. He suggested we sponsor the same student that we have in the past. This student did not have a sponsor yet this year. After discussion Gloria Boeck moved to sponsor this girl right now with funds from the replacement fund and replace those funds after our chicken supper fundraiser with the Weavers. The motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: We need to make an announcement about the bars for the fundraiser. We need UNFROSTED bars, possibly with no nuts. We will check before our next joint meeting on 9/24. Cathie Segebart had a list of the different parts of cleaning the kitchen. Dara and Wendy have agreed to clean the kitchen in stages and give us a bill for their time.

NEW BUSINESS: There being no new business, Bonnie Lorenzen gave a Christian Life devotion from the 1993 Portals of Prayer on "The Golden Years", Deuteronomy 33:29 about Moses who lived 120 years, well into old age, how we should be like Moses in his faith. Bankers, doctors, lawyers and others have much knowledge about this world, but our knowledge of God in our older years is the best knowledge for the foundation of faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: LeeAnn Musfeldt is the hostess for the September 20th meeting. The work committee Chairperson for September is Susan Mahnke and the Co-Chairperson is Carol Lile. The LWML Fall Rally will be served by the Ladies Aid at Zion Lutheran in Denison with registration at 9:00 a.m. and the rally to begin at 9:30 a.m. The Iowa District West Fall Retreat is September 24.

Susan Mahnke, Secretary



Amigos en Cristo

News from **La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:**
Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
Pastor Pedro Lopez, Denison, Iowa

ember 2022

I am so glad to share with all of you that our events for the months of July and August were a success! Our Hispanic Ministries were enriched by means of new relationships with new partners in ministry, new commitments to share about the outreach among our communities, and fundraising monies to continue supporting our families and ministry.

In July, we accomplished our second Rummage Sale. We were able to help our Denison community by selling lots of great stuff at very low prices, meeting lots of prospects for our ministry, and getting to know many of our volunteers and donors.

Our VII National Hispanic Convention in Orlando, Florida was a blessing to the eight of us who were able to go. It was a first for our members from the Denison and Storm Lake Hispanic churches. They loved it and were amazed to meet some of our national and international leaders in our LCMS and partners from around the world and learn from them about the efforts going on in sharing about our Lord Jesus around our Latin American countries and the world. They have so much to share about this blessing!

Thanks to the brothers and sisters from St. Paul in Ida Grove for allowing us to host the taco sale to serve the bicycle riders participating in the RAGBRAI event. We sold around 2,000 tacos! We had so much fun working together with more than 30 volunteers from several churches. We enjoyed having a bilingual worship service with our fellow Christians before the taco sale. We are ready for the next one as RAGBRAI will be celebrating their 50th anniversary next year. Be ready! We may ask your church to host the next taco sale and ask you for volunteers to make it happen.

The money we raised will be used to support the ongoing Hispanic outreach and the needs of our families. Together with your help and support, we continue our mission to bring the message of salvation to our Hispanic brothers and sisters. It is happening and God is opening new opportunities. Bendiciones, Pastor Lopez



After three years of not being able to continue our Camp Okoboji retreat, we were able to go and grow in our faith by sharing God's Word and enjoying the beauty of God's creation with some of our members and friends. On Sunday, August 7, I was privileged to lead the bilingual worship service at the camp. Thanks to Kirk, the staff, and Pastor Ryan Roehrig for helping make this service a great event of praise and glory to our Savior Jesus!

I will be participating in several LWML Zone Rallies this month. I am so excited to be part of these events as I am given the opportunity to share what is happening around our District in regard to our efforts to bring more Hispanics to our churches and prepare new leaders to take the challenge in meeting the spiritual needs of the ever-growing Hispanic community in our state and country! It is happening, my brothers and sisters, and your prayers and support are needed!

Rev. Pedro Lopez, Assistant to the President
Missionary at Large
pedro@iowadistrictwest.org, 571-606-7600 (cell)



Snapshots of Zion



On Wednesday, August 10, nearly 36 ladies gathered for a Ladies Lunch at Zion.



Accura residents and guests joyfully gather for worship on Wednesdays.



On August 18, Zion youth and friends gathered at Trinity in Manila for their annual Water Wars!

On August 17, Zion and Trinity said "Thank you!" to our teachers, staff, and administrators at IKM-Manning with breakfast refreshments



On August 19th, Zion welcomed approximately 60 teachers and principals from the schools of Iowa District West for their teacher in-service day.



Dear Pastor Conner and Zion Members,

On behalf of the teachers of our Lutheran schools in Iowa District West, thank you for being such a great host site for our Iowa District West Teacher In-Service on August 19. The use of the space for fellowship, food, worship, and workshop served our needs so well. Special thanks to Sue Puck for organizing Zion ladies to provide rolls and preparing the fruit and coffee to welcome the teachers as they arrived and Sheryl Zinke for attending to us throughout the day and cleaning up. Pastor Conner, thank you for your assistance with technology and Timothy for playing the organ for our opening time of worship. Zion, you are a great partner in the Gospel. Thanks again and may God bless you abundantly!

Rhonda J. Mohr, Assistant to the President Education Youth and Family Life



Please Note! All times and events are subject to change



**Sunday
Mornings**

Zion Family Bible Class (after worship)



September 15

**Thursday afternoon Communion Service at Zion
(1:30 p.m.)**



September 7

**Confirmation Begins
4:00 p.m.**



September 11

**Rally Sunday at Zion
Teachers installed; Sunday School begins**



September 18

Mission Door Offering at Zion for Manteys



September 25

**Zion Friends & Family Hayride
4:30-6:30 p.m. in Zion's field**



October 16

**Zion Lutheran Preschool Pancake Breakfast (9:00 – Noon)
Worship at Zion at 8:00 a.m.**



On Sunday, August 28, the voters of Zion, by a ten to one margin, approved moving forward in the calling process for a Director of Christian Education. The council will prepare information on the next steps in this process and share it with you soon. If you have any questions, please speak with congregational president, Jeff Hargens, or Pastor Conner.

September Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Angie Miller
2. Collin Brus
Cindy Scheuring (T)
3. Graham England
Bruce Grimm
4. Brock Kusel
Alaina Salter
5. Madelyn Dreher
Sarah Lorenzen
6. Mike Hull
7. Kyle Arp
Taylor Lapel
Timothy Rosener
8. Austin Johnson
Caleb Lahr (T)
Mary Lueth (T)
Jaide Paska
Carlys Stribe
Darlene Vollstedt
9. Katie Cornelius
Brice Shrimpton
Diane Vetter (T)
10. Alison Karsten
11. Ambria Ehlers
Harold Jurgensen (T)
Brandi Wiig
12. Kristie Borkowski
13. Dennis Backhaus
Carol Brus
Allen Stribe
14. Dakota Bradley
Lauren Greving
Erin Renze
15. Dylon Bauer
Will Sanford
16. Diane Lahr (T)
Brooke Long
Rylan Mundt
17. Ben Langel
Kaien Stoeckel
Charlie Tibben
19. Kora Kusel
Sue Soll
20. Marlene Jahn (T)
21. Christian Birks (T)
Daniel Hilsabeck
Alexis Karsten
Wendy Stribe
Daniel Vonnahme
22. Jason Boell (T)
Isla Haubrich (T)
Haley Kuchel
Liv Riesselman
24. Ella Sanford
25. Jennifer Grau
Jack Riesselman
26. Tanner Crawford
Lillian Genzen
Terri Rosener
27. Don Beck
Shaun Grau
Ashley Martin (T)
28. Cassandra Burcham
Susie Ulrickson
29. Michael Lorenzen (T)
30. Karl Albertsen
Jason Ehlers
Judy Irwin (T)

Anniversaries

- 2 Jim & Lori Asmus
Mike & Becky Bruch
- 3 Frank & Gloria Boeck (T)
Bary & Karen Kienast
- 4 Don & Trisha Beck
Jon & Jill Saunders
- 6 Gary & Joyce Schroeder
- 7 Derek & Brenna Hodne
8. Ron & Carol Brus
9. Russ & Beverly Bruhn
- 10 Jason & Lori Ferry (T)
Dan & Chantelle Grove
- 11 Rodney & Deanna Frank
- 14 Scott & Kristine Lingle (T)
- 15 William & Louise Bruhn
- 16 Eugene & Susan Mahnke
- 19 David & Joene Bohlmann
Kevin & Janet Brus
Jeff & Jean Hargens
- 20 Todd & Dawn Ketcham
Alex & Kari Ranniger
Brett :& Kasie Sanford
- 22 Larry & Connie Ahrendsen
- 24 Ben & Beth Booth
Karl & Donna Rutz
- 25 Richard & Sylvia Saunders (T)
- 27 Jesse & Katie Weitl
- 28 Conrad & Juanita Kurth
- 30 Allen & Carlys Stribe

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

Official Acts

Baptism:

Robert Eugene Gore, son of Michael & Bridget Gore; August 7, 2022; Pastor Jonathan Conner

Funerals:

Darlene Dorothy (nee: Meyer) Asmus; Died August 14, 2022; Funeral August 18, 2022; Pastor Jonathan Conner & Pastor Robert Riggert

In Our Prayers

Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Lyle Mundt, Pastor Johnson, Paxton Bierl, Stan Baack, Justeen Schwieso, Nancy Grimm, Jeanne Gruhn, Sherri Steffes, Tawnya Jacobsen (Kristin Backhaus sister), Rhonda Sandison (Laurene Meeves' daughter), Bev Rix, John Bexten (father of Beth Alexander and Amy Blackwell), Kingston Neumann