

WHEN GIANTS FALL

Barry Bonds tested positive for steroids. Martha Stewart was found guilty of insider trading, and she was incarcerated for five months. Sixty-plus women revealed Bill Cosby's sexual indiscretions. Big names fell from grace.

The Church is not immune. Faith leaders with huge followings, who have genuinely served as God's instruments to generate faith and expand Christians' understanding of God's truth, fall too. Sexual assault claims sunk apologist Ravi Zacharias after his death. If you visit our Catholic archdiocese's website, you will find contact information for suspected child abuse. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod began after Germans immigrated to the United States. Upon arrival, it became public that the head bishop sexually abused some of the female colonists.

On top of the boldfaced sin that damages the lives of the victims, there are secondary consequences too when leaders fall. Namely, fraud or dishonesty. The curtain is pulled back to reveal sinners. Christian writers Stanley Hauerwas and Will Willimon write with respect to the Eighth Commandment: "We have been created for friendship with God and with one another. Nothing is more important for friendship than an ability to speak truthfully with one another." When it comes to fallen Christian leaders, the stench of the untruth wafting our way in the wake of scandals sickens admirers' stomachs. These fallen leaders have presented themselves as faithful, but the truth is they are generating a great deal of faithlessness that hurts co-workers, employees, congregants, or even friends. The truthfulness for

which we have been created to demonstrate and speak to one another is shattered. Being duped is no fun.

The question becomes then, how do we respond when giants fall?

One response is to pretend like the indiscretion was no big deal. The response is to have no response, or, by saying nothing you are in fact saying something. Martha Stewart continues to oversee her home goods empire. The distance she fell was pretty short, and the message received was theft and fraud do not matter (they are maybe even acceptable).

Major League Baseball qualified Barry Bonds' homerun record with an asterisk. I suppose the MLB wanted to appreciate that Bonds had in fact genuinely hit homeruns without the aid of steroids during his career. In other words, baseball fans wanted to celebrate a powerful baseball player's record while at the same time qualifying that some of his homeruns were hit under the influence.

ShowTime's "We Need to Talk about Cosby" highlights how many no longer listen to Cosby's comedy albums or watch "The Cosby Show" even though Cosby was once hailed as *America's father*. In other words, the deception happening on the set of Cosby's show along with the rape, stopped his media from being funny. His comedy has ceased to be legitimate, and you set yourself up for scrutiny if you continue to watch or listen to his works.

The Church, for good or for bad, has reacted similarly to scandals. Part of the shock behind Rome's child abuse cases was in part due to the sheer number of incidents that occurred. But there was also shock with how the cases were handled. Archdioceses simply transferred suspected priests to new parishes. The response was there was no response.

All too often, the Christian giants who fall have already published a book or two, not to mention their sermons, podcasts, and online articles. What do you do with all that content? Again, some have argued that you should not toss out the baby with the bathwater. So, in the case of Ravi Zacharias, many have argued that he spoke and wrote legitimate truth. We may need to put an asterisk by his biography on the back cover of his books from now on, but his works remain worthwhile since truth remains truth even though the deliverer of that truth has egg all over his face.

However, some have said an asterisk is not good enough. LifeWay, a major Christian publisher, pulled Pastor Mark Driscoll's books from their stores and website when he faced charges of plagiarism and significant manipulation within his church.¹

I think we can all agree that no response is a bad response. It is a bad response because you have to deny the God-given part of you that protects fellow in-His-image-creations of God; in other words, you become less human by looking the other way. But it also prevents the Church from being a place of truth. Rather than dealing with the sin of sexual abuse, we will ferry priests and pastors to a new base of operation. This not only hinders the victims who suffer alone, who then think they were the reason why the abuse took place in the first place, but it also hinders the perpetrator. Christianity not only has the resources to heal and restore the victim (through the fact that our own God suffered victimhood on the cross), but Christianity can also forgive and restore in some fashion the abuser (through the fact that our own God forgave His abusers while He hung on the cross). All of this cannot happen,

however, if the truth of the abuse gets swept under the rug.

There may be some legitimacy to either taking books off the shelves and refusing to listen to sermons written by those who have fallen or qualifying the fallen's work in some way. However, I doubt any of these responses will create a sense of contentment. Yes, we have worked toward a state of justice by banning books and sermons, but ShowTime's documentary on Bill Cosby does a nice job of expressing the dilemma we face when Christian leaders, clergy, or parents fall. Bill Cosby was a positive revolutionary figure for the African American community. In "The Cosby Show", the Cosby's were affluent, responsible, and educated; they demonstrated a higher way of life for the struggling African American community in the 80's. So, when the victims brought to light Cosby's offenses, was it reassuring for the victims that he was incarcerated? For sure! But it was all bitter sweet. Yes, justice had been served, but the idyllic vision for African Americans created and philanthropized by Cosby evaporated; the dream for better African American representation in media went up in smoke.

When giants fall, the ground shakes and crumbles sending aftershocks into the lives of their victims and followers. Sin, especially sin hiding under the guise of truth and wholesomeness, unleashes hope-crushing damage. Simply put, when the giants fall, it sucks, and it is nearly impossible, on our parts to rebuild the structural damage done in our churches and families on our own.

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So, how should we respond when Christian giants fall on account of scandalous sin?² Whether it is

¹ I would highly recommend the podcast the "Rise and Fall of Mars Hill" if you want to learn more about the Church's response to scandal (plus, it is a compelling podcast through and through).

² While we have focused on pastors, we could also consider the falls of close family members too (e.g. abusive parents).

secular figures or Christian figures, our responses tend to be overly *reactive* in nature.

But Christianity possesses the resources to anticipate giants falling. Rather than being surprised to the point of breaking down, we can proactively anticipate potential falls due to the fact that the Christian leaders we look up to are in fact sinners. The Apostle Paul said it this way: “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world **to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost**” (1 Timothy 1:15). Paul believed doctrinal points concerning Original Sin (i.e. we have inherited the selfish desires of our ancestors along with the punishments). There is also the idea that Christians are *simul justus et peccator*. That is, Christians remain simultaneously justified by Jesus and a sinner.

While our spiritual leader’s fall may inhibit our desire to dive into doctrine, Christian doctrine – the teachings – may bring clarity into the situation.

Our liturgy is also helpful in proactively anticipating leaders’ falls. Weekly we confess that we are poor miserable sinners. So, why is it we are shocked that so-and-so committed a heinous act? Perhaps, we do not believe the words we confess in our worship setting. If we did believe the words, we might feel disappointment at our leaders’ descent, but we can also prevent despair from setting in. Despair would like to convince us that what the leaders declared is no longer valid, true, practical.

Point being, we can be the type of people who are more proactive than reactive.

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As we attempt proactivity concerning our leaders by believing the words of our doctrine, our liturgy, the Holy Apostles, and Scripture (when it comes to the realness of sin, even within those we trust

and respect), we should be drawn more and more to the ultimate giant – Jesus of Nazareth.

You might be wondering, “Didn’t Jesus fall?” He did in a sense. But His fall was no fault of His own; the punishment He faced on the cross was not for His personal sins – because those misdemeanors did not exist. “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Rather than falling from personal evil as some Christians leaders do, Christ fell from heaven and fell into death intentionally. Yet His falling led to His exaltation (see Philippians 2).

Point being, as we see human leaders fall from grace, we are graced by a greater Human Leader who saves and restores when sin presents itself. Those close to us may let us down or even harm us, but Jesus remains constant – the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He will never harm you. He did, however, allow Himself to be harmed in order to make your world right again.

As we watch spiritual giants fall – and more will – we can become soberly proactive in anticipating sin in our leaders rather than being shocked or moved to despair. We can renew our fidelity to the liturgy of the Divine Worship which helps make sense of the sad realities of this life. We can also learn or re-learn the doctrine concerning the sin that is disintegrating all humans (including faith leaders).

Finally, we can, as the hymn goes, welcome Christ as our Leader, Teacher, and Savior. We retreat from our disgraced giants and return to the Ultimate Giant, because this Giant Jesus will never fail us. – Pastor Johnson

God is No Rube: *How Cutting Edge Discoveries in Science are Revealing Life's Exquisite Design and Built-in Adaptive Programming*



Rube Goldberg, the 20th century American inventor, engineer, and cartoonist, is perhaps best known for his whimsical and imaginative contraptions composed of cobbled-together elements that together perform a simple function. In the illustration above, the lifted spoon propels the cracker to the parrot, who in the process of lunging to catch it, tips the cup that dumps its weighted contents into the bucket that is connected to the lighter, which when opened, lights the rocket that cuts the string holding the napkin that then falls to wipe the man's face.

It's an imaginative, but silly contraption. This, however, is precisely the sort of thing evolutionists have predicted we would find in nature as we studied life's systems, organisms, and structures. In fact, evolutionists have made a number of predictions that, if true, should be observable in nature. Dr. Brian Miller, Research Coordinator for the Center for Science and Culture at Discovery Institute and a leading proponent of Intelligent Design³, details three of their main predictions:

Three Main Predictions of Evolutionists

1. **Life is not designed.** As such, scientists have been discouraged from looking for it. In fact, they have essentially been forbidden

from using words like *purpose* or *design* or *goal directed*. Francis Crick, one of the co-discoverers of DNA's double helix structure, famously wrote, "Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved." In other words, biologists must repeat over and over in their minds, "Life is not designed, life is not designed," lest the overwhelming appearance of design make them begin to believe it was actually designed.

Echoing Crick's sentiment, Harvard biologist Richard Lewontin insisted, "materialism is an absolute... we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door." In other words, because they have foundationally (or *presuppositionally*) committed themselves to materialism (that only material explanations are allowable), they must accept evolution as true (they've ruled God out before they've begun their scientific search!). This means life must have evolved by random and unguided processes. Anything that looks designed, therefore, cannot be. Design must be denied. The biologist must deny what his eyes see.⁴

³ I highly recommend his recent presentation, entitled "The Surprising Relevance of Engineering in Biology," at the 2022 Dallas Conference on Science and Faith (available on YouTube). My one caveat is Miller's adherence to a progressive creation over great eons of time. He rightly recognizes the sudden appearance of fully formed organisms in the fossil record (with no

transition forms!), but he is blind to it as evidence for a global flood.

⁴ This is another great thing about being Christian: we don't have to close our eyes to evidence before we begin the scientific endeavor. We are free to follow the evidence where it leads.

2. **Biological systems will be sub-optimal.**

Evolutionists regularly claim that various systems in life are inefficient, ineffective, and clumsy, evidence of the supposed evolutionary baggage accumulated over time. They highlight things like the panda's thumb, the eye's backwards photoreceptors, the number of bones in the ankles and wrists, unexpected nerve pathways, "junk" DNA, and on and on.

They insist that these biological systems don't demonstrate the optimal design we should expect if an intelligent Creator designed them. In other words, they're claiming, "God wouldn't do it that way. Therefore, God didn't do it; evolution did."⁵ Dr. Nathan Lents, the director of the Cell and Molecular Biology Program at John Jay College, bluntly claims, "To suppose that these living things were separately created is to view the creative agent as whimsical, bungling, a mediocre engineer, and unintelligent designer." You read that right. He's calling God (who he rejects) bungling, mediocre, and unintelligent.

3. **Life's systems should not look like human engineering.**

In fact, evolutionists insist that human engineering should be more efficient, more effective, and better organized than nature's, which evolutionists predict will more resemble one of Rube Goldberg's clumsy contraptions. This is precisely what prominent evolutionary biologist Jerry Coyne has claimed: "[Biological systems] embody an absurd, Rube Goldberg-like complexity that makes

no sense as the handiwork of an engineer but makes perfect sense as a product of a long and unguided historical process."

These Predictions Have Been Tested... and Failed

Life is not designed. Biological systems will be sub-optimal. Life's systems should not look like human engineering. These are three of evolutionists' major claims. With the advances in science, these predictions have become testable. And they have been repeatedly failing, because with discovery after discovery, scientists are finding precisely the opposite of what evolutionists have predicted. We don't see inefficient, cobbled-together, sub-optimal, Rube Goldberg systems in nature; we see exquisite, efficient design that far outshines anything humans have designed. We see powerful evidence of a creative Mind who has imposed a top-down, blueprint-like design on systems and organisms.

In the late 90s Dr. Michael Behe, professor at Lehigh University, pioneered work on many of life's irreducibly complex systems, systems that, in order function and survive, must have multiple structures and ordered operations in place at once (see *Darwin's Black Box*, for instance). He famously used the image of a traditional mousetrap to explain the concept. Every piece must be in place simultaneously for it to work (the base, the spring, the hammer, the holding bar, and the catch). Such a mechanism cannot evolve in a step by step way; it's either all or nothing. And these sorts of all or nothing systems exist all throughout nature. Here are just a few: cilium, the light-sensing system in animal eyes, the transport system within the cell, the bacterial flagellum, the

⁵ There is great hubris in this claim. Who are we (with our three pound brains) to tell God how He should have done something?

blood clotting system, ATP synthase, and the cell membrane.

Space prevents exploring each of these. We'll offer only this about the last two items in the list. ATP synthase is a high-tech, micro-molecular, power generator inside the cells of your body that generates the fuel your cells (and you!) need to function and survive. And your cell has thousands of these elegantly designed molecular machines. Your cell membranes are, likewise, remarkable. They identify needed molecules and open specific doors to let them in. They identify waste products and get them out. They maintain the needed pH levels, the proper salinity, the osmotic pressure. They block toxins and invaders. They provide electrical insulation and energy harnessing. And every piece had to be in place or the cell would die – and so would you.

These all-or-nothing systems are everywhere in life. Either every piece is in place simultaneously or it doesn't work. And evolution has no mechanism to get every piece in place simultaneously. And cutting-edge science is discovering that nature not only has these irreducibly complex structures and organisms, but that it has irreducibly complex systems on top of irreducibly complex systems. So the problem for evolutionists is getting more intense as science progresses.

Engineers Come to the Rescue

For too long evolutionists have only been considering one piece of life's larger puzzle at a time. So, they were zeroing in on individual systems or operations and concluding that they were sub-optimal and inefficient, but thanks to a budding relationship between engineers and biologists, many are beginning to see more holistically.

Take, for example, the eye's photoreceptors. Evolutionists have long claimed that, because they faced away from the retina, they were sub-optimal, that they were evidence of an evolutionarily cobbled-together system and not design. But when engineers investigated the system they saw how the backward facing receptors fit in exquisitely with the whole. The receptors constantly shed cones. If they were facing forward, these cones would block vision. Because they face backwards, however, they can be shed and reabsorbed seamlessly and the blood can cool the receptors so they can work efficiently.

These discoveries have become so common that biologists are increasingly being encouraged to assume design in order to make progress in understanding biological systems. Process that! What was once forbidden in biology – considering design – is now being assumed! It's now being seen as the way to advance science!

Darwin had made such an approach anathema; design was to be denied at all cost. It was labeled an impediment to science, something that would get in its way. It turns out, however, that Darwin himself was putting a great impediment in front of scientific advance as he put researches off the trail of design and onto the trail of Rube Goldberg and his sub-optimal, cobbled-together, "bottom-up" systems. In other words, Darwin set science on the hunt for systems that showed no evidence of a pervading Mind imposing order on them from above.

Further – and this is majorly significant – Darwin led scientists to believe that the locus for an organism's change and adaptation came from the environment. You, have, no doubt, heard of *natural selection*. Darwin proposed that nature, with the help of random genetic mutations, selected the fit organisms. This idea that nature drove an organism's adaptation was then

extrapolated (because of the lack of evidence!) to evolution on a macro scale. To put it simply, Darwin suggested that nature favored certain organisms for survival and this produced small variations/adaptations (think of Darwin's finches that demonstrated variations in beak size that were optimized for environmental conditions). Given enough time, these small scale changes supposedly produced large scale changes (turning a pig into a whale, for instance, or turning a dinosaur into a bird – this has become almost standard fare in children's books! The baseless propaganda is aimed at young minds.).

What Science is Showing

Here's what science is showing: Darwin's ideas were wrong. Dead wrong. The locus for an organism's change isn't the environment; it's the organism itself. Researches are finding that organisms come pre-programmed with adaptation instructions, with built-in engineered responses. So life comes equipped with a program that allows it to adapt to its environment. This is truly remarkable!

To appreciate this, consider the self-driving cars beginning to populate streets. They are equipped with hundreds of sensors that enable the car to make decisions based on what those sensors detect in the surrounding environment. This is very similar to what scientists are finding in life (but life does it better!). In organism after organism scientists are finding built-in programs that allow the organism to perform if-then functions: If this scenario presents itself in the environment, adapt this way; if that scenario presents itself, adapt that way.

Go back to Darwin's infamous finches. He claimed that the environment favored certain beak sizes or beak sharpness. So the environment selected the survivors. It turns out Darwin was wrong. The

environment wasn't dictating change. The finches have a built-in program that allows them to alter their beak size/thickness in subsequent generations. So, the finch detects environmental conditions and then adjusts for them in its offspring so that the next generation is well-adapted to the existing environment.

Or, consider blind cave fish. The old story was that a genetic mutation wiped out the fish's eyes and natural selection favored it for survival. New research, though, is showing that the fish came pre-programmed with an if-then program: If this scenario presents itself, then shut down the genes for eyes so that energy can be applied to the needed senses.

This sort of thing is being discovered over and over again. Adaptation is not being driven by natural selection acting on random mutations, but by built-in adaptation programs. But programs require programmers! The evidence for design (and, thereby, the Designer – God) is overwhelming! And it's not just that life's systems are looking like human engineering (and biologists are now employing computing system language to describe what they're seeing!), but life's systems are far exceeding every system humans have ever designed!

Evolutionists are wrong; God is no rube. His impressive intelligence and exquisite design are on display for all to see, to study, to appreciate, and to learn from. Want to visit more on this? Want top-notch resources, including books and videos? Come talk to me! I'm happy to share! – Pastor Conner



ZION
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redemptive Love

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

A Zion Bible Study: Happening after the Divine
Service

**BIBLE
PROJECT**
Images from:



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
LUTHERAN CHURCH
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
PROCLAIMING PEACE BY CHRIST'S CROSS



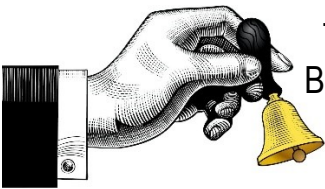
LWML Sunday

Celebrate and
support the mission!

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

 **LWML**
Lutheran Women in Mission

ZION
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Celebrating and Sharing Christ's Redemptive Love



The Pavlovian Pleasure Box in Your Pocket: Your Smartphone is Ringing Your Bell

In the 1890s, Russian researcher Ivan Pavlov observed dogs' tendency to salivate in anticipation of food. He wondered if he could condition that response in the absence of food. So, every time he served supper to the dogs he rang a bell until, sure enough, the dogs began to salivate at the sound of the bell without the food present. They were conditioned.

It didn't take long for people to see ways to use this on other people, to condition people with analogous bells so as to produce certain desired responses. If you're processing this you can see a potentially menacing method of manipulation. What could man do to his fellow man if he could condition him to respond to certain stimuli in predictable ways?

It's disturbing enough to consider, but what if it's already happening to you? We don't like to entertain this thought because we all like to believe that we would not be so easily duped, but the truth is that most of us are carrying Pavlovian boxes around with us in our pockets and essentially salivating every time its bell rings, even every time we imagine it ringing.

Your brain, as you probably know, is equipped with a pleasure chemical called *dopamine*. You can think of it as little pleasure rushes that your brain can push through your body. It's a truly remarkable and good gift from God, but it is susceptible to manipulation. And smartphone manufacturers, app developers, and gaming programmers know this.

If that wasn't disturbing enough, they also know that the dopamine pleasure cycle produced by digital games and social media is the same as the one produced by heroin. Doug Smith, author of *[Un]Intentional: How Screens Secretly Shape Your Desires and How You Can Break Free*, writes, "[T]he dopamine pleasure cycles created by the drug and the video game are identical."

Why is this concerning? Adam Alter, author of *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and The Business of Keeping Us Hooked*, explains:

As the brain develops a tolerance, its dopamine-producing regions go into retreat, and the lows between each high dip lower. Instead of producing the healthy measure of dopamine that once inspired optimism and contentment in response to small pleasures, these regions lie dormant until they're overstimulated again. Addictions are so pleasurable that the brain does two things: first it produces less dopamine to dam the flood of euphoria, and then, when the source of that euphoria vanishes, it struggles to cope with the fact it's now producing far less dopamine that it used to. And so the cycle continues as the addict seeks out the source of his addiction, and the brain responds by producing less and less dopamine after each hit.

In other words, smartphones function like drugs on the human brain. They give great dopamine highs, but they require increasingly more exposure to produce these highs. And the lows in between get lower as the addiction gets stronger. Smith gives us the bottom line:

Our screen-saturated world is able to shape our desires by making us feel good in the same way drugs and alcohol makes us feel good, and with similarly undesirable long-term consequences.

Seth Godin, the author and former dot com business executive, has called smartphones “Pavlovian boxes” (thus the title of this article), writing, “The smart phone... is an optimized, tested and polished call-and-response machine. So far, Apple’s made a trillion dollars by ringing our bell.”

They have been so lucrative that companies have invested massive resources into tracking every move you make online to deepen their understanding of how to ring your bell so as to manipulate your desires. Smith writes,

Every swipe and click... but also every video you watch and how far you watched it; every time you linger over an animated gif or just swipe on by; and certainly everything you ever post, upload, or share is cataloged and linked to a vast amount of data held about you. Over time, the history of every like, pin, email, swipe, and hashtag creates your epic digital biography – literally the instruction book that anyone or anything can read to learn what works on you, and what doesn’t.

Developers go so far as to pay attention to which background colors, which fonts, which audio tones maximize and retain your attention and which ones don’t. So deeply have they studied this that it has become formulaic. Nir Eyal, author of *Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products*, explains how to manufacture desires, how to manufacture and manipulate your desires. He describes a four stage “desire engine” complete with a trigger, an action, a variable reward, and a commitment.

So, the trigger is something that invites you to take a certain action, to click on a photo, or tap on a video. Think of this as the bait. You are being

baited. Then, the thing that gets you hooked is the variable reward. The important thing is that it’s not the same thing every time. So, your ice dispenser on your refrigerator isn’t habit forming. You don’t find yourself longing to push the lever to get ice or water. Its response is boringly predictable, but if every once in a while it spit out a strawberry daiquiri or a root beer slushy, then it would have the power to form a habit. And if it led you to believe that your chances of getting the daiquiri or slushy increased every time you depressed the lever, then you would find yourself drawn to the fridge frequently.

This is what’s happening on your phone. Eyal explains,

App developers know this, and they add many variable rewards to keep us hooked. Even the anticipation of a possible reward causes a user’s dopamine levels to spike before they even open their favorite app.

The simple truth is that you are being manipulated. And so are your children and grandchildren, and this manipulative conditioning is especially effective on children. To believe otherwise is naïve and foolish. Concerned? Ready to do something about it? It’s time to talk. It’s time to get wise to what’s happening so you can protect yourself and your children. For great resources, check out www.screenstrong.com. And consider being part of a screenstrong conversation group that I am working on starting. Call, email, stop in. Let’s get wise together. – Pastor Conner

October 2022: Fellowship Club: Orphan Grain Train and more!

The Zion Fellowship Club will coordinate another Orphan Grain Train clothing collection in late October. Items can be brought to the fellowship hall quilting room beginning October 23. Items will be delivered to the Ida Grove warehouse in early November. Used clothing items (men, women, children, all sizes and seasons) should be clean and in good condition. New socks and underwear are always appreciated. Shoes should be clean and in good condition with heels no more than a thumb-print high.



Please share this charitable opportunity with community friends and neighbors. Orphan Grain Train donations are sent to areas around the world with a recent emphasis on Ukraine refugee areas. Thanks also to the Manning VFW for medical equipment donations that were recently transported to Ida Grove.

The Fellowship Club will meet **Monday, October 10 at 1:30**. John's Gospel emphasis on "life" (John 1:4) guides the 2022-2023 programs. Thanks to Mike and Bridget Gore for sharing their journey through the adoption process at the September meeting. We pray God's blessings on the Gore family as they continue to be a blessing to their biological children and adopted son, Robbie. Be watching the bulletin for specifics on the October program. Guests are always welcome to join us as we fellowship and celebrate life together in Christ.



Sunday school is underway at Trinity!

Priscilla Guild Summary: 9/20/2022

The meeting was called to order by President Cathie Segebart. Minutes and Treasurer's report approved. The Guild has a balance of \$380.02. Pastor reported that members are encouraged to sign up for baking brownies and service roles at the upcoming Chicken Dinner fundraiser.



Cathie reported that over the course of the year, the Guild has donated \$1,787.43 to different organizations; the Guild has also donated material items like pill bottles. The Guild has pledged to increase its Denison Zone love offering from \$25 to \$40. Spencer Owen indicated that he had received the Guild's gift to support a Haitian student's tuition. LWML recognition service set for October 1; Guild members are encouraged to wear purple for the occasion. The Quilters' quilts will be showcased and blessed the same evening. Joint Guild and Weavers meeting scheduled following worship on September 24 to go over logistics for the upcoming Chicken fundraiser. Gloria will check into switching the size of the Portals of Prayer the Guild purchases. Bonnie closed the meeting with a Portals of Prayer devotion.

Susan Mahnke, Secretary



PANCAKE BREAKFAST

ANNUAL PRESCHOOL FUNDRAISER



Sunday, October 16th
Serving from 9 am - noon
Freewill offering

Join us for eggs, sausage,
and pancakes!

Zion Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
Manning, Iowa

Eat in fellowship hall OR
drive through!

For Drive through, enter
the south church
entrance.

Preschool Praises for September

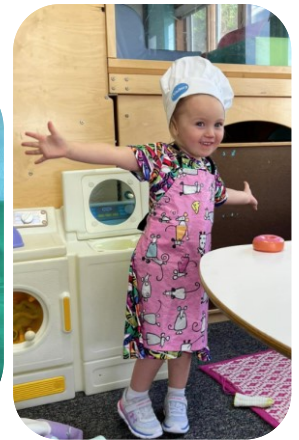
September was a busy month! We were able to visit Pastor Conner more this month and continued learning about the Creation and how powerful God is. We also have been sorting, counting, tracing, crafting, enjoyed a nice Fall walk, practiced fire and tornado drills, and had school pictures taken! On top of all of that, we had our moms come to school for our Mom's Night event. The children sang 10 Little Fishies and You Are My Sunshine, shared a snack, decorated hearts, and designed a scrapbook page with pictures of their families. It was so much fun!



We are getting prepared for the upcoming Pancake Breakfast by practicing the songs we will sing at the church service on Sunday, October 16th. We hope you come watch us sing and enjoy delicious food afterwards. This is a wonderful Preschool Fundraiser!

With such a busy month, we are extra thankful for our generous volunteers, Marlene Borkowski (Mrs. B) and Barbara Page (Mrs. P). Not only do we enjoy the company of these ladies, but the Preschoolers really enjoy having them in the classroom! We would also like to send out a huge thank you to all those that have donated your time and efforts in helping us check off items needing to be done in our classroom and for donating items from our wish list. We are very grateful for all of you and this Preschool wouldn't run so smoothly without you!

Ms Amy & Ms Melanie





Praise God for the privilege of sharing Jesus with children!



Chiesa, Comunità, Child-focused, Family Connecting



I Think I am Stuck

We have all felt, at some time in our lives, that we are stuck in a rut. We are getting up every day and going through the motions, but not really getting to where we want to be. We might be bored at work, adding more to our to-do list than is getting crossed off, or unmotivated to try something new.



Have you been telling yourself that you want to get healthier? Some steps that you might have to take are to eat better – get rid of the junk (comfort) food in your home, increase exercise (join that gym?), and make an appointment with your medical provider for a checkup. All of these steps require you to do something active – buy groceries with healthy foods, go to the gym to join or just get outside and use a walking trail, and call to make that appointment.

Some signs that you are stuck might be that every day feels the same. You can't remember what day it is and the daily monotony makes it seem like the same day on repeat. Maybe you can't find any motivation to get started on new projects or start a new activity that you wanted to try. You might feel that you don't have any enthusiasm, no excitement to do anything. And at the other end, you may be scared of trying new things because the thought of failing is too overwhelming.

Getting unstuck often requires making an active change in our lives. But wait! That is hard work. We must start by setting up realistic expectations. There is no magic solution. Making changes and creating new habits takes time and dedication.

This process is often not a straightforward event. It might be bursts of progress followed by no progress, which may feel like a setback but look back to the point you started. This is normal and should be expected. There may be times that you feel like you are back to square one, but it doesn't mean it is time to give up on your goals or intentions. Instead, use it as a time to evaluate your progress and your ultimate goal.

So, how do you get unstuck? Start by treating yourself like you are your own best friend. Asking yourself why you are stuck and what is going on inside, with kindness, can offer a lot of insight into the possible changes we need to make for our well-being. Then, get comfortable with the change and be clear to yourself what your goals are and the path you want to take. It is important to change your routine. Start with simple things. Get the new walking shoes and walk for 5 minutes, then increase your time as you are able. It can be tempting to compare ourselves to others but we can better focus on and accept who we are – not who we think we should be.

Making changes in life is difficult. We can get comfortable in our rut. You may want to seek out those around you for support, whoever that may be – a close friend, family member, or clergy support. Feeling stuck is deeply frustrating. It is possible to begin to make changes that will help you in your day to day lives. You just have to start.

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

Update 2022



Maggie, Stephen, Isaac,
Ginny, Gary

Dear Prayer Partners,

Thanks for your prayers!

I have accepted our Mission's new call for us to move to our Asia mission headquarters in Chiayi to help start our own new seminary. While this seems way out of reach now, we accept this calling in faith, faith that looks forward to what GOD WILL DO! Ever grateful for 22 great years of service with China Lutheran Seminary, I also look forward "giving thanks in all situations since this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Four years ago, we moved our Asia mission headquarters from Hong Kong to Taiwan because of the high costs and growing communist control. Now we have a lot of plans for The Luther Building to move forward in our Asian mission of spreading the gospel of Jesus and making disciples of all nations.

PRAY FOR US!!

10.9.22

**The Mantey's in
Manning!**

Mark and Megan Mantey, our missionaries in Uganda, will join us for worship on October 9 and then, in Bible class, share how God is working through them in Uganda. A fellowship potluck follows at 11:30. Everyone invited!



Pastor Johnson – Health Update

We are excited to announce that my tumor marker, which was at a high 12,000 prior to surgery, has decreased to a 24 post-surgery. The surgery removed the serious tumor. Chest CT came back clear. We are monitoring one spot in my abdomen over the course of two months to see if it grows. What that means, however, is that I have a break from chemotherapy for 2 months. This break will help heal the neuropathy I have in my toes and fingers. We couldn't have asked for better results. Thank you for your prayers (and continued prayers). We are not out of the woods quite yet, but we're moving in a positive direction. It's been an undeserved blessing to receive this good news. – Pastor Johnson



Interested in making your mission and ministry support automatic (or changing your current giving amount)? It's easy.

Either download the Zion App (search for "Zion Manning" in the app store) and give through the app, give through Zion's website (www.zionmanning.com) or give through automatic deposit. Stop in the church office, pick up the form from Shannon and attach either a blank, voided check or a deposit slip, and we'll take care of the rest.

Your regular and predictable support helps Zion plan for mission and ministry. Thank you for being a mission and ministry partner!

Trinity members, you can support Trinity's mission and ministry via automatic deposit and through your website (www.trinitylutheranmanilla.com), too! Ask Pastor Johnson for more information.



- 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



Mark and Megan Mantey
Serving in Uganda

Transitioning to Kenya
Mark: Associate Regional Business Manager
Megan: Regional Coordinator of Care and Development



Gather Together

In our last newsletter, we shared that our positions within LCMS International Missions changed as of July. We definitely “hit the ground running” during the past two months. One of these new opportunities allowed Megan to travel to Rwanda to connect with the Lutheran Mission in Africa - Synod of a Thousand Hills (LMA-STH) for a continuing education seminar.

It is often difficult for pastors and church leaders in Africa to gather for fellowship and continuing education. Various obstacles often prohibit this, but the need is great. It is vital for church leaders and pastors to meet so that they can grow in the faith, study the Word, and support one another in life and ministry.

The Rev. Selestine Seburikoko, bishop of the LMA-STH, values opportunities for pastors, evangelists, and seminary students to gather together so they may “be of one mind” and continue to receive training and education. Since they are a younger Lutheran church body, it also gives them the needed time to discuss best practices and strategies for sharing the Gospel for their growing churches and communities.

During August, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG) was also able to host a conference for their pastors. Megan is thankful she can work with church leaders throughout Africa to help coordinate and plan these opportunities. We are grateful the LCMS can partner together for these critical efforts of teaching and training.

Life & Ministry Update

Africa Region Field Orientation and Onboarding

This summer, we received five missionary families from Brazil, Kenya, and the United States. These missionaries serve in various roles in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Tanzania. We were able to go to the orientation to meet our new colleagues and share about business and care ministries for our field. It was a joy to meet the new missionaries and share their burdens of leaving the familiar and entering the unknown. We also share in their excitement of serving Christ by serving others as missionaries in Africa.

Mark was able to travel to Ethiopia to help two missionary families during the first few crucial days of being in their new home. It is a significant opportunity to walk alongside new friends and colleagues as they gain familiarity in their new country. Sometimes, the hands-on help of getting SIM cards for phones, talking to maintenance specialists, and buying furniture for a house can help make the new destination a home.

HOME SERVICE

It is home service time again! This means we have the opportunity to travel back to the United States to share updates with our ministry partners (you)! This is especially important since accepting new positions. Of course, we will still give updates on the Lord’s work in Uganda too.



Learn how a child can support God's Church and save for the future. See Warren Puck.

ances over \$1,000 earn second-tier rate of 0.75%. *Rates as of August 2022.
subject to change. View current rates at lce.org.

 **Lutheran Church Extension Fund**
> where investments build

2022 Thrivent Action Teams: Thrivent members! You have 1 or 2 Act Teams per year. These need written & approved by the end of the year. They are \$250 on a VISA card in Thrivent's name which is seed money to assist volunteer team in serving. Apply on line. If you don't have internet, call 800-847-4836 & ask for Action Teams. They will assist over the phone. (Ide Fellowship after church, Sunday School materials, community meals, fund raisers, fall hayrides & bonfires, mission projects, Alter Guild, Elders, quilt food pantry, veterans, school, painting, repairs, lawn needs, construction people in need.) Call Janet Smith for assistance 712-210-4776



DCE Update



Since the last update, we've been moving forward in the DCE Call process. The council finalized a Call Committee and the Call Committee, after receiving input from the council and numerous members, has partnered with Rhonda Mohr (Iowa District West Assistant to the President for Education, Youth, and Family Life) to identify a list of presently serving DCE candidates with a few years' experience. The Call Committee will review these names, identify which they wish to interview, identify which are open to receiving a Call, and then begin moving forward with interviews. What can you do? Pray for discernment. And, email the church office with questions you would like the committee to ask (zionmanninglcms@gmail.com).



Amigos en Cristo

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

October 2022

I am so glad we get to share information about your Hispanic Ministry in Iowa District West. There is new information to share with you to rejoice with us as we take the Hispanic Ministry to a new level of outreach and maturity.

In the Denison area, we continue to meet every Sunday for worship and Bible Study in the afternoon. We also meet on Wednesdays for a morning Bible Study. I am talking with some families about having another Bible Study on Friday evenings. We also continue to work the details about our mid-Fall ESL class.

In Storm Lake, we continue to have our Sunday morning worship service followed by Bible Study. We have confirmation and Bible Study on Wednesday evenings. We were privileged to have a Baptism for one of our new members who came from Cuba. He will be marrying one of our young members at Grace church Hispanic Ministry.

I was blessed to be able to travel to Mexico to spend time with my family and celebrate God's love with them. I preached at Iglesia Luterana Todos Los Santos in the city of Guadalajara which is the second largest and busiest city in Mexico. I also had the opportunity to preach at one of my grand-niece's quinceañera and also had a baptism for another grand-niece at the same church. What a blessing to continue to witness God's love with my family!

I continue to meet new prospect members in the Carroll area. I want to thank the brothers and sisters of St. Paul in Carroll for their ongoing support and patience as we try to develop the ministry there.

I thank God for opening new doors! I was invited to Hartley, Iowa to speak about the opportunity to develop Hispanic Ministry there. To my surprise, they were ready and eager to start some kind of outreach right away! We are planning an ESL class for this Fall. Gracias St. Paul's leaders for your desire to share Jesus's message with the Hispanics in your area. In October, I will have the opportunity to lead a bilingual service at St. Paul in Ida Grove.

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



September and October are full of commitments to share about our Hispanic ministry and culture at several LWML regional rallies. Thanks ladies for the opportunities you give me to share what God is doing among our midst! We are also gearing up for our next Thanksgiving bilingual service and the Christmas and New Year's celebrations.

Please keep us in your prayers and hearts as we strive to represent you among our ever-growing Hispanic Community, gracias and bendiciones.

Bendiciones, Pastor Lopez





Snapshots of Zion



Four generations together!

Approximately 75 people joined us for our family and friends hayride on September 25. Thanks to Zion's Board of Education for organizing and sponsoring the event.



Zion's and Trinity's Confirmation Program welcomes 48 kids. What a privilege to teach them about Jesus!

New autumnal banners!



Enjoying hot dogs and S'mores at our hayride!



Please Note! All times and events are subject to change



**Sunday
Mornings**

Zion Family Bible Class (after worship)



October 2

LWML Sunday with Noisy Offering



October 2

3rd Graders Receive Bibles



October 7

Staley's Chicken Dinner (5:00-7:00) at Trinity



October 9

Missionaries Mark and Megan Mantey at Zion



October 12

Family Discipling Event (6:00-7:30) at Zion



October 16

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



October 20

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



November 5/6

All Saints' Day @ Trinity & Zion



November 9

A Service of Grief and Hope at Zion (6:30 p.m.)

October Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 James Mullenger | 16 Miranda Benton |
| Eric Rosener | Mya Gaskill (T) |
| 2 Norah Vetter (T) | 17 Pamela Garvis |
| Ferdonna Zimmerman (T) | Haven Reese |
| 3 Marcus Borkowski | 18 Kate Greving |
| Alan Morris | Don Lamb |
| 4 Robert Ehlers | 19 Gloria Ewoldt |
| Chelsey Jensen | Sonia Kuchel |
| Camden Morris | Julie Weller |
| 5 Brian Birks (T) | 20 Steve Borkowski |
| Bennett Riesberg | Andrea Schwery |
| Katelynn Wittala | Natalie Hanson |
| 6 Haleigh Alexander | 21 Rodney Borkowski |
| Benjamin Ramsey | Pam Kusel |
| Richard Zinke | Nancy Walters |
| 8 Marlene Borkowski | 22 Luella Borkowski |
| Juanita Kurth | Cynthia Genzen |
| 9 Vivian Blackford | 23 Kyle French |
| Susan Mahnke (T) | 24 Diana Eddy |
| Lindsey Schumann (T) | Wyatt Grabill |
| Amelia Vetter (T) | Jill Mohr |
| Bonnie Witt | 25 Trevor Booth |
| 11 Houston Alexander | Nathan Janssen |
| Kimber Arp | 26 Zach Rasmussen (T) |
| Drew Doyel | Bret Saunders (T) |
| Lynn Kruse | 27 Brody Blom (T) |
| Skyler Sandage | Bobby Doyel |
| 12 Justeen Schwieso | Randy Dreher |
| Weston Stribe | Amos Olson (T) |
| 14 Wendy Ahrendsen | Daniel Tibben |
| Lance Gruhn | 29 Christopher Dreher |
| 15 Barbara Doyel | Louis Dreher |
| Justin Frank | Ashley Lorenzen |
| Lori Lenz | 30 Claire Behrens |
| Kaylyn Nelson | Justin Segebart (T) |
| Jodi Ramsey | 31 Abel Hinners |
| Betty Schroeder | Dean Hoffmann |
| Sandra Sextro | Callan Stribe |
| David Weller | |

Anniversaries

- ...
- 1 Robin & Jenny Bunker
 - 9 Ryan & Bobby Doyel
 - 10 Neil & Shala Hass
 - Duane & Kay Otto
 - 12 Gerald & Rita Beck
 - 13 Howard & Audrey Roe
 - 14 David & Julie Weller
 - 16 Dale & Karen Reinke
 - 26 Neil & Lindsey Schumann (T)
 - 31 Greg & Leesa Christensen

Official Acts

Matthew Albert Blackwell; September 28, 2022; Pastor Jonathan Conner

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

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), Jane Luetje, Cheral Buhr