



Zion Lutheran Church, Manning IA

ADVENT CONCERT

December 3 @ 7:00 p.m.
woodwind quartet at 6:45

Featuring Zion's Praise Team

Freewill offering / No tickets required
Refreshments following
All invited



Meditating on the Manger



Tucked in the pages of our hymnal is a marvelously profound hymnic meditation on the manger of Jesus Christ written by the 17th century Lutheran theologian Paul Gerhardt. It merits our notice. But before you read it, resolve to read it SLOWLY. Thoughtful poetry should be enjoyed like red wine or quality coffee. Don't gulp. Sip and savor and then swallow joyfully.

Gerhardt begins,

*O Jesus Christ, Thy manger is
My paradise at which my soul reclineth.
For there, O Lord, Doth lie the Word Made
flesh for us;
here-in Thy grace forth shineth.*

Gerhardt sees the significance of Jesus' incarnation, for where Jesus is, there is paradise. Further, he sees in the manger the Word of God made flesh for us and the grace of God shining for us. And because he sees the startling implications of Christ's manger, he finds rest for his soul as he reclines his soul before it.

*He whom the sea And wind obey
Doth come to serve the sinner in great
meekness.
Thou God's own Son, With us are one,
Dost join us and our children in our weakness.*

As he reclines before the manger, he considers who lies within it. It is none other than God's Son, the One whom the sea and wind obey! And yet this One comes in weakness and meekness to serve us sinners. He has taken on our flesh and has become one with us. But He comes for more.

*Thy light and grace Our guilt efface,
Thy heavenly riches all our loss retrieving.
Immanuel, Thy birth doth quell
The power of hell and Satan's bold deceiving.*

Consider Gerhardt's words! The light and grace radiating from Jesus' manger efface (wipe away) our guilt! And who among us does not daily battle guilt over sin? Jesus' heavenly riches restore all that was lost through Adam's sin – life, fellowship with God, peace, and wholeness. Jesus retrieves it for us and restores our loss. Further, this child in the manger – Immanuel, God with us! – His birth quells (quiets and stills) the power of hell and the deceptive tongue of Satan. For once God plays His hand, what power does hell have, what lie of Satan can remain unexposed?

*Thou Christian heart, Who-e'er thou art,
Be of good cheer and let no sorrow move thee!
For God's own Child, In mercy mild,
Joins thee to Him; how greatly God must love
thee!*

Now Gerhardt turns to us who have joined him in his meditation as he encourages us to be of good cheer and unmoved by sorrow. For as Gerhardt directs our gaze to the Christ child, God's child has, in mercy, joined us to Himself. How greatly God must love us! It's as if he's saying, "Look, look who's in this manger! This is God's Son. He has come in our flesh. He has come to redeem us. He has come to reconcile us to God. How great must God's love be for us!"

*Remember thou What glory now
The Lord prepared thee for all earthly sadness.
The angel host Can never boast
Of greater glory, greater bliss or gladness.*

Here Gerhardt reminds us of the reality of our earthly sadness. Tears, brokenness, disappointment, and grief remain. Jesus' manger doesn't remove them; it does, however, prepare us to face them. For in the manger we see God's glory enfleshed. Sorrow, sadness, grief, and pain will end. This is why Christ took on flesh, not only to bear our sin and sorrow, but to bear them away. The angels in heaven can't boast of such Divine action. They may look upon the manger in awe and wonder, but not with the same deep appreciation. With this deep appreciation, Gerhardt invites us to keep Christ as our true treasure:

*The world may hold Her wealth and gold;
But thou, my heart, keep Christ as thy true
treasure.
To Him hold fast Until at last
A crown be thine and honor in full measure.*

The world boasts of its great wealth, but Gerhardt resolves even as he invites us to see and keep Christ as our true and lasting treasure. To Him we are called to hold fast until God honors us with the crown of life. Then earth's treasures will be exposed as frauds, as false infinities and substitute sacreds. Then Jesus will be revealed as the great treasure of the Church. Our confidence and trust in Him will be vindicated as He honors His saints with the crown of eternal life.



Fellowship Club, December 2023

Join the Fellowship Club ADVENTure

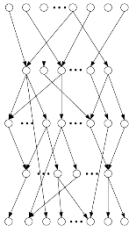
The Fellowship Club (and friends) will meet
Monday, December 11 at 1:30.

Food ADVENTure: Members will bring a favorite Christmas dessert, pastry, snack, candy to share and enjoy together.

History ADVENTure: The discussion of Biblical and church history continues with a focus on the history of Middle East conflict. LCMS Pastor Nabil Nour has prepared a special Bible study on the ongoing conflict between the people of Arab and Israel people. Pastor Nour describes himself as Arab by nationality, Palestinian by race, and a Christian by grace. He also celebrates that he is a baptized, beloved, beautiful, blessed, and blood-bought child of God.

ADVENTure to Peace: The study will provide a helpful Biblical perspective on the current conflict. Nour shares the "solution" is repentance and forgiveness in Christ alone. "YESHUA is our only hope in this fallen world. Because He is the sin-bearer, we have hope and peace that last to eternity." Friends and guest welcome!

The January gathering (January 8) will review some of the early history of our Synod. "Our God our help in ages past, our Hope for years to come."



A Cascade of Design: Appreciating Your Designed Body

My children have been building a go-cart (of sorts). It started when one of them happened upon two large, plastic reels. Reels roll. Children like things that roll. After rummaging through the garage for lumber scraps, they had found enough to construct a rudimentary frame. Before long they had it rolling across the parking lot. It was surprisingly sturdy, but it had one obvious problem: It couldn't turn.

So, they went back to the garage, disassembled an old bicycle, and swapped the front reel out for a bicycle wheel. The cart could now turn! But this solution created two new problems. One, they couldn't effectively reach the wheel, which lacked a handle, to turn it, and two, the tripod design was now tippy, so that every time they did manage to turn the wheel, the whole cart would fall on its side.

So, they went back to the garage, disassembled an old 360 caster trike, and fastened the swivel wheels onto the front of the frame even as they attached an additional board that could be manipulated to turn the wheel. But these solutions left another obvious problem. They had no way to propel the cart, other than going Flintstones and pushing it with their feet.

So, they went back to the garage, found some rope, and tied it to a functional bicycle. One of them hopped onto the bike and one guinea-pigged it on the cart. It worked! Sort-of. They could get going, even turn it (semi-successfully), but now they have another significant problem: No brakes! (I'm sure they're currently looking in the garage for something to solve this problem!)

The above scenario is a real-life example of something engineers call *cascading problems*

which they face in everything they design. One solution creates multiple new problems that have to be overcome. For example, if a design team wants to improve the aerodynamics of a car, they must consider many realities. If they alter the shape of the vehicle, they must be prepared to solve the following cascading problems: The new aerodynamic shape may compromise the structural integrity of the car, which may require adding weight to strengthen the frame. The changed shape may affect the driver's visibility and create blind spots. The new design may create unexpected manufacturing hurdles that may add cost to the car. The new shape may affect head room and seat positioning and overall comfort for the driver and passengers. And, it may increase wind noise. These are the cascading problems engineers regularly face.

The human body has similar obstacles. Let's consider one: Getting oxygen to your cells. You do this thousands of times every single day without thinking about it, but the fact that it happens with such ease is an engineering marvel, a marvel that testifies to the genius of the body's Engineer: the Lord Jesus.

Consider: Every one of your 30 trillion cells needs oxygen to survive. The body can't store oxygen like it can sugar and water, so how are you going to get oxygen to your cells? Obviously, you're going to inhale oxygen. But this creates an immediate problem. Your cells don't talk. They can't tell you they need oxygen. How are you going to know when they need oxygen? You're going to need some kind of sensor in your body to translate your cell's need to your brain to tell you to inhale.

And this alone is marvelously complex. It requires the sensors, an if/then algorithmic logic that can process the input from the sensors, and an output actuator that can actually get you to open your

mouth and suck in air! And we're only a few steps into this process!

Once your sensors, if/then algorithmic logic, and output actuators are working, you soon discover a new problem (forgetting for a moment your lungs and the alveoli that bring the oxygen into the blood): Oxygen doesn't dissolve very well in blood. You need something to help with that. The body's answer is iron, but how are you going to get that? You need to ingest it. And to do that you need your entire GI system and its intestinal cells. But simply ingesting iron into your body doesn't solve the problem. You need to connect it to your blood, which the body does by using the iron to form a complicated protein called hemoglobin, which it makes in the bone marrow and packs into your body's red blood cells. So you have another system that you need in order to get the oxygen to your cells!

But that presents another problem because you have to have just the right amount of hemoglobin so you don't sludge up the lines, because these red blood cells that the bone marrow is making take up space. How are you going to solve this problem? As it turns out, your body has specialized kidney cells (called Erythropoietin) that detect the oxygen levels in the blood and tell the stem cells in the bone marrow to turn on (or off if the levels rise too high) to capture the oxygen to deliver to your cells. So now your kidneys are involved!

So in order to capture the oxygen you need the aforementioned iron, but you need it in the right amounts. Letting too much iron into the blood can be toxic. So you need to find a way to get just the right amount through the duodenum in the small intestine into the blood. Your liver solves this problem by sending out a hormone (called Hcpidin) to regulate the iron levels being absorbed. So now your liver is involved! Further,

the liver makes the transport protein to deliver the iron to the bone marrow that is making the red blood cells, which have been equipped with the proper receptors to receive the iron. And this is necessary to ensure that the right cells get the iron so you don't end up poisoning the body.

Now you need to get this oxygen to the cells and you need the cardiovascular system to do this with the heart and all the blood vessels and so on. And when it gets there, you need a system to loosen the oxygen from the iron, which the body does by increasing the concentration of CO₂ which weakens the bond, allowing the oxygen-hungry cells to receive their much-needed breath of fresh air. But now you need to get rid of the CO₂! But we'll save that for another cascading problem.

Now, ask yourself, *Did the body figure this out by itself? Did it evolve through random genetic copying mistakes? Could non-directed mutations solve all of these problems simultaneously?* A step-by-step process won't do. You have to have all of these systems (plus many more!) functioning simultaneously to get oxygen to your cells. If one isn't functioning, you die... quickly.

To put it bluntly: It would take a miracle. And miracles are beyond the reach of nature. But they aren't beyond the reach of nature's God. Well did the psalmist understand:

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully
made.
- Psalm 139:13-14

Your body isn't a cascade of problems; it's a masterful cascade of design that testifies to the brilliance of its Creator: the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I should probably go see what the sound is coming from my garage!

- Pastor Conner

The Gift of Advent



Just when everything is bearing down on us to such an extent that we can scarcely withstand it, the Christmas message comes to tell us that all our ideas are wrong, and that what we take to be evil and ark is really good and light because it comes from God. Our eyes are at fault, that is all. God is in the manger, wealth in poverty, light in darkness, succor in abandonment. No evil can befall us; whatever men may do to us, they cannot but serve the God who is secretly revealed as love and rules the world and our lives. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer¹

The smell of cinnamon hangs in the air, as the apple pie cooks slowly to perfection in the oven. The soft flickering glow of candles illuminate the living room with their cozy light, while snowflakes float by the window in a gentle waltz down to the ground. The colors of red and green begin to fill your home with sparkle and shine as each Christmas decoration is placed with care upon the mantel, the tree and the tables. And you hear the soft croons of Bing Crosby sing out the dreams of a white Christmas ahead, while you place the last piece of your nativity scene lovingly into place. The music shifts and the sounds of Linus' tiny voice reading Luke Chapter 2 fills your home with the words, "Fear not, I bring you good tidings of great joy..."

These, are some of the words, sights, sounds and smells of Advent, of Christmastime. This time of

year, Advent, is a gift. Contrary to what our calendars might be telling us, this time of year is an invitation to move slowly and methodically. To take time to look inwardly at our relationship with God incarnate. It's not one more thing to add to your already full Christmastime schedule, but an invitation to slow down. To ponder as Mary did, that God so loved you, me, us that he began flesh and he moved into the neighborhood (as the Message translates in John 1:14).

The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means coming or visit. Advent is a time in our liturgical church calendar to prepare for Christmas, when we celebrate Jesus' birth. God incarnate. We remember that history was longing for and waiting for a Messiah before Jesus' birth and that even now we are waiting and longing for Christ's return, when he will bring the resurrection and the new earth and make all things right. We know fully well the brokenness in our world, the darkness, the war, the famine etc. We as Christians, live in the state of already and not yet. Christ has come to forgive our sins that if we believe in him, we get the free gift of eternal life. Yet, the final day has not yet come. So, we wait in this now and not yet, in this He has come and He will come again. We also realize in Advent that though we are already saved by Christ's blood we are still a work in progress. And so, in Advent we not only prepare our homes and church building by decorating and preparing for the coming guests and the coming holiday. We also too should use this time to prepare our hearts, minds and souls.

We can do this with great joy and freedom and many different ways that work best for the season of life we are currently in. We celebrate Advent

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer to Maria von Wedemeyer, Dec 13, 1943, in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas*

(Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012).

each year in our Lutheran church body but coming together midweek for a special Advent service. At Zion we also enjoy fellowship and feast together on these days, so if you're local join us each Wednesday in December for our Advent worship services.

Other ways we can celebrate this Advent season is by incorporating an Advent wreath into our decorations. Then each night at dinnertime (or supper as I'm told I'm wrong the noontime meal is dinner... I'm pretty sure I'm not wrong that's lunch haha). Regardless, each night at dinnertime light that week's candle(s) and have a beautiful meal with candlelight even if it's simply Casey's pizza. It still makes this season just a little different and little more special each night. Lighting candles in this season of Advent, not just an Advent wreath, can help us remember the light of Christ. That darkness cannot overcome him, that we are called to be his light. Though the days are short this time of year, we have the light of Christ to lighten even the darkest nights. Candles this time of year are a great reminder of that.

Consider reading an Advent devotion each day, or as you remember to do so. Lutheran Hour ministry has free ones at <https://www.lhm.org/advent/>. As I stated last month, I really enjoy Tsh Oxenreider's Advent Devotional Shadow & Light.

Create or find playlists of Christmas music to listen to that help you ponder God incarnate, God made flesh. Yes, I love all the pop Christmas music too, but there is nothing like listening to O Come O Come Emmanuel and all the other great Christian Christmas songs done by Penatonix, Andrew Peterson, Shane and Shane, All Sons and Daughters and many many other great artists out there.

Bake, cook or purchase some of your favorite Christmas goodies and fill your home with smells and tastes that help you to fully meditate and sit in Psalm 34, "O taste and see that the Lord is good". The scent of cinnamon baking in anything, the smell of warm bread fresh out of the oven, and the sweet smell of frosted sugar cookies are a few of my favorite this time of year. As I'm sure your home, decorated beautifully for the season take time to savor the sights, smells and tastes resting in the knowledge that it is our God who is faithful to provide and lavishes us with his blessings this time of year.

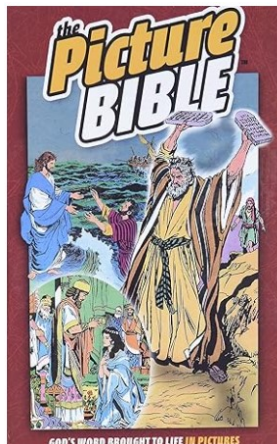
Consider all your senses this Advent season, fill your home, your mind, and your soul with sights, sounds, tastes, smell and little touches that bring Christ to mind. That remind you that you are loved by the God of this universe, so much so that He became flesh. That he took on your sin on the cross and died the death you deserve so that by believing you may get the free gift of eternal life. It is nothing you have done but it is everything He did! For you! You are his beloved son, his beloved daughter, a prince, a princess of King Jesus! And this Advent, this year, you, beloved, are invited by the King of Kings to slow down, to linger longer, to prayerfully prepare and wait in joyful anticipation like a child for Christmas morning the coming visit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! You are not a machine that inputs date on your calendar to go mindlessly from one Christmastime to do/event to the next. You are a human being not a human doing. Spend sometime this Advent simply being in the presence of our Lord, let this Advent be a season of nourishment for your body, mind and soul. Let the Lord of Lords dwell richly in your heart and minds, in your hearth and home, and let the hustle and bustle of the holidays fall away. Or at the very least fall down your list of things to do, while you relish in what Christ has already done for you! – DCE Kathryn Schneider

Christmas Book Gift Ideas:

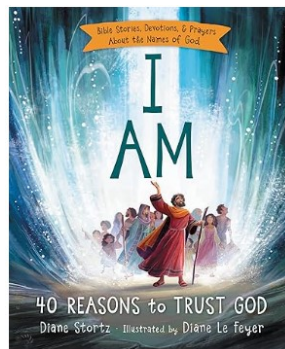
And so, we rush into the December Advent season making lists, cooking goodies, shopping for gifts, wrapping presents, rehearsing for Christmas pageants, attending Christmas concerts, and so much more. It's as if we can't help but feel the rush each year as soon as Thanksgiving is over to get on to the next holiday.

So, I'd love to supply you with a gift guide for those in your life that can help your family grow in faith and connection with God and each other.

The Picture Bible Script - by Iva Hoth



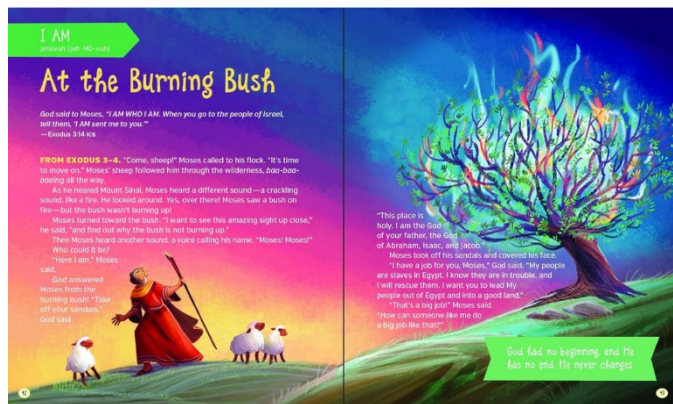
I received this Bible in 1999 from my Sunday School teacher and proceeded to read cover to cover through this beautifully illustrated comic book style Bible. My version looks like an actual bible, but if you search Amazon the newer version has comic pictures on the cover. This bible covers a majority of the Biblical stories and it does take some creative liberties with dialogue. However, I've used it a few times in our 6th grade confirmation class to teach and the kids have loved it! They've asked if I could buy them each their own copy and the days, we do read from it they are all engrossed and engaged like no other day! 😊 Consider giving the gift of this Bible this Christmas and watch how your young learners dive into the Word in a whole new way.



I Am: 40 Bible Stories, Devotions, and Prayers About the Names of God - by Diane M. Stortz

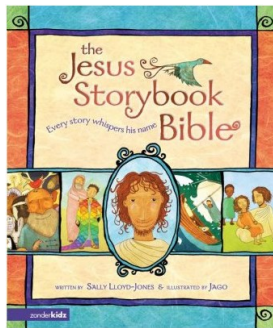
Now, I know you shouldn't judge a book by its cover but last year while shopping at Hobby

Lobby this book caught my eye. I read through the first devotion and knew I had to add this to our home library. The illustrations are stunning, the retelling of Biblical stories is captivating, the added questions at the end of the stories to bring about discussion and the prayer at the end are just so well thought out. Now, this is still far too advanced for my 3 and 1 year old to fully get all they can out of this devotional. But we try every so often to open it up and read a story from it. They aren't ready for the short questions at the end, nor do they fully understand the application portion of the devo. But I'm all about habit formation and caring for their souls so we will grow into this one. Here's one more picture as it's simply a beautiful book to add any home library.



The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name - by Sally Lloyd-Jones

This is a simplified picture Bible for your pre-school through elementary aged kids. I've used this Bible in the past to help teach pre-school through kindergarten chapel at my last call.

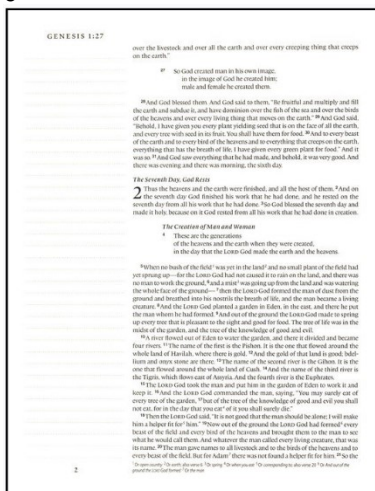


The Lutheran Study Bible (Check out all the versions cph.org has to offer)



For the high schoolers on up through all the adults in your life consider the gift of God's word. I'm not sure if you can ever have too many Bibles, but if you do not yet have a Lutheran Study Bible in

your home library consider gifting someone in your home one. It makes a great Bible to read from, use the study notes to help answer questions and give more in depth knowledge. If study Bibles aren't your thing, then do a Journal Bible. This is my favorite Bible in my home, as it allows me to write notes in the margins. We also gifted both our boys a Journal Bible at



their baptism. John engraved their names on it, and we are getting their Bibles out for each big milestone in their life's, for their friends and family to highlight verses, write in words of encouragement and prayer and then upon graduation and leaving our house they will have a Bible filled with the handwriting, notes, and prayers of so many people who helped us raise them in the Word. (I've included a picture of the inside of the journal Bible so you can better understand what I mean by space in the margins to write).

New Mornings New Mercies - by Paul David Tripp



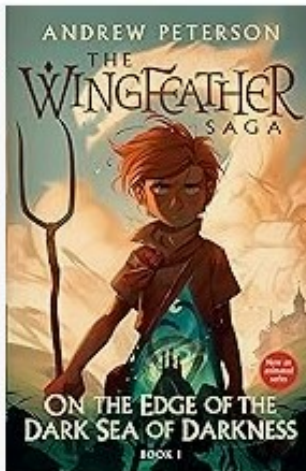
My Pastor in San Antonio gifted me these 365 daily devotionals book a few years back for Christmas. And it is a go to one I have used a lot of the years. It is a dated devotional and I will fully admit I have struggled using this type of devotional over the years. As I get really downtrodden when I don't read the book perfectly through on time. Yet, my goal is progress not perfection so I find myself turning to this book and learning to be okay with not reading through cover to cover in one go. I've used a few of these devotionals when asked to lead a devotional for Bible studies, meetings, or this past summers Pilates and prayer group. It's a great book to have on your shelf and pull-out year after year.

If you haven't noticed yet, I am an avid reader and love to give and receive books. So, let me finish

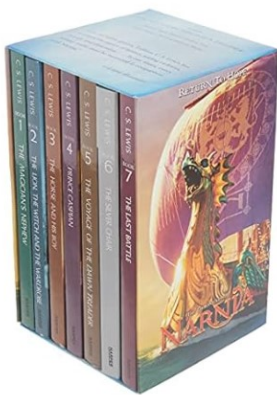
out this book gift guide with two of my favorite series of fiction.

The Wingfeather Saga - by Andrew Peterson

I only recently learned of the Wing Feather Sagas, and am currently reading Book 2 in the series. I look forward to reading them with my boys when they are bit older as I find the sage enchantingly whimsical and filled with calls for courage, adventure, and standing up for what is good, true and beautiful.



The Chronicles of Narnia series - by C.S. Lewis.

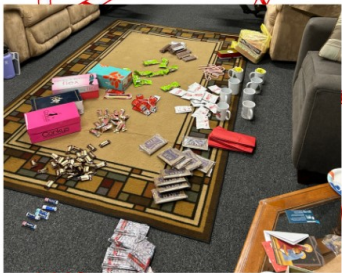


This is an oldy, but a goody, and I simply enjoyed reading these books over the years, and love the movies created from them too. It is another book series I can not wait to read through with my boys and see anew through their awe and wonder in the years to come.

- DCE Kathryn Schneider

Celebrate Christmas with the children of Zion and Trinity on Sunday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m. (with student musicians beginning at 6:00 p.m.) and refreshments following!





Sr. High youth
pack Christmas
care packages
for recent grads.



Senior High Youth have been busy this November! 7 youths and 2 adults from Zion attended the IDW Senior High Youth Gathering in Des Moines. They had a great time growing in faith in Christ. Our youth also helped pack 9 Christmas care packages for recent graduates. Our youth wrote Christmas cards and filled their care packages with snacks, hot chocolate fixings, a mug and a gift card to let our recent grads know we are praying for them and love them!



Preschool Praises for November

This past month we really focused on being polite, using our manners, and being kind! We were introduced to Miss Bee Polite, our classroom friend who reminds us about being polite and kind in the classroom and everywhere we go. She moves around the classroom and the kids have fun trying to spot her. She also likes to watch them to see when they are being polite and kind in order to have a reward sent home! We practiced using our table manners, played a game to decide whether the choices were kind or unkind, and even built a kindness tower together as a class.



Scissors have been a favorite new addition in the classroom. During free play you will find many kids stopping at Miss Melanie's table to work on their fine motor and cutting skills! We even received new play-doh scissors which have been a huge hit!

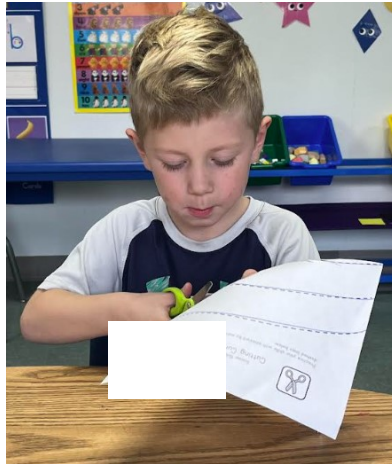
We had another visit from Kelly (Nature Center) this past month and she taught us all about turkeys, brought fun items for them to pass around, and finished with a fun turkey craft! We also had a visit from John Bexten with JB Construction (Miss Amy's dad). Each class worked together to build a birdhouse and we have been working on decorating them before we get to hang them this spring. I hope the birds are attracted to bright colors. :)

Pastor Conner spoke to the kids about the Tower of Babel where God confused the languages because people were defying him by trying to build a tower up to heaven instead of spreading throughout the World. He also shared with the children about Abraham and Sarah and the promise that God made to them for a child, even in their old age. Abraham and Sarah's children eventually lead to Jesus, which is how they blessed the whole World. The children are excited to learn all about the birth of Jesus this upcoming month of December!

After chapel, we spend time with Miss Kathryn and have been practicing our songs to sing on December 13th at the beginning of Advent Services. We will also be celebrating Jesus' Birthday this month in our classroom. Instead of gift exchanges between the children we wrap up school supplies and new items for the classroom for the children to open and use while at preschool. This makes it easier on the families and fair between all students. It's fun to open up new items that we all get to enjoy together. If you would like to add a gift under our tree, feel free to donate any school supply or check out our Amazon wish list. If you have any questions feel free to email me at zionmanningpreschool@gmail.com.



Miss Amy & Miss Melanie



Thank you,
Zion, for
enabling us
to share
Jesus with
children and
families!





Amigos en Cristo

News from ***La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Amigos en Cristo:***

Friends in Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church

Pastor Pedro Lopez, Denison, Iowa

ember 2023

Blessings to all in this Advent season mis amigos and prayer warriors! Such a joyous time to share the good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Looking forward to the Christmas celebrations with new families and friends. Here we are sharing with you the latest about our Hispanic Ministry, your Hispanic Ministry.

Our third session of ESL class is coming to an end soon at St. Paul, Hartley. We celebrated Thanksgiving with our students on Monday, November 20. We have made new contacts and were blessed to have a few more people come to worship services. We will also be baptizing a couple of children in December and there may be a couple of weddings. We also thank God as He opened new doors with a local company that is eager to work with us in helping the Hispanic community find work and better opportunities in the Hartley area.

In Carroll, we celebrated a bilingual service together with St. Paul on October 29. It is exciting to hear two languages praying and praising together. We celebrated Thanksgiving on Tuesday, November 21. Our third session of ESL class will also be finishing mid-December. We have a good group coming to our Bible study on Saturday evening. We lost one family that moved out of state due to work and possibly a couple more will be leaving. We have about 8-11 people attending. We would like to give thanks to all the volunteers; we would not be able to do any of this without you.



In Denison, we continue with Sunday worship service but have changed our Wednesday Bible study to Carroll since the people who come live in Carroll and a couple drive from Coon Rapids. We will have five baptisms the weekend after Thanksgiving. We ask for your prayers as we ask God to give us all we need to continue to spread the message of Jesus to the people in Denison.

At Storm Lake, we continue to offer our Bible studies and worship service every week, and we are glad to have restarted confirmation class. We are excited to see how our small group is interested in preparing themselves to learn more about God and, who knows, maybe future church leaders. We are also looking at the possibility to start an ESL program here. We need your prayers on this since we will be reaching out for volunteers.



Our outreach at St. Paul-Fort Dodge is on hold for the winter months. For now, we continue to keep in touch with contacts from our fall ESL class. Looking for the possibility to start something at the beginning of the new year.

Our Hispanic LWML group is active. Our ladies are participating as much as they can in events around the region.

Please feel free to come and help or celebrate these days with your new Hispanic Lutheran brothers and sisters and as always keep us in your prayers, gracias and Bendiciones. Pastor Lopez

Rev. Pedro Lopez, Asst. to the President
Missionary at Large,
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571-606-7600



OLIVERS LATEST TWIST

News from our missionary, Professor Oliver, in Taiwan

SERVING THE LORD IN TAIWAN

November 2023



I've launched my new film series with the faith that "All things are possible with God!" This truth is repeated over and over again in God's Word in many different ways. For example, "And they were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, 'Who then can be saved?' But looking at them, Jesus said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.'" (Mark 10:26-27). In fact, it seems that the more impossible it is to us, the more God is delighted to reveal His great "impossible" saving works! These videos will be 3 to 6 minute snippets to remind you to pray for us. Here is the link to Mission Possible #1:

<https://youtu.be/TOVHSNkpUdU>

After moving into my new office in the Luther Building (our Asia Mission Headquarters), I began my ambitious work of writing Chinese theological textbooks based on 22 years of teaching. I've already finished the Introduction and Chapter 1 for the first book. My hope is to write these four textbooks:

1. Solid Ground! Entering Theological Studies with Healthy Thought and Research Methods.
2. Conviction! Will You Too Die in the Wilderness with Moses? Luther's Bondage of the Will as Hermeneutical Framework for Reading the Bible.
3. New Testament Insights.
4. Basic New Testament Greek.

Gary Thies of Mission Central in Mapleton, Iowa linked me with St. John's Lutheran Church in Cordova, Nebraska to help do some short video devotions for their worldwide Facebook outreach. Talk about the impossible! The second devotion reached over one million people in the Middle East and other places! Here is what was reported: "Facebook marketing experts have said that these numbers are impossible to achieve, and they have not seen results like this before. God is definitely at work here.... There is no other way to explain these results.... We are reaching large numbers of persecuted Christians to encourage them to keep up the good fight as well as huge numbers of people that do not know Jesus."

Pray For:

1. Isaac & Gary at boarding school, and Ginny at Chiayi Morrison.
2. Missionaries and families at the Luther Building in Chiayi.
3. Family & relatives health and protection.
4. For faith, wisdom and diligence to write textbooks.

Gary with cello at school orchestra concert, Isaac at Chiayi park by our new home, and Ginny also at the park by our home. Gary and Isaac are at Morrison Academy in Taichung, and Ginny is at Morrison Academy Chiayi Branch (in the Concordia Middle School grounds).





THE FERRY FAMILY

Rev. Charles Ferry serves the LCMS as the Regional Director for Asia. He is responsible for all the LCMS missionaries and mission work in this part of the world.

He often represents the congregations and people of the LCMS before our partner churches as we work together toward the planting of Lutheran Churches.

Charles and Cheryl are the parents of seven children, three of whom were born overseas during Asia missionary service.

- Caleb (18)
- Caitlin (14)
- Carissa (11)
- Cassandra (9)
- Chloe (7)
- Charlotte (5)
- Caylee (2)

Before moving to Taiwan in 2018, the Ferry Family was based in Indonesia for over four years.

Being and Receiving Guests

Another church year comes to a close. In the time since the last newsletter, we have not been idle! Homeschooling is in full effect, and Charles has been working... inside Taiwan and outside Taiwan. See below for some highlights from Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore, and All Over Asia.



Above: Participants in Taiwan at an LCMS teaching event on being a Lutheran church worker

Above and Right: The regular convention of the Lutheran Church in the Philippines (LCP), an important partner in Asia. Meeting an early LCP president and his wife with the current president and pastors (right).

Below: Dr. Jim Baneck of LCMS Set Apart to Serve visits Singapore to preach the Word and teach.



SERVING THE LORD IN

Taiwan and All Over Asia

NEWS FROM THE FERRY FAMILY



End of the Church Year 2023



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Caleb as he endures his Air Force Basic Training, and for him and his fiancée Katrina Kautz as they plan for their life together.*
- *The Ferry family during frequent times apart during this season of crazy travel for Charles*
- *Peace in our time, so that the church may proclaim the Word in its truth and purity.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *An enjoyable and productive time with our whole LCMS Asia team together in Chiayi this September*
- *Continued safety and health for the Ferry Family*
- *Colleagues in the St. Louis home office who support us so completely and skillfully.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *Churches, partners, and friends who open to us their congregations, homes, and lives.*

Ferry Family Update



Above: Home school with Charlotte in full swing



Left: The Ferry family rejoices that our dear son Caleb has found an incredible Lutheran lady to be his wife. Katrina said "yes" this fall after being friends for several years! The two are now planning their wedding for a date some time in late 2024. We are all excited to welcome her to the family. Caleb is presently involved in his Air Force basic training, and his next placement will partly determine their wedding plans, including dates and location.



Above: the girls enjoy a perk of life in tropical Asia, playing in the water outside in late October. Try that in Wisconsin!

As the year is starting to wrap up and as we start to think about new beginnings for 2024, I wanted to mention a couple of things regarding giving. We hope to be closing out the 2023 year by January 15th and having statements out by January 30th. Envelopes will be available after the 2023 year has been closed. If you are interested in signing up for automatic giving, forms are available at the church office or they can be emailed to you upon request.



Steps for automatic giving:

1. Contact the church office and request the form.
2. After completing the form, return it to the church office.
3. If you want to make any changes, also contact the church office and complete a new form.

If do you not need envelopes, please also contact the church office and share that information.

The Zion family has experienced so many blessings during this past year. The number of kids that come up for the children's message makes me smile, the preschool program, the music each Sunday, the fellowship and most importantly the Word that we receive each week. With the blessings, there is also the business of the church which needs the support of each one of us. The topic of tithing can be a very awkward subject. In writing this little article I have been researching what the Bible says about tithing. And it says much!

A couple of key thoughts that spoke to me is that we cannot out-give God. God's Son gave his life for us. All that we enjoy is from God and we are the stewards, be it of time, be it of talents, be it of treasure. **I appreciate the way Dave Ramsey speaks of tithing:**

Ready for a truth bomb? Tithing isn't for God's benefit. He doesn't need our money. Instead, tithing is meant for our benefit because sacrificing a portion of our income reminds us to rely on God to meet our needs. Plus it makes us more aware of the needs of others too. In fact, supporting the needs of pastors and the work of the local church is one of the main purposes of tithing. Tithing helps your local church actively be the church by helping others. Giving encourages a grateful and generous spirit and can help steer us away from being greedy or loving money too much. Plus, being outrageously generous is a blast!

I hope you give his words deep thought. And, I encourage you to consider what Scripture says on tithing. It could change your life – and Zion's!

- Financial Secretary, Jean Hargens

Trinity News

Peace at Trinity

Peace in JESUS

God's people had been disobedient and unfaithful to Him. They would be recipients of His justice and be led away to captivity. Jeremiah shares their cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11). Held captive by guilty consciences; held captive by earthly circumstances; held captive by prejudices and political conflicts, many today share Jeremiah's lament, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."



God would not forget His people or His promise. Isaiah's prophecy (9:14) shared the promise of the Savior who would be called "Prince of Peace." The angel hosts announcing Jesus' birth to shepherds, would declare, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace," (Luke 2:14). The risen Lord would greet His frightened disciples, "Peace be with you," (John 20:21). The earthly church received the persistent greeting of the Apostle Paul, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Galatians 1:3).

The logo of Trinity Lutheran states, "Peace through the Cross." There is peace with God because the Son of God, born in Bethlehem, went to the cross to make peace with God and peace among God's people a reality. Peace has come to us! Come and hear of God's peace for you in all seasons of the church year and all seasons of life.

Peace be with you! Pastor Riggert

Peace for the CHILDREN

A special service on December 2(4 p.m.) will feature the pieces of the nativity scene. Trinity's children will help assemble the scene. Families will receive a nativity scene and devotions to continue to gather around the manger as a family. We continue to celebrate the opportunity for children to gather each Sunday morning for a special time of worship, learning, and crafts. Jesus brings His peace to our homes!

Peace PROCLAIMED through Advent and Christmas Worship

"Peace" will be the theme of our December worship! In addition to the Saturday afternoon services, special midweek Advent services will be held on December 6 and 13. A fellowship meal will be served beginning at 5:30 p.m. and the worship will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve worship will be Sunday, December 24 at 4 p.m. Hear the angel's announce "On Earth Peace." The service will conclude with the traditional candle lighting and "Silent Night." Join us on Christmas Day, Monday, December 25, at 9 a.m. for a special communion service with the theme, "Pondering Peace." The end-of-year service on Saturday, December 30 will focus on Simeon's desire to "Depart in Peace."

Trinity News: Peace at Trinity

Peace in TRANSITIONS

Transitions (death, illness, personal and family changes) often disrupt peace. The constant is Jesus who brings His people together and invites them to serve and witness together! Praise God for the faithful servants and leaders at Trinity. Trinity Transitions continue:



- Call documents for a spring seminary candidate are being prepared by the Board of Elders and Pastor Conner.
- The Voters' assembly will meet after the service on December 9 to approve a budget for 2024, elect officers, and address other business.
- Parsonage preparations for a new pastor continue. Diane Vetter is organizing use of Thrivent Action cards to assist with expenses. Contact Diane if you have Thrivent benefits to share.
- We continue to share our time, talents, and TREASURES. As the year concludes your generous gifts to support the mission and ministry of Trinity are needed. Approximately \$10,000 is needed before the end of the year to meet the budget goal. Opportunities for special additional gifts include: parsonage repair, air-conditioning replacement expense, and the endowment fund. Contact Treasurer, Bricy Lorenzen, for information on electronic giving. Thank you!
- We have peace to share with our family, friends, and community! Join us!

Zion Ladies Guild November Secretary Report

The regular meeting was held on Nov.8, 2023 @1pm. Pastor Conner opened with readings from Mathew 25 and prayer. President Ehlers called the meeting to order with Name of the Triune God. League Pledge. Roll call was answered with What would be difficult to for you to go a week without. 16 guests present. Birthdays: Cindy Leslie and Bev Grundmeier, Paula Vogl, Allen Ehlers. Anniversaries: John & Kathryn Schneider, Al and Becki Ehlers.



Mite box passed and prayer read. The Treasurer's report was reviewed. Darlene bought some paper good supplies. Kitchen treasurer report balance given. Robert Christensen family gave a for serving the funeral luncheon. Circle and Human care reported they are continuing to quilt.49 quilts were done this past year. One quilt went to Templeton for the Spolstra benefit.

Old Business: Advent concert was discussed (12/3/23). Signage sheets were passed around to sign up for dessert following the concert. We will serve coffee and hot apple cider. Christmas tree decorating was also discussed. Kathryn and some of the older Confirmation kids will decorate the tree this year.

New Business:

Group 2 will serve the first week Sunday of December. Nomination for Secretary and Treasurer for 2024: Gloria and Karen agreed to stay on for another term. Voted and passed. Joann Thomas agreed to stay on as VP. The officers will need to meet and finalize the new booklet and decide on mission disbursements in December. December 13th is the noon potluck event. Everyone brings a dish to share and ask a friend to join us. Kathryn has agreed to join us and provide us with some entertainment.

The next meeting will be in January of 2024. Meeting was adjourned. The Lord's Prayer and table prayer were recited. Lunch was served by Joann Thomas and Margret Kuchel.

Gloria Ewoldt, Secretary

Come, let us adore Him!



Christmas Services @ Zion

- 12/24 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Candlelight Services
- 12/25 10:00 a.m. Brunch & Hymn
Sing

Christmas Services @ Trinity

- 12/24 4:00 p.m. Candlelight Service
- 12/25 9:00 a.m. Communion
Service

Zion's Annual Voters' Meeting
Sunday, December 10
after Worship

*Learn
Celebrate
Participate*



Afternoon Communion Service

December 21 @ 1:30





Snapshots of Zion



Thank you to the Gore family for decorating Zion's Christmas tree this year!

Thank you to Pastor Riggert, DCE Kathryn, and youth readers for leading Zion & Trinity's joint Thanksgiving Eve Service!



Thank you to our faithful Orphan Grain Train volunteers!

Thank you to Amy Blackwell and Melanie Enenbach for loving children and sharing Jesus with them.



Thank you to everyone who filled Christmas boxes for Operation Christmas Child!



Thank you DCE Kathryn for organizing and Mr. Booth and Dr. Morris for chaperoning the Iowa District West youth gathering!



Please Note! All times and events are subject to change



Sept. - May

Bible Reading Challenge



Sunday Mornings Cold-Case Christianity Bible Study at Zion (after worship)



December 3

Advent Concert at Zion (7:00 p.m.)



December 6, 13, 20

**Midweek Advent Services (Zion: 5:45 service w/ meal following
Trinity: 5:30 meal, 6:30 service – no service Dec. 20 for Trinity)**



December 10

Zion Annual Voters' Meeting (after worship)



December 17

**Children's Christmas Programs (6:00 Student Musicians, 6:30
Programs begin)**



December 21

Zion Afternoon Communion Service (1:30 p.m.)



December 24

**Christmas Eve Services (Zion: 3:00 and 7:00)
(Trinity: 4:00)**



December 25

**Christmas Day Brunch and Hymn Sing
(Zion: 10:00 a.m.)
(Trinity: 9:00 a.m. Communion Service)**

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December Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion &

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Robert Ewoldt
Takara Hoffmeier
2. Melodie Boell (T)
Renee Grimm
Vera Hodne (T)
Kamryn Ketcham
Stephen Muhlbauer
Emma Schwieso
4. Janet Gruhn
Tracie Kurth
5. Tiffani Beck
Jase Hull
Ross Kusel
6. JoAnn Petersen
Eryn Ramsey
Nancy Wanninger
7. Beverly Graves
Mike Heaton
8. Owen Grabill
Annette Hilsabeck
Brian Stoberl
9. Deb Birks (T)
Piper Doyel
Wade Ranniger
10. Athena Bess
Breyton Johnson
Keaton Otto
Martin Wanninger
11. Michell Lile (T)
Jaxen Vollstedt
12. Everlynn Bauer
Zoey Heaton
13. Tricia Beck
Courtney Grabill
14. Neeka Jacobsen
15. Miranda Lingle (T)
Sheryl Zinke
16. Mabel Langel
17. Octavia Hodne
Lonnie Jahn (T)
Taylor Roe
18. Zane Diersen
Jay Miller
20. Casie Eischeid
Courtney Eischeid
Kourtney Grimm
21. Carson Swanson (T)
22. Kathy Vollstedt
23. Shane Boeck (T)
Joyce Schroeder
Gary Witt
24. Brittany Page
25. Ben Booth
Chris Greving
Carol Joens (T)
26. Brody Chapman
Larry Mahnke
Laurene Meeves
27. Eric Ramsey
28. Mila Irlbeck (T)
Elissa Riesberg
Billy Weitzl
29. Caden Muhlbauer
30. Cody Eischeid
Ginger Wardrip
31. Larry Ahrendsen
Amber Ehlers
Ellie Ranniger

Anniversaries

3. Gene & Colene Lohrmann ...
4. Karl & Angela Albertsen
5. Steve & Nancy Muhlbauer
8. Richard & Beth Mundt
10. Wyatt & Sylvia Badow (T)
12. Robert & Linnet Nissen
13. Greg & Amber Neumann
14. Keith & Tonya Benna
Bruce & Mary Grimm
23. Carl & Carol French
29. Glen & Shirley Ahrendsen
Kent & Karen Vollstedt

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

Official Acts

Transfer In:

Jennifer Stickrod from Peace Lutheran Church, Wall Lake, IA, November 3, 2023

Baptized:

Chayse Jaymes Gust and his children: Braylee Jaymes Gust and Beckett Elmer Gust; November 5, 2023; Pastor Jonathan Conner

In Our Prayers

Tawnya Jacobsen (Kristin Backhaus' sister), John Bexten (father of Beth Alexander and Amy Blackwell), Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Justeen Schwieso, Sherri Steffes, Cory Ahrendsen (Larry & Connie's son), Juanita Kurth, Kristin Webb, Bruce Rutz, Steve Rutz, Jamie Osterbuhr (Amy Hull's sister-in-law), Audrey Grinhaug (Howard and Audrey Roe's granddaughter), Denny Backhaus, Athena Bess, Larry Mahnke, David Peters (Cynthia Genzen's brother), Kaui Jenkins, Carol Peterson