To be Well (Part 2)

Do you want to be well?
Do you believe you can be?

Over the last few months (in our series on doing the Proverbs and now in this series), on the top-down control our mind has over our brain/body and our well-being, we have repeatedly emphasized our agency, our God-given ability to change our lives. To be more direct: *You* have agency. Whatever your life circumstances, you retain agency and God has given your mind the ability to direct your brain and body in healthy ways.

Dr. W. Lee Warren, author of *The Life-Changing Art of Self-Brain Surgery,* summarizes what we covered last month,

> Modern brain imaging and neuroscience have revealed that your brain is constantly breaking and remaking connections between its estimated eighty to one hundred billion neurons. Incredibly, a growing body of research demonstrates that you can control most of those connections when you determine what you pay attention to and how you deliberate about those things. It turns out that you can direct structural changes in your brain by thinking different thoughts, and those brain changes can benefit your body through improved physiology, reduced stress hormone production, and even alterations in the ways your genes are expressed (1).

In other words, your thoughts physically alter your brain and train it to automate certain responses (whether to freak out, spiral into depression and anxiety, or to process a situation calmly and thoughtfully using God's truth).

This month we want to give more focused attention to the thoughts that swirl through our minds. We want to think about what we're thinking about. Estimates vary, but according to Dr. Warren, we have over six thousand thoughts a day. As he points out, what we do with these thoughts "determines the course and quality" of our lives. If we want to be well, we need to pay attention to these thoughts especially because, as Dr. Warren shares, "a vast majority of our thoughts are automatic, and… most of them are untrue" (123). If that's the case (and the evidence suggests that it is), it becomes essential, especially if we want to be well, that we learn how to discern truth from falsehood.

Dr. Warren calls our thoughts *scripts*. These are the various thought streams that run through our minds. What most people don't realize is that they have a good deal of control over these thought streams, if they can learn how to exercise that control.

Over the next several paragraphs we will examine the various scripts that run through our minds and how we can manage and direct them. Dr. Warren describes one of these scripts as "automatic 'thoughts' *you think* that you think." According to Dr. Warren, these originate from our brains, not our minds. Remember how last month we described the brain as an automizing organ? We said, "God has intricately designed your amazing brain to automate processes in your body, like walking and breathing and pumping blood, so that you can give attention to everything that's happening in your world."

These automatic thoughts that you think you're thinking are really requests from your brain to automate a response to a particular situation. Dr. Warren explains,

> [Brain-generated "thoughts"] can be conceptualized as computer programs your brain runs that send messages to your mind. They are reflexive, preprogrammed events that occur automatically, formed by your experiences, habits, culture, upbringing, and emotional state. They arise from synaptic connections between neurons you have developed, consciously or unconsciously, over the course of your life. Because they sound like real thoughts, they may lead you to respond reflexively with anxiety or doubt, or to jump to conclusions (125).

In other words, your experiences in childhood and into adulthood have shaped you, literally shaped the neural connections in your brain. Your experiences have resulted in certain automatic responses in your brain, whether that be automatic anxiety and fear or automatic calm and peace. The good news, as we've shared already, is that you can change your brain (the big word is *neuroplasticity*—your brain can be physically rewired). You can choose what you want to automate by choosing what you're going to think about (because your thoughts wire your brain; your immaterial thoughts influence material reality—amazing!). We'll return to this. For now, let's appreciate the power of these automatic "thoughts" in our lives.

I'll begin with a personal example. Many of you know I am interviewed monthly by the Issues, Etc. podcast. They invite various guests to discuss a wide range of theological, cultural, political, relational, and ecclesiastical topics. I am invited to answer questions that confirmation youth have asked me over the years. In nearly 60 episodes I have answered dozens and dozens of thoughtful and difficult questions.

Oftentimes, when the interview has ended, intrusive thoughts will spring into my head: *You sounded like a fool. Someone is going to highlight your ignorance. Someone is going to show that you don't know what you're talking about.* These "thoughts" come from a deep-seated fear of looking incompetent, a fear that I have unintentionally rehearsed in the past, and a fear that my brain could quickly automate (if I let it).

This is why it's essential for us to learn to "take every thought captive to obey Christ…" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We cannot let our brain automate falsehoods and destructive thoughts. If I let my brain automate these thoughts (wherever they have come from), I would be allowing my brain to establish neural connections in my brain, which would make it more likely that I would have and dwell on these thoughts in the future. And this, as you can well imagine, would not do good things for me. Therefore, I must relentlessly return to what God says about me in the Word, specifically what God says about what He has done for me in Christ.

Let's consider one more example. Imagine you have an argument with a friend or with your spouse. Your brain will want to automate a response. Based on your life experiences and habits (what you've seen done and what you've repeated), your brain will head toward your default, but it will sound like a script in your head: *She's going to leave me.* Or, *I can't take this anymore; I need to leave him*. Or, *I need to make her hurt like she made me hurt*.

Dr. Warren explains what is happening in your brain:

> You may react to that input with anxiety and panic before you even stop to process the fact that you've made it through rough spots in your relationship before. Once you give consent to your brain to run the anxiety-panic program, it will produce the physiological

> changes associated with stress. Your body suffers, and you have made new synapses that makes it more likely that you'll have that same response the next time you have a fight (124).

What you must remember is that you retain agency. This is a gift from God. You get to decide what you think about, and what you choose to think about affects what your brain automates. If you want to be well, you need to get very intentional about your thoughts. You need to pay attention to what you're thinking. And you need to ensure you are giving careful attention to the voices you allow to catechize you. If you want to automate anxiety and panic, be catechized by those modeling anxiety and panic. If you want to automate calm and peace, be catechized by those modeling calm and peace. This is why I have so strongly emphasized studying Proverbs (along with the other wisdom literature in Scripture). God teaches us how to think well, how to align our minds with truth. And by aligning our minds with truth we will physically wire our brains by that truth.

Dr. Warren discusses a second script in his book. He calls them "real thoughts:"

> Rather than being presented to the mind by the brain, these arise in the mind out of your consciousness and then interact with your brain in a mind-down way… These mind-generated real thoughts are not brain programs but come from you—your consciousness and your 'self' (125).

To return to an earlier example, these thoughts sound less like *You sounded like a fool* and more like *Did you prepare adequately? Is there an aspect of that question you need to study more?* And, *Who does God say you are?* Dr. Warren says that these thoughts "show us opportunities and issues that need to be addressed but are not incessantly negative or condemning" (126).

Here is where we invite God's thoughts (from His Word) into our minds. This is why a deep familiarity with Scripture is so important. By thinking God's thoughts we actually invite God, through His Word, to wire our brains. God's Word physically alters our brains and physically blesses our bodies—what a remarkable thought! God's Word physically aligns our brains and bodies with Him and His truth. It's no wonder the psalmist declares the man *happy* who meditates night and day on God's Word (Psalm 1)!

I have found great benefit in memorizing the hymns (which are just Scripture set to music). *God's Own Child I Gladly Say It* will forever be one of my favorites. Consider the first verse:

> God's own child, I gladly say it:
> I am baptized into Christ!
> He, because I could not pay it,
> Gave my full redemption price.
> Do I need earth's treasures many?
> I have one worth more than any
> That brought me salvation free
> Lasting to eternity!

Remember some of the automatic thoughts of self-doubt and self-reproval I struggle with? This hymn brings God's Word into my mind so that I can bring God's truth into my brain, so that I can wire my brain with God's truth. And when I do this, I find mental peace and physical wellbeing.

Dr. Warren discusses one more script that we need to bring discernment to. This script is specifically spiritual in nature. We've discussed bringing God's Word into our minds, hearing God speak to our minds through His Word. We must also take seriously the spiritual realm that is hostile toward God and us. Jesus speaks of the prince of this realm, Satan, as a thief and says he

has one primary goal: "to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). The apostle Paul bluntly says, "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers…" (2 Corinthians 4:4). This god (Satan) blinds through lies, lies about God and lies about us. He lied to Eve in the Garden and He lies to us still today.

Dr. Warren describes how we often experience Satan's voice:

> This voice feels accusatory, provoking shame, fear, or other negative emotions. Its messages include, *You are worthless. No one could love you. You're the worst person ever; God could never forgive you for that.* Sometimes, this voice sounds alluring and points out all the ways you deserve to feel a particular way or do a particular thing. *It's okay! What's the harm. You deserve it! No one will get hurt* (127).

We must not listen to this voice. We must not give it a foothold in our mind or allow it to weasel its way into our brain. Scripture exhorts us repeatedly to "resist the devil" (James 4:7), to stand "firm in [our] faith" (1 Peter 5:9), and to "stand against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). We do this, as Scripture makes clear, by putting on the whole armor of God, which includes the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. This is our offensive weapon to fight against the lies of Satan. Again I return to the aforementioned hymn *God's Own Child I Gladly Say It*. Verse 3 addresses Satan:

> Satan, hear this proclamation:
> I am baptized into Christ!
> Drop your ugly accusation,
> I am not so soon enticed.
> Now that to the font I've traveled,
> All your might has come unraveled,
> And, against your tyranny,
> God, my Lord, unites with me!

This is a bold confession and a direct sword strike into Satan's lies and accusations. And it is a necessary component of our mental (and spiritual, emotional, and physical) wellbeing.

In coming months we'll discuss distinguishing emotions from feelings and feelings from facts. We'll also talk about your personality, about your tendency to dismiss unhealthy habits as "just your personality." And we'll discuss bringing God's truth into the lies and hard things of our lives, into sadness and depression, into illness, stress, and anxiety, into negative self-talk, loneliness, and bad habits. Our goal is to empower our minds to instruct our brains in truth—God's truth—so that we can live in the freedom and happiness of that truth, so that we can be well.

To review what we've discussed this month, we'll turn again to Dr. Warren:

> Knowing that thousands of times a day you hear multiple types of scripts that all *feel like true thoughts* should convince you of the importance of learning to discern the true ones and recognize and challenge those that are false. If you want to become healthier, feel better, and be happier, you need to believe that not every automatic thought you have is true. But learning to discern the nature and source of a thought is the key to taking control and beginning to write your own script (128).

We'll continue the conversation next month. For now, we simply repeat our opening questions:

Do you want to be well?
Do you believe you can be?

Armed with God's Word and Truth and our intentional effort to take every thought captive to it, it's possible.

- Pastor Conner

10-Day Back-To-School Prayer Challenge

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." Ephesians 6:18

This month I, DCE Kathryn, wanted to share a resource/article I found from a podcast I like to listen too called Risen Motherhood. But this is not just for mamas. This is for everyone in the church. As we kick off the new school year let us all join together in praying for our kids, teachers, and schools of all kinds. Those at IKM and other districts around, those at private school, those homeschooled. Those teaching, those guiding, and for the kids as they learn. That God would give His peace, His joy, that He would bring good godly friendships, provide His protection, grant His wisdom, and so much more. Let us together join in prayer with this 10-Day Back-to-School Prayer Challenge. Imagine what God will do when all the saints together gather to pray for 10 days at the start of the school year!

10-Day Back-To-School
Prayer Challenge
By Risen Motherhood

Written for any mom at any stage to pray for her local schools, educators, and children—be it homeschools, co-ops, private schools, charter schools, or public schools.

Day 1: A Prayer for Peace

Matthew 28:20 "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Father, you promise to be with us always. No matter if a child leaves home or not, help them remember that you are with them and you are near. Draw each child's heart to you—give them not only the peace of God, but open their hearts to find peace with you. If any child is in a new school or engaging in a new school type this year, bring them a particular comfort and confidence as they experience new and unfamiliar things. Help all the children to not be afraid, but to trust you to care and protect them this year. Remind them they are never alone and you offer mercy and grace in their time of need. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 2: A Prayer for Joy

Psalm 16:11 "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Father, I pray this school year brings the children joy. Let them have fun in their homes or classrooms, enjoying their friends and making memories. For some students, who don't have a safe home life, I pray they would find a refuge at school. As each child engages in their course work, may they see that you are the creator of all things—you are Lord over math, science, music, art, and reading. Let them see your eternal power and divine nature as they study and learn. Give them an excitement and zeal for life and learning that leads them to the knowledge of you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 3: A Prayer for Friendship

Ecclesiastes 4:9 "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up."

Father, give each child a kind and loving group of friends this year. May they connect with other students quickly at the start of the year, and find friendships that encourage and support them while they are at home or at school. Give the children discernment to find and surround themselves with godly company that encourages good character and decisions. I pray that each

student would be the friend they want to have, offering patience, self-control, kindness, and humility to others. May they see the least and love like you. Above all, may they know you are their Father and their friend. They can bring all their cares and concerns to your throne of grace with confidence because of Jesus' sacrifice. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 4: A Prayer for Protection

Psalm 121 "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore."

Father, I pray that you keep the children safe during the school year. You promise to be our keeper, protecting us from all evil. Prevent evil from infiltrating the halls, homes, and hearts of schools and students. Give teachers, administrators, and parents, wisdom and sound judgment as they make policies and decisions around safety and protection. Protect the children from bullies, or from becoming a bully. Remind us that you will bring justice and right all wrongs someday. Create in each person a pure heart and help their thoughts and actions to be pure and honoring to you. Be our sun and our shield. Give us courage to love one another as we go through our days. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 5: A Prayer for Wisdom

James 3:17 "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."

Father, you promise wisdom for anyone who asks for it. I pray for each child as they enter another school year that you would help them to resist negative influences and make wise choices. We know the enemy wants to make them stumble, but we pray for your protection over their hearts and minds. May those who are found in you put on the full armor of God to shelter them in every way. Let the students be peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere with one another and with the teachers and staff. Give the students discernment to choose right over wrong, not engage in peer pressure, and to speak and act in God-honoring ways. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 6: A Prayer For Parents

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Father, I pray for the parents of all the students heading back to school this year. First and foremost, if they don't know you, may they come to a saving faith in you, joyfully receiving the work of the Holy Spirit in their life. No matter if they are full-time homeschooling or sending their children to another location for their education, I pray that you would help parents to trust you with their children this year. Help them to not lean on their own understanding, but acknowledge you in all their ways. Please give parents patience, endurance, and organization with school schedules and activities, and may they remember their labor is not in vain. Let them look to you for their help and comfort and bring them a peace that passes all understanding. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 7: A Prayer for Teachers

Psalm 90:17 "May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."

Father, thank you for all the teachers who are educating students this year. Whether they are mothers at home or paid staff at a local school building, encourage their hearts as they engage in this important role. Give the teachers energy and excitement for the work, patience and compassion for the students, and wisdom and creativity for the coursework. Give them true joy in their tasks and help them to not feel burdened, overwhelmed, or alone in their work. Give them friendship and comrades in their roles and help them to feel supported by parents and the administration. May they all come to a saving faith in you, and may your favor rest on them. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 8: A Prayer for Administrators

Ecclesiastes 2:13 "I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness."

Father, I pray for my community's school administrators. Whether private, public, or a homeschool co-op, grant our school leaders unity, strength, and knowledge. Give them discernment as they work through budgets, staffing, and policies. May they love wisdom and light and fear your name. Help them to make decisions that honor and reflect your values that lead to the flourishing of not just the students and staff, but the entire community. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 9: A Prayer for After School Sports and Activities

Mark 12:30-31 "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Father, I thank you for so many opportunities for the children to grow and learn through extracurricular activities. I pray that you would give parents wisdom in what activities to engage in and where to set boundaries. As the students participate, help them to display your love to others with their heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love their neighbor as themselves. May they find success in their endeavors while maintaining a humble spirit, unity with others, and honorable conduct—not cheating or tricking to get ahead. Let them have fun and have a spirit of gratitude, remembering all good gifts come from you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Day 10: A Prayer for My Role in Supporting My Local Schools

James 2:14-17 "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

Father, you call us to faith with works and I know that loving you means loving others. Show me what I can do for my local community's schools and how I can support them. Whether that's serving on the PTO, volunteering to serve lunches, helping another homeschool mom with selecting curriculum, running for school board, or simply continuing to pray, give me eyes to see the ways I can serve the children, families, and staff at our local schools. Help me to be a faithful presence in my community, lobbying for the weak, caring for the least, and shining light into dark places. You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life—make that reality known to all. Show me how I can tangibly participate in the work you're doing in my community. In Jesus Name, Amen.

"10-Day Back-To-School Prayer Challenge" by Risen Motherhood: Gospel Hope for Moms, risenmotherhood.com

Preschool Praises for August

Summer has flown by, and the new school year is quickly approaching. A lot of work has been happening behind the scenes the past couple of months.

Earlier this summer the tile flooring in the preschool room was tested for asbestos. The glue attaching the tiles to the floor tested positive. Consequently, the decision was made to go ahead and replace the flooring completely prior to the start of the school year. Because this was somewhat of an unplanned project, the timing of getting it completed is cutting it close to the beginning of the school year. The new flooring is scheduled to be installed on August 31 and September 1, and our first day of school is on September 8. If all goes as planned, we will have 6 days to get everything moved in and ready for students. There may be a somewhat last-minute request for help moving items back into the classroom during that time.

On August 7th, Miss Melanie and Miss Gwen attended the annual Iowa Lutheran Early Childhood Conference in Des Moines. This year's theme was "Chosen." Pastor Conner was one of this year's keynote speakers and gave a talk titled "No Nametags Required."

August 22nd preschool hosted the bake sale at Manning's Farmers Market. The monetary donations we received will go toward the costs associated with the flooring project in the preschool classroom. A big thank you to everyone who supported the bake sale by either baking or buying. I appreciate you all!

Classroom visits were held on August 25 and 26, because the classroom is under construction, visits were held upstairs in the Fellowship Hall. The kids got to see where chapel time is held weekly with Pastor Conner! Chapel time has historically been a highlight of the week for our preschoolers, I'm sure this year will be no exception.

We have 22 students enrolled in the preschool program this year. Of those 22, 15 of them are returning families who have previously had their older children in our preschool. This is my (Miss Melanie's) 5th year in the classroom. There are 13 kids this year who I have previously had one or more of their siblings at Zion Preschool. There is a good chance I will be calling kids by a sibling's name at some point in the year. Hahaha :)

Miss Melanie

Miss Melanie Enenbach
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Keeping in step with the Spirit (Pt. 4): Patience

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." – Gal. 5:22-23

With the previous fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace, we have found that they are the serious business of God to establish these fruits among us by the example of Himself. God says, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." Patience is part of this sanctified (holy) life to which we are called as the people of God.

Patience is a fruit of the Spirit because it is the strength to remain rightly ordered when everything in you wants to react.

Patience is tied to slowness to become angry consistently in the Scriptures. This makes the modern mental tool of counting slowly to 10 an effective method for someone who needs to remain calm rather than give in to their reactions. The wisdom literature of Proverbs 14:29 says, "Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly." And in chapter 16 of Proverbs, it is written, "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty warrior."

The Hebrew phrase translated "slow to anger" (*arek appayim*) is also commonly translated as "patient." When we look at the wisdom literature of the Bible and translate the previous Proverbs using "patient" rather than "slow to anger", we can see more clearly that patience is highly valued. Solomon, who was blessed with unsurpassed wisdom himself, says that the patient one ("The slow to anger one) is someone with great understanding and better to have on your side than the mighty warrior. Let that sink in. The benefits of patience are understanding and being more preferable than a mighty warrior.

And the mighty warrior of whom Solomon speaks is more like a champion who would go before the whole army to fight the opposing army's champion. Think of David and Goliath (the champion of the Philistines and a giant). As we can remember, Solomon's father, David, fought the giant Goliath and won while the rest of the Israelite armies were shaking in their boots. But David trusted in the Lord, and the battle was won.

When we wait on the Lord to fulfill His plan among us, we are proven through patience to be more preferable than a giant as we wield great understanding. Impatience reacts without thinking, and those reactions can have consequences. If any of you are impatient, you must recognize that you stir up strife, multiply problems, and damage what you have been called to build up. These consequences of impatience should tell you that you are not merely an inconvenience to those around you. Instead, you have added much to the problem.

The wisdom of God does not flatter us; instead, it often exposes us in our foolishness.
This is why the Holy Scriptures declare in the book of Proverbs that an impatient person is an exalter of folly. And to exalt something is to raise that something up as a goal or as something to which you would like to aspire.

I have never known someone who would openly say that they aspire to be foolish, nor have I heard someone say that their goal in life is to stir up strife or add problems to their lives or to hurt those around them. However, the Proverbs expose us in that anyone who practices impatience is the same one who is, by their actions, attaining the goal and aspiration of foolishness.

Impatience is tied to becoming angry, or having a "hasty temper".

Anger clouds your judgment. The one ruled by it has lost their clarity. Anything spoken is not truly heard; anything seen is not truly perceived; anything spoken is not spoken with love or wisdom. Impatience makes it so that you may be present, but you are not clear. It is as if you are clouded with smoke and cannot sense direction or intention, only smoke. Patience cuts through this smoke and restores your senses so that love can operate again.

Paul speaks to this when he writes to the Church at Ephesus, "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love." - Ephesians 4:1-2

Patience is what makes real relationships possible. Without patience, everything fractures.
Think of times that hinge upon the practice of patience:

- Has it shown up in your marriage when you are misunderstood or interrupted?
- Has it shown up with your children when they move slower than your schedule allows?
- Has it shown up in your friendships when they fail you, frustrate you, or simply do not see things the same way as you?

I am sure you can think of many more circumstances, but these are the areas of your life where patience is either practiced or abandoned.

Impatience reacts quickly, cuts people off, raises the volume, and assumes the worst.

Impatience demands resolution now, clarity now, change now.

In contrast, patience slows the reaction enough to create space, not in avoidance, but so that truth may be spoken in love and received.

As Paul said, patience does not cut people off or raise the volume or assume the worst. Instead, patience works hand in hand with humility, gentleness, and love to bear with one another. Patience is also something that is not thrown out the window when another person sins against you. Instead, patience is most needed in the moments of sin, especially when someone sins against you. Patience bears with one another, not by excusing the sin, but by refusing to let anger corrupt your ability to deal with the sin.

This is a wonderful time to examine how God shows forth patience with us when we sin against Him. Throughout the Old Testament, God's people resist Him. They reject and even kill the prophets. They fall away from Him again and again. Stiff-necked stubbornness, rebellion, and unbelief mark the story. However, God does not abandon them. David writes in Psalm 103:8, **"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."** This is shown by the very fact that He continues to pursue us with love; He continues to call us to faithfulness by the repentance of our sins, He continues to send laborers into His harvest. He bears with His people across generations of resistance. Then, in the fullness of time, He sends His Son.

This is patience in its clearest form. Patience is not laziness or indifference to sin, it is not a compromise with evil, but it is the willingness to bear with the sins of a rebellious people to the point of the cross. Jesus does not set aside truth. He fulfills it. But He does this with patience which absorbs suffering, rejection, and evil in order to bring about redemption. We are called to bear fruits of our faith, one of which is patience. This

pattern of patience given by God is love stretched over time. It is anchored in the truth and seeks the good of the other. However, this example given by God seems hard to follow.

So, let me help you identify moments of impatience by a series of questions that you can ask yourself to examine where you may be impatient. Where are you quick to react? When does frustration rise in you? Is it when things are not moving fast enough, are not clear enough, or are not in your control? Who are people that you struggle to bear with in love?

When examining yourself, it is crucial that you do not try to justify your actions. Instead, simply name those moments with honesty. Then, begin to slow down. When you identify the moments of impatience, you may realize them when they come again in the future. Then, when that moment comes again, interrupt your instinct reaction. You interrupt your hasty reaction when you do not rush to speak; when you do not assume you understood everything immediately. Instead, if you find that you struggle with impatience, then work on these things:

Ask better questions.
Listen longer than you want to.
Speak only when you can do so in love.

These are challenges that do not give in to weakness. Instead, the practice of patience is mastery over your instinct reaction to anger. God has been patient with you. He has borne your burden with you in your confusion, rebellion, and sin. As you have received that kind of patience, so practice it in step with the Spirit at work in you. ~ Pastor Staehr

August 2-4 - Trinity's VBS
Trinity averaged 53 kids
LOHRMANN
Trucking

August 5th - Trinity's First Family Night
Trinity hosted around 150 kids + parents at our Family Night
VARIETY PACK
VARIETY PACK
I'M A BEARDED DAD

!AMIGOS EN CRISTO and GRACIA!

News from ***Las Iglesias Evangélicas Luteranas***
Amigos en Cristo in Denison and Gracia in Storm Lake
Pastor Pedro Lopez

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This has been a wonderful summer and I am grateful to share the many ways God is working through our ministry.

Community Outreach and Service
In July and August, we began volunteering with Timothy Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs through its Swaddling Clothes program. We are also gathering the names of Spanish-speaking community members interested in learning English through our upcoming ESL classes.

Hispanic National Convention
On July 27th, six of us traveled to Irvine, California, to participate in the Hispanic National Convention. It was an inspiring opportunity to learn and connect with people who share our faith, language, and traditions. Fili and Adrian also spoke with the director of the Center for Hispanic Studies and we pray they will soon begin their studies.

St. Paul, Carroll
Our Saturday evenings of praise, prayer, and Bible study continue to provide a meaningful time together. We also enjoy monthly fellowship gatherings that strengthen our community.

St. John, Storm Lake
We continue to support the Swaddling Clothes program on the second Saturday of each month. The program serves an average of 50 families each month and is making a meaningful difference in the community. Through this outreach, we meet families and invite them to Sunday worship at Grace.

Holy Trinity, Farnhamville
We have met with the congregation at Holy Trinity and are planning an ESL program to serve Farnhamville and the surrounding area. This outreach will help us connect with Hispanic residents and people from other ethnic communities and invite them to church.

Upcoming Bilingual Outdoor Worship:

When: September 13, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.
Location: Graham Park in Carroll, weather permitting
Music: Mariachi San Pablo from El Paso, Texas

The bilingual service will bring together Hispanic brothers and sisters from across Iowa District West, along with friends and members of local congregations. Please share this invitation with your contacts.

Prayer and Thanksgiving:

Please continue to pray for the Hispanic Ministry of Iowa District West and for the communities we serve. The prayers and faithful service of our volunteers are a great encouragement, and we thank the Lord for each of you. We also ask for your continued prayers for my wife and I, that the Lord would graciously guide, strengthen, and equip us for the work He has entrusted to us.

Bendiciones,
Pastor Pedro Lopez

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

Mission Door Offering!

Sept. 13

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

Pastor Lopez will preach and present at Zion on September 20th!

Sept. 20

Pastor Pedro Lopez
Missionary to Hispanics in Western Iowa

Get equipped to be a voice for life.

Learning Session:
The Christian in the civil realm

Celebrate Life!

Thurs. Sept. 17 @ 6:30 p.m.
Manning Library

HYMNS OF THE SEASON

Three Hymns (30 Mins.)
Season: **Season after Pentecost**
Tuesday, September 8
@ 6:30 p.m. @ Zion

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

Sing and celebrate the hymns of the season!
An informal, family devotion setting. All invited!

Volunteer Opportunity

Zion and Trinity,
Consider ministering to your neighbor in partnership with MRHC. See below.

CARE CALLER PROGRAM

Care. Connection. *You Are Not Alone.*

Our Care Caller Program is here to bring a friendly voice and a listening ear.

WHAT IS THE CARE CALLER PROGRAM?

Our volunteers make weekly phone calls to check in, offer friendly conversation, and help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

A simple call can make a big difference.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Patients referred to us through

- Hospital discharge
- Senior Life Solutions discharge
- Clinic referrals

Participation is completely voluntary.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- One friendly phone call per week
- Calls last about 10-20 minutes
- Conversations focus on connection and companionship
- Your privacy is always respected and protected

WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS WILL DO

- Introduce themselves and build rapport
- Engage in respectful, friendly conversation
- Listen and provide companionship
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Encourage you to contact your providers for any medical concerns

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

This program is non-medical. Our volunteers do not provide medical advice, treatment, or clinical assessment.

MANNING REGIONAL HEALTHCARE CENTER
An Affiliate of MERCYONE

Ask your primary care provider about our Care Caller Program to participate.

Call (712) 655-2072 to learn more.

IOWA DISTRICT WEST: SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING

UNSHAKABLE LIGHT

UNSHAKABLE LIGHT

Camp Okoboji

October 2-4, 2026

"I am the light of the world..."
– John 8:12

July 29th - New Sponsors were installed for Reagan Woebke

August 26th - Pastor Staehr led the opening Chapel at Unity Ridge to start their 2026-27 academic school year.

AUGUST 2026 @TRINITY

love God + love people

iowa district west

jr youth gathering 2026

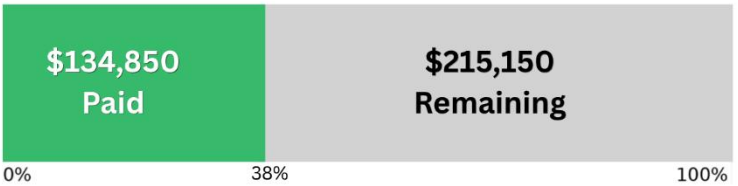
keynote speaker pastor andrew noble

october 24–25, 2026

sheraton hotel, west des moines

Roof Loan (20 year note)
Beginning balance: $350,000

Special gifts to the roof are welcome!



The sooner we pay it off, the more resources we have to invest in the mission and ministry.

CFO Update

- The balance of the loan at the end of July is $215,150.

CFO Update

- Through July Budget Income: $262,520
- Through July Budget Expenses: $267,381
- Total Shortage Through July: $4,860.72
- Note: Council has held back payments to LFS, Camp Okoboji, and Zion Preschool. Total hold back=$14,200

Budget Outlook

- Estimated Monthly Budget Income Needed: $41,670
- 7-Month Budget Target: $291,690 or above

This monthly update is intended to ensure the tone is transparent, urgent, and encouraging regarding our financial position.

Through July, income is behind target by $29,170.

Rally SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 13

TEACHERS INSTALLED IN WORSHIP
SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS @ ZION!

Rally SUNDAY

Fellowship CLUB

September 2026

Let's Get Real!

"Let's Get Real!" is the 2026-2027 theme for the Zion Fellowship Club meetings. In a world of artificial intelligence and imitation products, we crave the "real." The Book of Acts shares the reality of Jesus' resurrection and faith responses of real boldness, humility, generosity, and joy.

Gather for Bible study, mission education, and fellowship the second Monday of the month—Monday, September 14 at 1:30 p.m. Guests are always welcome!

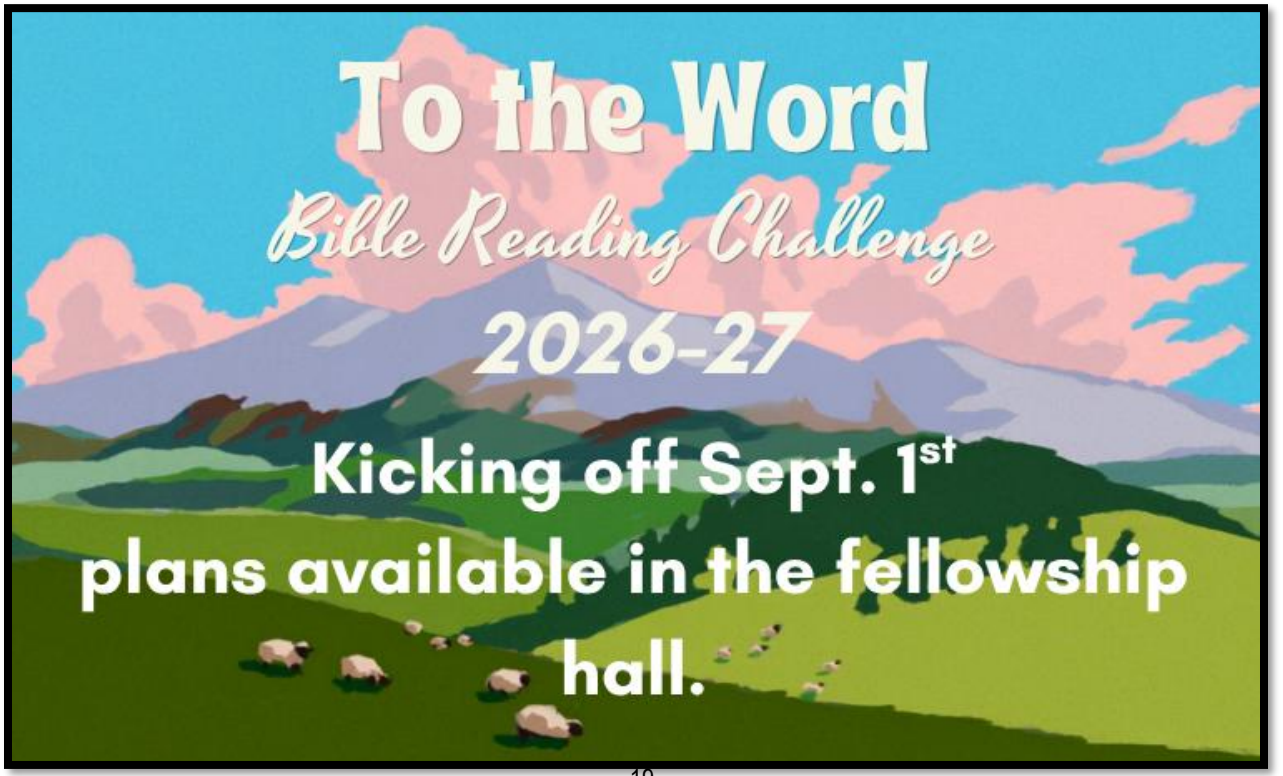
The Fellowship Club supports various mission projects locally and globally!

Thank You

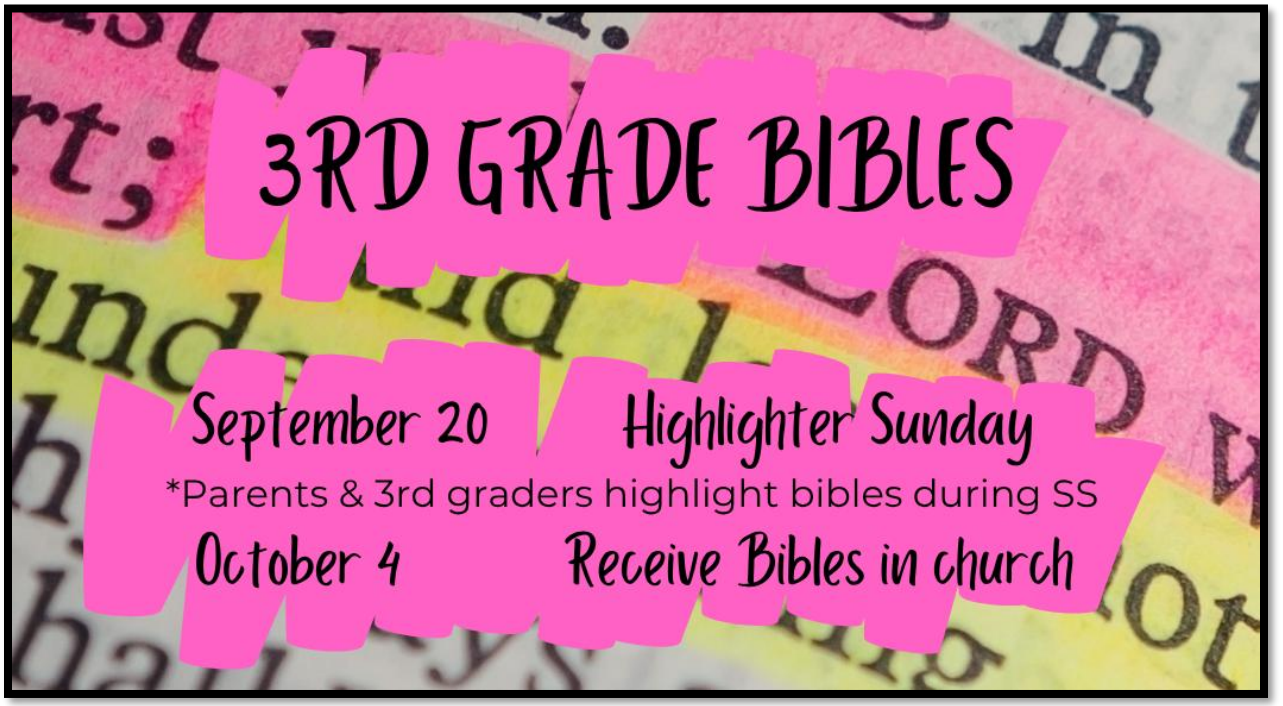
We would like to thank our Zion family for all of the support and love shown to our family as we navigate this devastating loss. We are truly humbled by it all. We appreciate all of the prayers, visits, phone calls, cards, gifts, flowers, food and hugs. Thank you to anyone who provided bars or assisted in any way with the prayer vigil, visitation, and funeral from taking care of the sound to distributing the candles and displaying the beautiful flowers in the vases on the tables. We want to say a special thank you to Pastor Riggert, Kathryn and John Schneider, and Pastor Conner for being there with us, singing and playing beautifully at the prayer vigil, leading and organizing the most meaningful prayer vigil and funeral and just walking with our whole family through all of this. Rylie-Shea was a bright light in our family and she is deeply missed. Thank you and in Rylie's own words, "I am woman, hear me roar!"

- The family of Dr. Rylie-Shea Frankee Muhlbauer

ZION FAMILY & FRIENDS
HAYRIDE,
HOTDOGS, & S'MORES!
OCT. 18TH @ 4:30PM
EVERYONE WELCOME!


To the Word
Bible Reading Challenge
2026-27
Kicking off Sept. 1st
plans available in the fellowship
hall.

Come learn about youth group, gathering & Advent/Lenten meals
High School Youth Meeting
during Sunday School
Sept. 13th


3RD GRADE BIBLES
September 20
Highlighter Sunday
*Parents & 3rd graders highlight bibles during SS
October 4
Receive Bibles in church

August Update from Camp

Join us Sunday, September 6 for our next Omelet Brunch in the Dining Hall from 9:30 am - 1 pm. This will be also our final Summer Sunday Worship (9 a.m.). See you next Summer! Our next (and last for 2026) Omelet Brunch will be October 4.

Also, we're always looking for additional help for our Omelet Brunches, especially omelet cookers. No experience needed, will train!

Please mark your calendars to join us for Volunteer Weekend, October 9-10. There will be many activities available to get us ready for winter. Call the office if you have any questions or if you plan to come - 712-337-3325. We will also have a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 10th.

<u>Wants and Needs</u>

Garden Hoses - at least 50 feet / Brooms (with the upright dust pan) / Outdoor Rocking Chairs / Laundry soap, bleach and hand soap / Queen mattresses / Milwaukee Tool batteries (20V-6 amp) "Red lithium" / Thrivent Action Team Cards (contact Kellie Jones for potential projects; 712-337-3325)

In Christ,
Adam Hengeveld
Executive Director

UPDATE

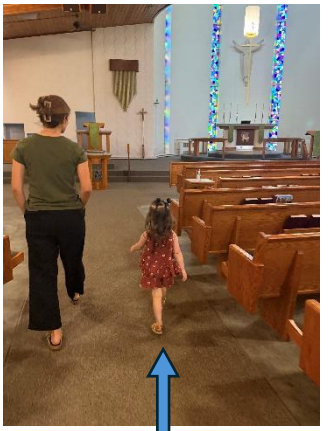
www.campokoboji.org

Melanie Enenbach (director) and Gwen Irlmeier (assistant teacher) celebrate the preschool's bake sale at Manning's Farmers Market.

Snapshots of Zion

Confirmation parents register their children for confirmation.

Aaron and Sara F. celebrate the baptism of their son Krew with the children of Zion watching.



Preschool students meet their teachers, play with toys, and explore the building

Darlene V. and Robbie G. appreciate Zion's ministry.

Upcoming Events @ ZION & TRINITY

Please Note! All times and events are subject to change

Bible Study	Sunday mornings @ Zion following worship (Digging into the Word: The Gospel According to Matthew)
September 2	Confirmation begins (4:00 p.m.)
September 2	Financial Peace at Zion (6:00 p.m.)
September 8	Hymns of the Season at Zion (6:30 p.m.)
September 13	Rally Day / Sunday School Begins at Zion
September 13	High School Youth Meeting at Zion
September 17	Afternoon Communion Service at Zion (1:30 p.m.)
September 17	Celebrate Life Meeting (6:30 p.m.) at Manning Library
September 20	3rd Graders Highlight Bibles
October 2	Staley's Chicken Supper at Trinity (4:30 – 7:00 p.m.)
October 4	3rd Graders Receive Bibles in Worship
October 11	Preschool Pancake Breakfast (9:00 a.m. – Noon / worship at 8:00 a.m.)
October 18	Family and Friends Hayride at Zion (4:30 p.m.)

September Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1. Angie Miller
2. Collin Brus
   Cindy Scheuring (T)
3. Graham England
   Bruce Grimm
4. Brock Kusel
   Alaina Salter
5. Madelyn Dreher
   Sarah Lorenzen
6. Brylie Baier
   Mike Hull
7. Kyle Arp
   Kingston Neumann
8 Austin Johnson
   Caleb Lahr (T)
   Mary Lueth (T)
   Carlys Stribe
   Darlene Vollstedt
9. Brock Baier
   Katie Cornelius
   Eric Fara
   Diane Vetter (T)
10. Mazie Blankman
    Alison Karsten
11. Ambria Ehlers
    Brandi Wiig
12. Christian Birks (T)
    Kristie Borkowski
13. Carol Brus
    Allen Stribe
14. Lauren Greving
15. Dylon Bauer
    Will Sanford
16. Diane Lahr (T)
    Brooke Long
    Rylan Mundt
17. Waylon Bornhoft (T)
    Kaien Stoeckel
    Charlie Tibben
18. LeAnn Hacker (T)
    Madison Musfeldt (T)
    Lawrence Paulsen
    Kali Weller
19. Kora Kusel
    Sue Soll
20. Marlene Jahn (T)
    Vivian Wardrip
21. Daniel Hilsabeck
    Alexis Karsten
    Wendy Stribe
    Daniel Vonnahme
22. Jason Boell (T)
    Laynie Harris
    Isla Haubrich (T)
    Haley Kuchel
    Liv Riesselman
24. Ella Sanford
25. Jack Riesselman
26. Tanner Crawford
    Lillian Genzen
27. Don Beck
    Ashley Martin (T)
    Thea Olson (T)
28. Cassandra Burcham
    Camden Havick
    Susie Ulrickson
29. Michael Lorenzen (T)
30. Karl Albertsen
    Jason Ehlers
    Emerson Havick
    Judy Irwin (T)

Anniversaries

1 Jay & Lynna Miller
2 Jim & Lori Asmus
3 Frank & Gloria Boeck (T)
  Steve & Dara Jorgensen (T)
  Bary & Karen Kienast
4 Don & Trisha Beck
  Jon & Jill Saunders
6 Gary & Joyce Schroeder
9. Russ & Beverly Bruhn
10 Jason & Lori Ferry (T)
14 Scott & Kristine Lingle (T)
16 Eugene & Susan Mahnke
19 David & Joene Bohlmann
  Kevin & Janet Brus
  Jeff & Jean Hargens
20 Todd & Dawn Ketcham
  Alex & Kari Ranniger
  Brett & Kasie Sanford
22 Larry & Connie Ahrendsen
24 Ben & Beth Booth
  Karl & Donna Rutz
27 Jesse & Katie Weitl
28 Conrad & Juanita Kurth
30 Allen & Carlys Stribe

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

Official Acts

Baptism:
Krew Allen Folk, son of Aaron & Sara Folk, August 9, 2026, Pastor Jonathan Conner

Funeral:
Dr. Rylie-Shea Frankee Muhlbauer; Died August 2, 2026; Funeral August 8, 2026; Pastor Jonathan Conner

In Our Prayers

Gene Mahnke, Gary & Joyce Schroeder, Martin Wanninger, Darlene Vollstedt, Mary Olson (Shelly Gruhn's mom), Carol French, Jim Asmus, Athena Bess, Kaui Meyer, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Sherri Steffes, Judy Reinke (Ernie's sister-in-law), Karen Vollstedt, Stacey Rolenz, Ashley Myers (daughters of Shelly Helmich), Jana Stock (Jessica Schellhorn's sister), Sara Jackson