

The Mountain Top **Messenger**

VOLUME 52, ISSUE #8 Zion Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod AUGUST 2014

Grace, Peace, and Mercy to you from God our Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son.

August, in my holdover analytical way of assessment, I thought 8th month, 12 months in a year, so 8/12, then not liking to see a fraction laying around that could be reduced I did the math, 4/6, then 2/3. It was then the thought hit me, that is how much of our calendar year will be over when I write the next cover letter. Where does the time go? Then as I sat back in my chair and looked at my calendar it filled in pretty quickly. July 28th, I am leaving for a conference at Concordia University Nebraska. I received a grant to attend this conference and they are paying for Conference fees, meals at the conference, travel to and from the conference, and housing, can't beat a deal like that. The title of the conference is "Institute on Liturgy, Preaching, and Church Music. Some of the titles of the seminars and workshops that I will be attending include; Freshness and Variety in Proclaiming Law and Gospel, Ceremony in the Small Parish, Let us Pray: Elevating the Pastor's Unceasing Life of Prayer, Proclaiming Within Limits: Writing Concise Sermons, Keeping Children Musically Active in Worship, and A Conversation with Matthew Harrison (Visit with the President of the LCMS) and more. All in all, it looks like a very exciting and enlightening experience and I am excited to see how that all will tie in here at Zion.

After the conference, we have VBS rapidly approaching, August 11th, there is more information on that inside the newsletter.

On the school front, all my work for the summer quarter has been turned in and I am anxiously awaiting my grades. Along with that Wally Becker, from the St. Louis Seminary, will be visiting Zion on August 21st. Wally is one of the Vicarage Supervisors and will be meeting with Pastor Bahn, June, and me, to see how things are going here at Zion. Thank you to everyone who filled out an evaluation for the program.

Another item I would like to remind people of is that Sunday school and Confirmation are rapidly approaching, so keep your eyes and ears open for upcoming dates, times, and places.

Continued on page 3

Zion's Ministry Staff and Church Officers

E-Mail: zionashland@hotmail.com
Website: www.zionashland.org



Church Office 715-682-6075 (M/T/W 8am-12noon, Th-1-5pm)

Vicar Rick Williams 715-209-0479 (M/T/W/Th 8:00-5:00)

President, Chuck Chronis 715-682-0070

Head Elder, Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

LFOJ Child Care Center - Administrator, Karyn Leino 715-682-6075

Little Friends of Jesus Child Care Center 715-682-5185

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Sunday Morning Worship 9:00 am Wednesday Evening Worship 6:30pm

Bible Studies: Sundays 10:15am

Stewardship Thoughts

Just as there are ample tools to make sure that every home is in full repair, there is no shortage of tools to be used by Christians to promote stewardship. But it is important to learn how to use the tools the Lord has given to us. It is in Scripture that every Christian will find what the Lord has called him or her to do in the area of stewardship. The goal is faithful craftsmen who know how to apply God's word to their own lives and who are led to regular, proportional, and generous stewardship of their time, talents, and treasures. We have God's word that this can be done.

MAILBOX

Don't forget to check out your mailbox at church in the Narthex. The name plates have been re-organized. If your name is missing or wrong, please let the office know.

DIRECTORY

We are updating our directory. We have missing addresses, phone numbers and grown children no longer living at home still listed. Please help us out if you receive a note or phone call. Plus, we would like your e-mail address. We send out reminders and "breaking news" now and then. You can send it to the office: zionashland@hotmail.com, call, or leave a note in the office. Thanks.

NEED A PRAYER?

Zion Lutheran Church has two active prayer chains—a daytime and an evening chain. If you would like to have the chain activated to pray for a specific need, please call Marge Douglas at 682-2160. If you reach the answering machine, please leave a message, but then call the church office at 682-6075 and give the request to the church secretary and the chain will be activated. The Prayer Chain members are asked to keep all prayer requests confidential and not discuss them with others, but caller discretion is advised.



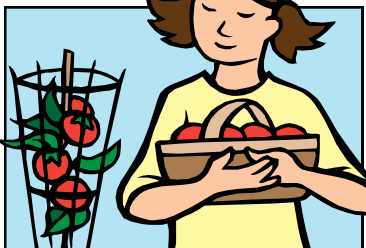
And finally I would like to remind everyone of the Wednesday night services, we are continuing with our series on the End Times. The remaining messages in this series will take us through the 20th of August. The remaining topics in the series are; Have No Fear the End is Near, Put Some Sticks on H-E Double Toothpicks, and Heaven. The end of August we will be starting a new series called the Great Life, and includes topics of; Heart of a Shepherd, Finding Life, and Sharing Jesus in Practical Ways. So if you can't make it to church on Sunday, or if you would just like to join us for more of God's Word we would love to see you on Wednesday night.

In closing I would just like to say I had chapel with the LFOJ kids today and we talked about Jesus feeding the 5,000 and then His walking on the water and calling Peter to Him and Peter's lack of faith causing him to sink. It was amazing how quickly they all grasped the understanding that we all need to keep our eye on Jesus. As I thought about it afterwards, I recalled the statement of Jesus in Mark 10:14 .."Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God" Remember to keep that innocence of a child as you think and live your life in Jesus.

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you, and give you Peace. Amen.

Blessings to you all, your brother in Christ,
Vicar Rick






How has your vegetable garden done this summer?

If you are looking at piles of vegetables that won't get eaten, why not drop them off at the Daycare Center. LFOJ would truly love to have fresh, locally grown vegetables for their little ones.

The State regulations say we can't take anything canned. ☹️
You can drop them off any time, Monday-Thursday, 6:00am-4:30pm. at the Center. 😊



MEMBERS' DISHES

There are many dishes that people have forgotten when they brought food items for potlucks, funerals, etc. Please check in the kitchen, there is a cabinet marked "members' dishes".



Mowing Schedule

Only a couple months left for mowing. Sign-up sheet by the office door. Thank you for helping.



SUNDAY SCHOOL SCOOP

VBS



Camp Luther VBS is coming soon--August 11-14. We have sign-up sheets in the Narthex for food donations, volunteers, and meals for Camp Luther counselors. Please consider helping out where you can---it was a wonderful experience last year to spend time with the young people from Camp Luther and watch their faith in action. VBS registration is still open for students in grades 1-6.

Meals for Camp Luther counselors: Our congregation provides meals for the 4 counselors during the week of August 11-14. Breakfast is served at the church around 8:00am Monday-Thursday. If you would be available to provide breakfast, serve and clean up on any of these mornings, please sign up. You'd be finished before 9:00am. Lunch is a sack lunch similar to what other campers will be bringing. We're also looking for 2 families in the congregation to provide a dinner at their home for the 4 counselors on Monday or Tuesday evening (August 11 or 12). This is a great opportunity for stewardship in our church and a time to learn more about the Camp Luther experience and the VBS program. Sign up sheet for meals will be in the Narthex. Thank you!



Sunday School classes will be starting up in September. If you are interested in helping out with teaching we are putting together "teaching teams", so you won't have to teach every Sunday if that is a concern. Anyone high school and older is encouraged to join in on a very rewarding experience. Contact Katie Colgrove (715-209-2512) if you are interested.

Alice Ellis will be playing Gospel songs on the piano at Ashland Health Care on August 2 and August 23 at 10 a.m. It would be nice to have some singers (or instrument players) to help out. Please give her a call (715-682-8528) if you are available one or both Saturdays.



LFOJ HAPPENINGS



LFOJ recently celebrated the season of summer with sprinkler day. All the children enjoyed running through the sprinkler, and playing water related games. God gave us a beautiful day!

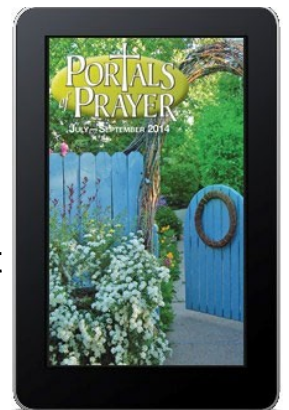
Things are shaping up nicely for the start of school. Two toddlers will begin transitioning out into the “Big Room” in the next few weeks. The center is losing 3 full-time clients to kindergarten, but all spots in our Learner room are full for the upcoming school year. We have a huge crew of school-agers joining us after school as well. God continues to bless our childcare program.

Preschool classes will begin Thursday, Sept. 4th. There is one opening in the 4/5 year old preschool (Mon/Wed/Fri). If you know someone who may be interested in preschool services, please have them contact Amy at the church office.

NEW for Portals of Prayer! The Kindle Edition

Our popular daily devotionals are now available in the Kindle format. Buy, download, and collect hundreds of short meditations on God's Word—all conveniently portable and ideal for quickly finding your past favorites.

Looking up each Bible verse reference has never been easier! In the Kindle format, Scripture verses and passages are just a tap away. Go through www.amazon.com



They also have a online/mobile edition that you go through Concordia Publishing House, www.cph.org

July 7, 2014

-A. Ellis

Sweet Seasons

Today Herb and I did a short RTV drive-around our field. I couldn't help but notice that as we approached a wide swath of clover, it felt like we drove into a perfume bubble. The air carried the sweet scent of summer.

It is now early July and we are into the full-bloom of creation. Monarch caterpillars devour milkweed, wrens flit near their nests, tall grass is ripening, sweet corn stretches knee-high, tomato plants build jungle-like structures, butterflies glide on air-waves, bees roll in pollen, hummingbirds hover close by, daisies line the roadways, buttercups sway in the breeze, fawns romp with does... everything seems to be operating at full-energy. A sweet feast for attentive humans.

This vigorous reality of summer invited me to again appreciate our four-season landscape. Autumn with its loss of spent leaves, and animals bedding down to sleep. Soon winter blows in a "wake-up" call to stoke the home-fires and button-down doors. Before you know it, the spring run-off thaws out hope and the fresh-scent of the earth sprouts sweet dreams. Then with the benefit of daylight and increased warmth, summer grabs the stage and runs with it: spinning skirts of flowers, trumpet fan-fare of swans, fragrance of fresh-cut hay, and parades of waving ferns. A time to sit in the shade and sip sweet lemonade.

Yes, the ongoing drama of our upnorth creation urges us to remember that we belong to the God of all seasons. For He inhabits the home of our hearts and uses the beauty and best of nature to tune our senses to His great grace and tender mercy. A feast of faith seasoned with the sweet aroma of God's divine love. The table is set...everyone is welcome. Thanks be to Him.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven



ORGAN

What is happening with the Organ search? The organ committee is getting ready to make a recommendation to the Church Council and Voters about a new organ.

Psalm 150 New King James Version (NKJV)

Let All Things Praise the LORD

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary;

Praise Him in His mighty firmament!² Praise Him for His mighty acts;

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

³ Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;

Praise Him with the lute and harp!

⁴ Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;

Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

⁵ Praise Him with loud cymbals;

Praise Him with clashing cymbals!⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

Why do churches have organs? Psalm 150 concludes the Psalms with a description of sounds that can accompany worship, so we can assume that the Old Testament Hymnal (PSALMS) considers the musical accompanying of worship to be pretty important. Take a look at the different instruments used to express in the best possible way the praise of our God. The opening verse (*"Praise the Lord!"*) is taken from the Hebrew word, "Hallelujah!" Hallel is the word for "praise" and Jah is the name by which God identified himself to Moses (*"Jahweh"*) God is the

great "I Am" and deserves the highest and very best praise we can render to Him. See if you can list the sounds of praise in this psalm.

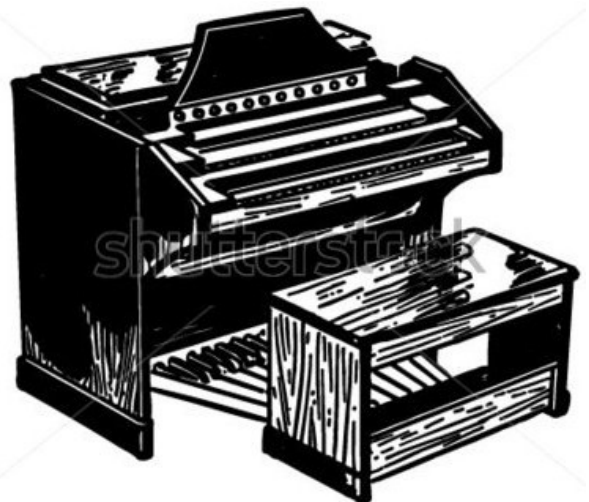
Pipe Organs can portray four basic sounds of instruments for praising God: Diapason, Flute, Reed, and Strings. So most Digital Organs seek to digitally master and reproduce these authentic instrumental sounds. Some of the advantages of a digital rather than our pipe organ are: a) digital organs do not need re-tuning every six months, b) the cost of a digital organ is ten percent of a pipe organ or less, c) different styles of organs can easily be reproduced on a digital organ (*Baroque, French, English, Italian, etc*). d) computers in a digital organ enable the organist to record or save a hymn or prelude that the organist has perfected, e) preset pistons enable the organist to change registrations quickly and easily.

So today by using a pipe organ or a digital organ, churches can create sounds of worship and praise in honor of God who has given us His Son, Jesus Christ for our salvation. The psalmist is assuming that the sound of worship in the church or temple is meant to reach to God in heaven itself, above the firmament (sky). So churches try to obtain the very best sounding instrument they can afford for accompanying the worship of the congregation. Organs are able to combine most

of the sounds mentioned in Psalm 150, and sometimes percussion instruments are added for special services (e.g. "timpani" on Easter Sunday or bass drums on Reformation Sunday or cymbals at Christmas time.).

Sometimes, even though the organ has these sounds, a brass choir or a string ensemble will also accompany the organ and congregation, for greater effect.

The truth is that organs can only create an approximate sound of the "real thing." Generally the more expensive pipe organs and digital organs do a better job, so the organ committee has been traveling to different churches to listen and evaluate the sound of the organ we want for our congregation that is in the range of our capability.



The organ committee is asked to meet on Sunday, August 3rd, at 11:30 a.m. to come up with a final recommendation to the Church Council, based on its research and the input they received on July 13th from those who gathered to talk with the Organ Committee about the organ. The recommendation is that we fund the organ through Memorial and Thank Offering Gifts rather than through a Capital Funds campaign. Please be thinking and praying about a gift to the Lord that will have significance and meaning for years to come and that will enable us to purchase an organ without going into debt.

A Memorial in honor of a loved one or a Thank offering in honor of a special blessing in your life can be very meaningful for individuals and families as well as for the congregation. Each time the organ is used to give praise to God, it also incorporates the memory of loved ones whom we remember through our gifts to God. Often people are motivated to give generous and meaningful gifts to God for something that is used in the worship life of a church.

St. Paul was inspired to record in Scripture the following:

2 Corinthians 8: ¹Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, ⁴imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the will of God. ⁶So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. ⁷But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.” NKJV

Please be fervent in your prayers and thoughts as you ask God to help us make a choice that will honor Him and serve the worship needs of the congregation for years to come. The Church Council will meet in early September to make a recommendation based on that of the Organ Committee.

Thank you for your interest and prayers,
Pr. Stanley Bahn,
In behalf of the Organ Committee



Wednesday, August 13th

VBS - Worship Service

6:30pm

**Be sure to join us for a joyous night of worship along with
Camp Luther staff and the VBS children.**

Comments from those who attended

last year's service were:

exhilarating, joyous, great, warming, wonderful

Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 11 Signs of Doom

By Thom S. Rainer

[PURCHASE A COPY](#)

I was their church consultant in 2003. The church's peak attendance was 750 in 1975. By the time I got there the attendance had fallen to an average of 83. The large sanctuary seemed to swallow the relatively small crowd on Sunday morning.

The reality was that most of the members did not want me there. They were not about to pay a consultant to tell them what was wrong with their church. Only when a benevolent member offered to foot my entire bill did the congregation grudgingly agree to retain me.

I worked with the church for three weeks. The problems were obvious; the solutions were difficult. On my last day, the benefactor walked me to my rental car. "What do you think, Thom?" he asked. He could see the uncertainty in my expression, so he clarified. "How long can our church survive?" I paused for a moment, and then offered the bad news. "I believe the church will close its doors in five years."

I was wrong. The church closed just a few weeks ago. Like many dying churches, it held on to life tenaciously. This church lasted ten years after my terminal diagnosis. My friend from the church called to tell me the news. I took no pleasure in discovering that not only was my diagnosis correct, I had mostly gotten right all the signs of the impending death of the church. Together my friend and I reviewed the past ten years. I think we were able to piece together a fairly accurate autopsy. Here are eleven things I learned.

- 1. The church refused to look like the community.** The community began a transition toward a lower socioeconomic class thirty years ago, but the church members had no desire to reach the new residents. The congregation thus became an island of middle-class members in a sea of lower-class residents.
- 2. The church had no community-focused ministries.** This part of the autopsy may seem to be stating the obvious, but I wanted to be certain. My friend affirmed my suspicions. There was no attempt to reach the community.
- 3. Members became more focused on memorials.** Do not hear my statement as a criticism of memorials. Indeed, I recently funded a memorial in memory of my late grandson. The memorials at the church were chairs, tables, rooms, and other places where a neat plaque could be placed. The point is that the memorials became an obsession at the church. More and more emphasis was placed on the past.
- 4. The percentage of the budget for members' needs kept increasing.** At the church's death, the percentage was over 98 percent.
- 5. There were no evangelistic emphases.** When a church loses its passion to reach the lost, the congregation begins to die.
- 6. The members had more and more arguments about what *they* wanted.** As the church continued to decline toward death, the inward focus of the members turned caustic. Arguments were more frequent; business meetings became more acrimonious.
- 7. With few exceptions, pastoral tenure grew shorter and shorter.** The church had seven pastors in its final ten years. The last three pastors were bi-vocational. All of the seven pastors left discouraged.
- 8. The church rarely prayed together.** In its last eight years, the only time of corporate prayer was a three-minute period in the Sunday worship service. Prayers were always limited to members, their friends and families, and their physical needs.

Continued on page 10

9. **The church had no clarity as to why it existed.** There was no vision, no mission, and no purpose.

10. **The members idolized another era.** All of the active members were over the age of 67 the last six years of the church. And they all remembered fondly, to the point of idolatry, was the era of the 1970s. They saw their future to be returning to the past.

11. **The facilities continued to deteriorate.** It wasn't really a financial issue. Instead, the members failed to see the continuous deterioration of the church building. Simple stated, they no longer had "outsider eyes."

Though this story is bleak and discouraging, we must learn from such examples. As many as 100,000 churches in America could be dying. Their time is short, perhaps less than ten years.

What do you think of the autopsy on this church? What can we do to reverse these trends?

This article was originally published at ThomRainer.com on April 24, 2013. Thom S. Rainer serves as president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. Among his greatest joys are his family: his wife Nellie Jo; three sons, Sam, Art, and Jess; and seven grandchildren. Dr. Rainer can be found on Twitter [@ThomRainer](https://twitter.com/ThomRainer) and at facebook.com/Thom.S.Rainer.

Autopsy of a Deceased Church from Faceout Studio on Vimeo.

For more than twenty-five years, Dr. Thom Rainer, author of *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, has helped churches grow, reverse the trends of decline, and has autopsied those that have died. From his experiences, he has discovered twelve consistent themes among those churches that have died. Yet, it's not gloom and doom because from those twelve themes, lessons on how to keep your church alive have emerged.

Whether your church is vibrant or dying, whether you are a pastor or a church member, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* will walk you through the radical paths necessary to keep your church alive to the glory of God and advancement of Christ's Kingdom!

Requested submission by Church President,
Chuck Chronis

IT'S TIME FOR THE REVEALING OF NAMES

When: Saturday, Aug. 23rd

Time: 6:00pm

Place: Church Fellowship Hall

Do you know who your secret pal is? Are you sure? We will all find out on the 23rd. I have heard from a few who want to apologize for not being the "best" secret pal, but their "name" was always in their heart. Join us for some talk, laughs and refreshments. If you can't make it, please contact Lynn (292-0592) so she can pass on to your secret pal, your name. We'll start a new selection of "pals" in September.

*Secret
Pals*

BULLETIN BOARD - We receive many requests for bulletin announcements every week and it would add pages and time to the bulletin. Therefore, each week we notify you in the Sunday bulletin what "new" item from what group has been posted. So, please check out the bulletin board regularly for news.

AUGUST Servers for Worship Services

Our Servers for our Worship Service are very important. We ask that if you are unable to serve on your designated date, please find someone else to take your place. We really appreciate your help in this matter!!

ELDERS

Aug. 3 Don Pocernich & John Pruss
Aug. 6 Darryl Warren
Aug. 10 Darryl Warren & Chuck Chronis
Aug. 13 Mike Cashman
Aug. 17 Mike Cashman & Doug Warren
Aug. 20 John Pruss
Aug. 24 John Pruss & Darryl Warren
Aug. 27 Chuck Chronis
Aug. 31 Chuck Chronis & Mike Cashman

GREETERS FOR AUGUST

Greeters should arrive by 8:40am

Aug. 3 Pat & Katie Colgrove
Aug. 10 Ethel Guss & Penny Mattson
Aug. 17 Harrelson Family
Aug. 24 Brian & Linda Klobucher
Aug. 31 Moreland Family

AUGUST Acolytes

Aug. 3 Ashlee Moreland & Kyle Sapper
Aug. 10 Taylor Vyskocil & Heather Dickrell
Aug. 17 Tia Warren & Jacob Graves
Aug. 24 Justin Esala & Kyle Sapper
Aug. 31 Ashlee Moreland & Taylor Vyskocil

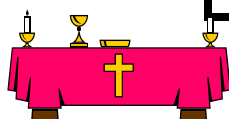
AUGUST Ushers

Ushers should arrive by 8:40am

Aug. 3 Tim Bauer & Chris Bolz
Aug. 10 Terrel Bolz & Karl Williams
Aug. 17 Clarence Osmak & Luke Barker
Aug. 24 Jordan Thimm & Herb Ellis
Aug. 31 Don Moreland & Scott Pearce

AUGUST ALTAR GUILD

Kim Westman 682-6571
Lynn Ladd 682-6034
Katie Colgrove 209-2512
Kathryn Draeger 746-2160



Our Prayer Concerns AUGUST

Mission

Zion Lutheran Church
Little Friends of Jesus Childcare Center
Jordan Kroll Mission in China

Thanksgiving

To all of you who have worked faithfully and joyfully to serve our Lord by serving others and often go unnoticed by all but our Heavenly Father.

Illnesses

Otto & Dorothy Rusch, Dale Houle, Riley Bretting, Jim Fletcher, Matt Raspotnik, Bob Wolfgram, Carl Sapper, Beau Muhs, Larry Korbein, Marlene Parkhurst, Katie Stipetich, Jim Morzenti, Cailey O'Connor, Sheryl Hildebrandt

Nursing Home &

Assisted Living Resident

Corrine Tolliver Sharon Johnson
Otto & Dorothy Rusch George Schwiesow

Shut-in's

Gordon & Marianne Vyskocil
Walt Schutte



Military

Aaron Esala

OFFICIAL ACTS

New Member— Heather Gust 7-6-14

Baptism — Zachary Darwin 07-19-14
Brayden Darwin-Gervais 07-19-14

